

# Utah County Birders Newsletter

January 2015



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## JANUARY MEETING:

**Thursday, January 8th, 2015** - 7:00 pm

### Winter Social / UCB Challenge Awards Ceremony.

Our meeting will be our annual dinner/UCB challenge awards ceremony at Golden Corral on January 8, 2015 at 7pm. Dinner will be pay on your own, and we have the entire back room reserved for our group. The Golden Corral is located at 225 West University Parkway, Orem.

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## FIELD TRIPS:

**1 January, 2015 (Thur).** Utah County Birders Field Trip - 9:30- early afternoon. New Year's Day birding, **South Utah County**. Meet at the East Bay Sam's Club in Provo at 9:30 am.

**1 January (Thur).** Jordan River Christmas Bird Count - Leaders: Jeanne Le Ber and Ray Smith - Meet at 7am at Johanna's Kitchen, 9725 South State Street, Sandy (801-566-1762). Assignments will be distributed and groups will start birding at 8am. Team reports and count tally will begin at 6pm at the Sizzler on 9000 S. & State St. To sign up, or for more information, call Jeanne or Ray at (801-532-7384).

**3 January, 2015 (Sat) - Payson Christmas Bird Count** - For the Payson Bird Count we will meet at McD's at 7:30 AM to go over the assignments and pass out the info. If you are planning on participating let Bryan know beforehand so he can divide up the groups and areas. Bryan Shirley 801-722-9346.

**January 17, 2015 (Sat)** - 9am-11am. Bird walk along the **Jordan River Trail in Saratoga Springs** past the model airplane park. Meet at the parking lot for the Model Airplane Park. We will bird along the river where the hot springs keep the water from freezing, and look for Great Egrets, Great Horned Owls, and any other "great" birds we happen to see. The address is roughly 6798 N. Saratoga Rd in Saratoga Springs. To get there, take Pioneer Crossing west from I-15, and turn left on 2300 West/Saratoga Rd. Follow 2300 W/Saratoga Rd around until you see a large parking lot and the sign for the Model Airplane Park on the right side of the road just before you cross the Jordan River.

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)

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## UCB Captain's Log: January 2015

by Keeli Marvel

Thanks to all those who participated in the 2014 UCB birders challenge. If you completed the challenge and are not on the list below, please let me know before Thursday January 8, 2015 so we can make sure you are recognized at our January meeting. Additionally, if you ARE on the list, but I've messed up your name, let me know so I can get it right on the award certificates!

### Gold Level (29 species in all 29 counties in Utah, plus meeting/field trip attendance)

Suzi Holt	
Amanda Holt	Flora Duncan
Carol Harris	Esther Duncan
Carol Jean Nelson	Deloy Pack
Kathleen Blanchard	Yvonne Carter
Bryan Shirley	Alton Thygerson
Dennis Shirley	Jim Strong
Keeli Marvel	Kay Stone

### Silver Level (29 species in 19 counties plus meeting/field trip attendance)

Danny Nelson	Doug Mead
Linda Nelson	Ned Bixler
Amanda Kobelin	Carolyn Shirley
Machelle Johnson	

### Bronze Level (29 species in 9 counties plus meeting/field trip attendance)

Alona Huffaker  
Milt Moody  
Sheryl Serrano

As we enter a non-challenge year for our club, I'd like to focus on birding our local birding hotspots and favorite patches. I invite all of you to volunteer to lead a short local field trip to introduce us to your favorite birding patch! Remember, you don't have to be an expert; you just have to be excited about birding!

Additionally, to those of you who are looking for ways to spice up 2015, I offer you a few suggestions borrowed from one of my favorite online bird bloggers, Felonious Jive and his blog post "New Birding for a New Year" on the birding blog website 10,000 Birds. (<http://10000birds.com/new-birding-for-a-new-year.htm>) He suggests the following ideas to challenge your birding and take it to a whole new level in 2015.

