

# Utah County Birders Newsletter

July 2015

## Contents

[July Meeting](#)

[Upcoming Field Trips](#)

[Captain's Log](#)

[Bird of the Month](#)

[Field Trip Report](#) - River Lane

[Backyard Bird of the Month](#)



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## JULY MEETING:

Our monthly meeting will be canceled on its regular date in exchange for a bird walk on the evening of **July 23rd at 7pm**. We are going to meet in the parking lot at **Vivian Park** (South Fork turnoff) up Provo Canyon and walk a short ways down the bike trail, birding along the Provo River. Bring bug spray as that area can get pretty buggy.

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## FIELD TRIPS:

**Saturday, July 11th, 2015. Mirror Lake Highway** - 6:30 am - Mabelle Johnson will lead a field trip to Mirror Lake. Meet in the Orem Harmon's parking lot (870 E 800 N, Orem) at 6:30am, we will carpool from there. There is a \$6.00 per vehicle fee to enter the area. Bring snacks and/or lunch and water as well as bug spray and sunscreen. We'll head home around mid-afternoon.

**Thursday, July 23rd, 2015. 7:00 pm - Evening bird walk at Vivian Park.** We are going to meet in the parking lot at Vivian Park (South Fork turnoff) up Provo Canyon and walk a short ways down the bike trail, birding along the Provo River. Bring bug spray as that area can get pretty buggy. [Vivian Park](#)

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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## Utah County Birders Captain's Log: July 2015

by Keeli Marvel

The July doldrums are upon us. Hope ya'll are keeping cool out there and seeing some birds in spite of the record breaking temperatures!

I recently had a friend tell me of how she and her husband watched proudly as a nest of robin hatchlings fledged in her yard and how careful they were not to touch the young, even as they helped one that had been trapped behind their woodpile. I commended her for her efforts and congratulated her on the success of the nest in her yard. Then we had a nice discussion on the topic of bird scent. I think a lot of people have the misconception that if you touch baby birds, your scent will rub off on them, and then the parents will no longer accept them. I've heard this several times frequently, so I thought I'd help dispel the myth.

I've always been taught that most birds do not have a well-developed sense of smell. I'll tell you why the data is no longer supporting that theory in a minute. In this situation, however, American Robins in particular, and many of our common song birds, in general, do not seem to be bothered by human scent. This means that if you find a baby bird out of a nest and it can't fly yet, one of the best things you can do is put it back in its nest and the parents (who are often standing by anxiously) will continue to feed and care for it. If the nest is gone, you can also put the baby bird in a small box or other soft container and place it up in a tree or bush where you think the nest may have been. In most cases, the parents should return to care for their young. Newly fledged birds that are capable of flight will commonly spend a few days after fledging from the nest on the ground, and at that point they benefit most from us if we just keep our distance, keep our pets away from them, and let them do their thing. For more information, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology website All About Birds has a really good informational page you can share with family and friends on what to do if you or they find a baby bird:

[http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/faq/master\\_folder/attracting/challenges/orphaned](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/faq/master_folder/attracting/challenges/orphaned).

The theory that most birds don't have a well-developed sense of smell is one that has been held for most of the last century. Recent research, however, is showing that there is a great deal more to bird olfactory sense and the role it plays in many species' lives than was previously thought. An article published in the Audubon magazine last year discusses in depth about some of the research currently being done that shows that many species actually have a very acute sense of smell and that it may be used for any number of things such as predator detection and food quality assessment and detection. If you'd like to read that article, it is available at the following link:

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/january-february-2014/birds-can-smell-and-one-scientist>

I set out to write an article about how birds don't have a sense of smell, but after a little research, found myself learning something new. Hope you enjoy reading about it as much as I did.

Stay cool, and happy birding!

Keeli Marvel

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## Bird of the Month

### Black-crowned Night-Heron

*Nycticorax nycticorax*

by Lynn Garner

I was taking a walk with my grand daughters in Rexburg's Nature Park when an unusual bird flew across one of the ponds toward us. As it drew closer, I could see that it was a Black-Crowned Night Heron. It landed nearby and posed for us in a clearly cautious stance (below, right), flying away again after a few moments. The coloring indicates that it was probably a second- or third-year bird.



The Black-Crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax Nycticorax*) is a stocky, short-necked and short-legged heron that seldom extends its neck. The adult is mostly white or gray, with a black crown, shoulders, and back. Adult plumage is reached in the third year; younger birds look mostly like brownish versions of their parents. The adult has red eyes, a black, thick beak, yellow legs, and in breeding season, a couple of long white cord-like head plumes down the back of the neck. It flies heavily and has a flat, raucous *quawk* as its call. According to an old bird book, "Quawk" was one of its earlier common names.

