

Utah County Birders Newsletter

November 2015



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NOVEMBER MEETING:

Tuesday, November 10th, 2015 - 7:00 pm. The meeting this month will be on a different night than normal.

Jason Robinson from the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources will be our guest speaker. Jason has agreed to come talk to us about the recent federal listing decision to not list the **Greater Sage-grouse** as threatened or endangered and what efforts the state and other entities are taking to conserve sage grouse in Utah.

Meet at 7:00 pm at the Monte L. Bean Museum. 645 East 1430 North, Provo, UT <http://mlbean.byu.edu/>

Next month we will return to our normal meeting date.

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday November 21st, 2015: 7:30am-early afternoon. Meet at the parking lot at the mouth of Provo Canyon to carpool. We will go on our **annual Loon Loop field trip** where we will plan to visit some mountain reservoirs in search of Loons and other winter waterfowl. Where we go will be bird sighting and weather dependent. Please come out and join us!

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

Utah County Birders Captain's Log: November 2015

by Keeli Marvel

If the weather report is to be trusted it seems like winter will be upon us this week. Not sure where the time went this year!

A couple of weekends ago Alona and I attended the Birds of Paradise exhibit at the Utah Museum of Natural History. The exhibit was really very interactive and informative. It tells the story of how photographer Tim Laman and Cornell ornithologist Edwin Scholes documented 39 species of Birds of Paradise. It took them 18 expeditions over the course of eight years to get sound, video, and photographic recordings. They spent a great deal of time in the absolute middle of nowhere in Papua New Guinea and northern Australia. The exhibit really opened my eyes to the diversity of the Birds of Paradise family of birds. They have some of the most unique and extravagant plumages and some of the strangest and most elaborate courtship displays I've ever seen. The exhibit was very well presented and I highly recommend it to anyone with some time available for a trip up there. It was very interactive and would be great to take children to as well.

As the year starts drawing to a close, it's time to start thinking about our birding challenge for next year. If anyone has any input or requests, please email me. I'll be working on the challenge between now and the end of the year, so stay tuned!

I submitted my travel and training cost estimate requests at work today and if they all get approved, it could potentially be a very exciting year bird-wise for me. The American Ornithologists Union is combining with various other organizations this year for their annual meeting which will be held in Washington DC, and according to their website, it's shaping up to be their largest meeting yet with an estimated 2000 people in attendance. That's 2000 bird nerds! I'm pretty excited about the opportunity to get caught up on the current research of some of the best ornithologists in the country! I'm also applying to attend an advanced bird banding course with the Carnegie museum. That course will be an opportunity to get more hands on experience studying birds up close. Should be an exciting year coming up!

The Christmas Bird count schedule should be coming out soon. If you've never participated, or even if you have, we always need more help! Even if you're not that confident with your ID skills, the best way to get better is by practice and we can always use the company and another set of eyes! The counts are always a fun event for those who participate so please consider joining a count circle this year!

Happy Birding!

Keeli Marvel

Bird of the Month **Pileated Woodpecker**

Dryocopus pileatus
by Yvonne Carter

AH, THE EXCITEMENT OF SEEING YOUR FIRST UNUSUAL BIRD IN ANOTHER STATE!!!

About eight years ago as I was just starting to birdwatch, I was visiting one of our sons in Florida in January. Florida is a little different than other southern states because major companies have transferred part of their business to Florida. Thus, there are many areas with recent residential developments in amongst what could be called the 'old' or 'real South'. We have a favorite 'haunt' we visit with our grandkids, a local favorite spot. It is very 'Old South'. A combination of gas station, and a store with a long, wrap around porch, old wooden rockers, men coming in and out in bib overalls, and of course, boiled peanuts are available. My son had gone in to purchase milk and I sat outside with our three year old granddaughter. My peripheral vision sensed motion and I turned in that direction to see not ten feet from me a Pileated Woodpecker perched on the railing. I was so excited and surprised I let out a little scream that brought my son running out from the store, afraid something had happened to his little daughter.