- 1- Do a Big Year! : Most of us can't afford a world-wide Big Year, or even an ABA area Big Year, but maybe you can do a county big year, or a hotspot Big Year. Start today and give it a try!
- 2- Try E-bird: It's citizen science at its best! It keeps all kinds of neat lists for you, and you can find bird sightings and target lists almost anywhere. If you need help setting up an account, I'd be more than willing to help you do so!
- 3- Go "Green": Try finding greener ways to bird! Carpool more, drive less. Maybe try biking or walking to your favorite local spots. I know it's not always an option, but there are ways to be a little bit greener every day.
- 4- Take a pelagic trip: Talk to anyone in our group that went on our Monterey Trip in 2013, and we'll tell you it's worth it, despite the seasickness! Trips run on both the east and west coasts so if you're heading in either direction, it's worth checking out your options!
- 5- Travel!: Ok, I know this goes against what Felonious said in #3, but if you have the opportunity to do so, get out and see some birds somewhere new! No better way to reignite the birding spark than to go somewhere as mind-blowingly birdy as Costa Rica. If you can do so, make it happen! Also, if you need someone to go along, let me know! I'm always up for a birding adventure. Assuming I can get the time off work... silly jobs always getting in the way of birding.
- 6- Learn: Learn something new about the birds you enjoy. I feel like every year I learn new calls, new bird identification tricks. Birding is an ongoing learning process and every time you go out birding you are improving your identification skills a little at a time. If you struggle with gull/shorebird/sparrow (etc...) identification (and who doesn't?!), grab a seasoned birder, and get them to go with you and share their skills!
- 7- Patch Birding: I love this suggestion. In 2014 we roamed the state for our challenge. 2015 is going to be a good year to settle in, bird your favorite spots or adopt a local patch and bird the heck out of it! Felonious Jive also points out that your local patch may be your back yard, and what better what to adopt it than to make it bird friendly. Put out feeders and install bird friendly landscaping. Talk to me, or to your local plant nursery for ideas.
- 8- Buy a scope: When I got my spotting scope, it changed my life. Birding the Antelope Island Causeway suddenly became enjoyable! This is not something you have to break the bank for, either. Decent scopes can be had for under \$500.
- 9- Bird with a friend! No better way to enjoy what you already love doing than to share it with those people whose company you enjoy.

Wish you all a very birdy and Happy New Year! Hope to see you all at our January meeting!

Keeli Marvel

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## Bird of the Month

### Rock Sandpiper

*Calidris pilocnemis*

by Dennis Shirley

My newest all-time favorite shorebird and even up there with all the worlds birds is the ROCK SANDPIPER. No it is not found in Utah. It's probably never even been close. But it is a classy bird. One of the things I like about these birds is their confiding behavior. They will let you approach fairly close and still go about their daily activities without paying much attention to your presence.

My love for the bird blossomed with my recent excursions to Shemya Island far out on the Western Aleutian Islands. Here they are residents year-round. They nest in the semi open, rocky, short tundra, upland areas of the island. During the short breeding in May and June they have an interesting one wing "salute" territorial display. A single wing is raised straight up, showing it's flashy white under lining. Up to the salute you'd swear there are no birds around. They are very cryptic colored, matching the ground cover they nest in - kind of like a small long-billed ptarmigan. After the breeding season the birds molt and change from their tundra coloration to a dark charcoal color which this time is exactly the color of the rocks along the rocky wave swept shorelines. Now again they are hard to see unless they move or fly. I can't think of a more harsher place to spend the winter than along the frozen shorelines of the Bering Sea/ North Pacific. There are three North American subspecies that are found along the North Pacific seacoasts from Alaska to California (winter only).

Rock Sandpipers are slightly larger than a dunlin, have a medium to long slightly drooping bill, are short legged and necked, have a kind of hunched over appearance, and have yellowish green legs. Their closest relative is the purple sandpiper of the North Atlantic seashores.

\*If you would like to write an article for the Bird of the Month, please contact Machel - [machelle13johnson@yahoo.com](mailto:machelle13johnson@yahoo.com)



Photos by Dennis Shirley.



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## Field Trip Report

**Geniel's House** - 17 December 2014

by Suzi Holt

We had 7 awesome Birders come to the Field trip at Geniel's House in Elk Ridge today. We enjoyed 12 different species this morning at the feeders. Here is our check list:

Black capped chickadee-4  
Mountain chickadee-2  
European Starling-3  
Western Scrub Jay-5  
Dark-eyed junco-4  
Steller's Jay-3

House Finch-12  
Northern Flicker-1  
Black-billed magpie-2  
House Sparrow-2  
Eurasian Collared-Dove-2  
California Quail-2

What a beautiful morning and a warm way to bird from inside the "bird room".