Its feeding habitat is marshland with slow creeks or ponds. Its hunting posture is hunched over (above, left), intent on seeking the frogs or fish that constitute its main foods. Most of its feeding takes place in the evening after dusk; during the day, it usually rests or roosts. The Heron will often fly a considerable distance from its nest to feed.

These Herons nest together, often in large groups, in isolated patches of woods. Their nests are large loose affairs of branches and twigs. A typical clutch is three to six pale sea-green eggs. Many pairs raise two broods in a summer, so it is not uncommon at the heronry to see parents feeding two sets of offspring, juvenals clamoring about in the branches and fledglings still in the nest.

Black-Crowned Night Herons nest from southern Canada southward throughout North and South America to Patagonia. They winter mainly from the California and Gulf coasts southward, though they may be found year-round in parts of Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico., as well as along the Atlantic coast.

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

**River Lane - June 20, 2015**

by Mabelle Johnson

Fifteen birders met this morning for a Utah County Birders field trip to River Lane. We met in the Sam's Club parking lot and started off with a few species, then drove on to River Lane. It was a beautiful morning, warm and sunny. The air was filled with the sounds of Yellow Warblers, American Goldfinches and Bullocks Orioles. We birded the road and spent some time on Sandy Beach. Thanks to all who joined us, especially the new birders who were attending for the first time. We hope to see you again!

We met up with Alona on the road, who told us about a Blue Grosbeak she had seen on her way in. On our way out, Sheryl, Amana and I were able to see it as well. We were the last ones out so I don't know if others saw it as they were leaving.

A Barn Owl was flushed about half way down the dirt road. It flew West over the road, over the heads of some of the birders, for a bit before ducking into the trees. It was spotted again as it was being mobbed by some small, annoyed birds. I didn't get a look at what was mobbing it, I was watching the owl...

## Sam's Club Parking lot:

Great-tailed Grackle  
Black-capped Chickadee  
American Goldfinch

## River Lane:

Barn Swallow  
Bank Swallow  
Northern Harrier  
Orange-crowned Warbler  
Eastern Kingbird  
Western Kingbird  
Western Meadowlark  
Mourning Dove  
Eurasian-collared Dove  
Black-billed Magpie  
Starling  
House Finch  
Red-winged Blackbird  
Yellow Warbler  
Brown-headed Cowbird  
Bullocks Oriole  
Song Sparrow  
Barn Owl  
Canada Goose  
Rock Pigeon  
House Sparrow  
American Robin  
Common Raven  
Blue Grosbeak  
Western Wood Pewee (Heard only)  
Ring-necked Pheasant (Heard only)  
(Duck sp. fly over)

## Sandy Beach:

Killdeer  
Yellow-headed Blackbird  
Caspian Tern  
Snowy Egret  
American White Pelican  
Clark's Grebe  
Snowy Plover (5)  
California Gull  
Ring-billed Gull  
Black-necked Stilt  
American Avocet  
Double-crested  
Cormorant  
Willet  
Osprey  
Spotted Sandpiper



**Blue Grosbeak** - photo by Sheryl Serrano.



**Snowy Plover** - photo by Sheryl Serrano.



**American Avocet** - photo by Sheryl Serrano.

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## Backyard Bird of the Month

June 2015

Jack Binch - Sandy

A couple of **California Quail** ignored the kestrels and came into the yard. The kestrels have fledged and maybe I can get a few small birds now. Saved a lot on bird seed the past couple of months.

Yvonne Carter - American Fork

I think I have a hawk close by. I have some of the usual--**Western Scrub Jays, chickadees, finches, California Quails** in the bushes -- but not the unique species that I usually get in April through June. Found two dead robins on the grass in the last week.

Herb Clayson - Salem

As I was filling my feeders in the front yard a male **Bullock's Oriole** flew into the area.

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

**Yellow Warbler** - I get them each summer. They are fun to watch and hear singing in the mornings.

Milt Moody - Provo

In my Provo backyard I had three juvenile **Western Screech-Owls** come to my bird bath three mornings in a row at dawn and take turns taking a bath. I was alerted to their presence with some back-and-forth calling through my open window around 5:30 AM each morning.

Dennis Shirley - Elk Ridge

Add one more **Band-tailed Pigeon** to the Utah County yard bird records for the summer. I had my first ever on June 6, 2015. He stayed around till the 12th and haven't seen him since.

Alton Thygerson - Provo

**California Quail** chicks - Watching 9 of these fuzz-balls brings a smile as Mom and Dad herd them from place-to-place.

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.