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## Field Trip Report

**Salem and vicinity** - 19 December 2014

by Kay Stone

On Friday December 19th Lynn Nielson, Jim Stong, Reed Stone and Kay Stone birded East Bay, Woodland Hills, Salem Pond and Spring Lake. We saw 28 species of birds. The birds seen were Great Tailed Grackle, Rock Pigeon, Ring-billed Gulls, Starlings, American Robin, Killdeer, Coot, American Widgeon, Canada Geese, Black-Crowned Night Heron, Magpie, Red Tailed Hawk, Lewis Woodpecker, Steller's Jays, (many, many) Northern Flicker, Scrub Jay, Kestrel, Common Goldeneye, Kingfisher, Bald Eagle, Lesser Scaup, Greater Scaup, Pied-Billed Grebe, Northern Shoveler, Junco, Eurasian -Collared Dove, House Finch. The highlight of our trip was to see so many Stellar Jays in the area. We all remarked that we had never seen so many Stellar Jays in one area.

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## Field Trip Report

**South Utah County** - 1 January 2015

by Keeli Marvel

6 birders, and then 5 more who joined us along the way met on New Year's Day to bird the south end of Utah County. We drove around East Bay Golf Course, walked down the Kuhni's canal path on the south side of the golf course, stopped at the Lewis's Woodpecker spot in East Salem, and then finished with a visit to Salem Pond.

Best birds of the trip were Evening Grosbeaks on the canal trail, Lewis's woodpeckers at their usual location, a nice diversity of ducks at Salem Pond, a pair of Wilson's Snipe in the marsh on the southwest end, and a Bald Eagle across the hwy from Salem Pond. Complete trips lists are below. Thanks to all who participated.

Happy Birding!

East Bay Golf Course, Utah, US-UT

Jan 1, 2015 9:45 AM - 10:15 AM

18 species (+1 other taxa)

Canada Goose 55  
Gadwall 3  
American Wigeon 30  
Mallard 105  
Mallard (Domestic type) 10  
Northern Shoveler 2  
Pied-billed Grebe 5  
Black-crowned Night-Heron 1 on the island on east side of golf course where they are always seen roosting  
American Coot 50  
Killdeer 1 Heard only at first stop  
Ring-billed Gull 2  
Northern Flicker 1  
Black-billed Magpie 4  
Black-capped Chickadee 2  
European Starling 5  
Song Sparrow 1  
White-crowned Sparrow 5  
Dark-eyed Junco 6  
American Goldfinch 2

Kuhni Canal, Utah, US-UT

Jan 1, 2015 10:20 AM - 10:41 AM

8 species

Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Northern Flicker 2  
American Robin 50  
European Starling 35  
Cedar Waxwing 1  
Spotted Towhee 1  
Song Sparrow 5  
Evening Grosbeak 3 Confirmed by all members in our group and heard calling. Observed by other birders at this location on other dates as well.

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East Salem (Utah Co.) (incl. Lewis'

Woodpecker hangout), Utah, US-UT

Jan 1, 2015 11:10 AM - 11:45 AM

6 species

California Quail 1 heard only  
Red-tailed Hawk 1  
Eurasian Collared-Dove 3  
Lewis's Woodpecker 4 Documented to consistently winter at this location. Have been seen here several years in a row. Observed by all members in the group.  
Steller's Jay 2  
House Sparrow 25

Salem Pond, Utah, US-UT

Jan 1, 2015 11:52 AM - 12:52 PM

23 species (+2 other taxa)

Canada Goose 200  
Muscovy Duck (Domestic type) 2  
Gadwall 2  
American Wigeon 20  
Mallard 50  
Mallard (Domestic type) 20  
Northern Shoveler 60  
Green-winged Teal 4  
Canvasback 10  
Ring-necked Duck 10  
Lesser Scaup 20  
Bufflehead 4  
Common Goldeneye 20  
Common Merganser 3  
Ruddy Duck 2  
Pied-billed Grebe 5  
Bald Eagle 1 Across highway perched in tree next to overflow pond  
American Coot 30  
Wilson's Snipe 2  
Ring-billed Gull 2  
Belted Kingfisher 1 heard only  
Northern Flicker 1  
Black-billed Magpie 3  
Song Sparrow 2  
House Sparrow 20

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## Provo Christmas Bird Count – December 20, 2014

by Bryan Shirley

This year was the 115th Christmas Bird Count and the 43rd Provo Christmas Bird Count. This year the count was very different than most – warm temperatures made finding some of the regular species difficult, but on the other hand we recorded some species we miss most years. We were especially low in waterfowl and we missed things like Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, and Common Merganser, all of which are recorded almost every year. We did record 2 species we have never had before – Snow Goose and Lesser Black-backed Gull. A few of other surprises were Cinnamon Teal, Sora, Lesser Yellowlegs, Ruffed Grouse, and Red-naped Sapsucker. We also had a White-throated Sparrow and a Double-crested Cormorant for the count week but were not able to locate them on the count day.

Here is the total list:

1. Snow Goose - 1
2. Canada Goose - 721
3. Wood Duck - 7
4. Gadwall – 8
5. American Wigeon – 12
6. Mallard – 1197
7. Cinnamon Teal – 1
8. Northern Shoveler – 5
9. Green-winged Teal – 1 (New Low)
10. Common Goldeneye – 4
11. Ring-necked Pheasant – 32
12. Ruffed Grouse – 2
13. Wild Turkey – 67
14. California Quail – 240
15. Pied-billed Grebe – 16
16. American White Pelican – 1
17. Double-crested Cormorant – Count Week
18. Great Blue Heron – 8
19. Black-crowned Night Heron – 5
20. Bald Eagle – 16
21. Northern Harrier – 15
22. Sharp-shinned Hawk – 6
23. Cooper's Hawk – 11
24. Red-tailed Hawk – 57
25. Rough-legged Hawk – 1
26. American Kestrel – 75
27. Merlin – 3
28. Virginia Rail – 9
29. Sora – 1
30. American Coot – 572
31. Sandhill Crane – 101
32. Killdeer - 10
33. Lesser Yellowlegs – 15
34. Wilson's Snipe – 2
35. Ring-billed Gull – 1073
36. California Gull – 140
37. Lesser Black-backed Gull – 1 (new for count)
38. Rock Pigeon – 1392
39. Eurasian Collared-Dove – 883
40. Mourning Dove – 173
41. Barn Owl – 2
42. Western Screech-Owl – 5
43. Great Horned Owl – 5
44. Belted Kingfisher – 7
45. Red-naped Sapsucker – 1
46. Downy Woodpecker – 35
47. Hairy Woodpecker – 2
48. Northern Flicker – 175
49. Northern Shrike – 2
50. Steller's Jay – 17
51. Western Scrub Jay – 165
52. Black-billed Magpie – 362
53. American Crow – 3
54. Common Raven – 7
55. Black-capped Chickadee – 276
56. Mountain Chickadee – 48
57. Bushtit – 16
58. Red-breasted Nuthatch – 22
59. White-breasted Nuthatch – 8 (New High)
60. Brown Creeper – 24
61. Canyon Wren – 1
62. Bewick's Wren – 1
63. Marsh Wren – 5
64. American Dipper – 22
65. Ruby-crowned Kinglet – 32
66. Townsend's Solitaire – 7
67. American Robin – 2147
68. European Starling – 7464
69. Cedar Waxwing – 417
70. Yellow-rumped Warbler – 19
71. Spotted Towhee – 49
72. American Tree Sparrow – 9
73. Song Sparrow – 102
74. White-throated Sparrow – Count Week
75. White-crowned Sparrow – 281
76. Dark-eyed Junco – 984 (including all sub species)
77. Red-winged Blackbird – 4871
78. Western Meadowlark – 23
79. Yellow-headed Blackbird – 11
80. Brewer's Blackbird – 875
81. Great-tailed Grackle – 166 (New High)
82. Brown-headed Cowbird – 1
83. Cassin's Finch - 1
84. House Finch – 815
85. Pine Siskin – 1
86. Lesser Goldfinch – 71
87. American Goldfinch – 100
88. Evening Grosbeak – 96
89. House Sparrow - 704

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## Backyard Bird of the Month

December 2014

Jack Binch - Sandy

Favorite bird of December is a small flock of **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. Nine so far.

Yvonne Carter - American Fork

So many **Juncos!** along with House Finches, Scrub Jays, Black-capped Chickadees and a Red-Breasted Nuthatch.

Jeff Cooper - Pleasant Grove

A male **Cassin's Finch** visited my feeder throughout Christmas Day. I haven't seen it since that day.

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

**Northern Flickers** - Close up views of a very beautiful bird.

Carol Nelson - Provo

An adult **Bald Eagle** and an immature **Bald Eagle** plus my 79th yard bird, a **Merlin**, were December's gifts.

Dennis Shirley - Elk Ridge

11 **Wild Turkey** - eating me out of house and home!

Alton Thygerson - Provo

**Steller's Jay** - Daily visitors with up to four Steller's Jays at the same time.

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.