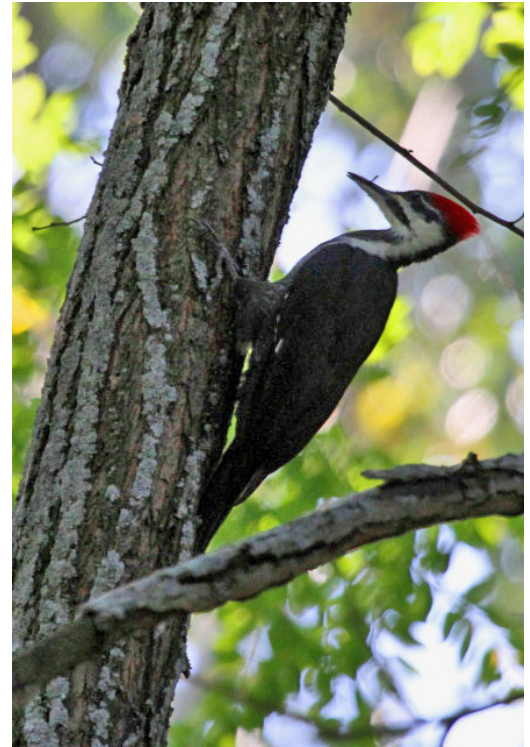


photo by Eric Peterson

A Pileated Woodpecker! You can see them once in a great while in Florida in winter months and during the summer in the northeast. Our youngest daughter lived in Renton, Virginia with small forests, ponds and wetlands behind her home. Visiting her one summer, I discovered a pileated woodpecker up in a tall tree. They are the largest North American woodpecker -- after the Ivory-billed, which is believed to be extinct. The Pileated Woodpecker lives in dense, mature forests. It is locally common in some areas and some claim that they sometimes stay in the same area all year. In breeding time, it excavates a cavity high off the ground up to 70 feet, in a dead tree trunk or branch, where it lays 3-5 eggs. These eggs are incubated by both parents for 2-3 weeks, and the young leave the nest 3-4 weeks after hatching. The male is a large, long-necked broad-winged woodpecker with a long tail -- length being approximately 16-17 inches. You cannot miss his prominent bright red crest. Its plumage is mostly black, with a red mustache, a white chin, and a white stripe running across the face and down the neck. In flight, you can see white under the wings and white flanks. The female is similar although the red crest is not as bright. The Pileated Woodpecker eats carpenter ants, which live in dead wood, and also other wood-boring insects, besides berries.

Another exciting specimen to see is the Painted Bunting. Do you want to know where you can see six or seven Painted Buntings at one time? I will tell you in a minute. David Sibley has used illustrations of a Painted Bunting on one of his books. And I can tell you they are for real. They are really truly blue, green, and red: Males have indigo-blue heads, bright green back, bright red underparts and rump and the females are lime green above, lemony-green below. They are elusive at times and stay in low foliage, nesting not far above the ground. The young start fending for themselves around 2 weeks after hatching. The Painted Bunting sings all year round, except when it molts in late summer. It forages on the ground, looking for insects, spiders and seeds. They are found in southern Texas and southern Florida although they do go up the coast in the Carolinas in summer.

Now, to see Painted Buntings during winter months in Florida, head for the Green Cay Wetlands and Nature Center. Exit I-95 at exit #51 and head west on Highway 806 for about 5-6 miles, turn right on Hagen Ranch Road, drive 2.2 miles and it will be on your right. At the Nature Center, they keep numerous feeders tucked back in the trees and that is where I have found those beautiful birds.

THERE IS NOTHING AS EXCITING AS SEEING THESE UNUSUAL BIRDS FOR THE FIRST TIME! A Birder never forgets that experience.

If you would like to write an article for the Bird of the Month, please contact Mabelle - mabelle13johnson@yahoo.com

Field Trip Report

The Big Sit, Provo Airport Dike - October 10th, 2015

by Keeli Marvel

We had 11 total participants that watched birds from the count circle between the hours of 6:30am and 6pm (with an hour lunch break). Thanks to everyone who came out and joined us!

Our species total was 50. This is neither our highest nor our lowest count, but somewhere in the middle.

The species we saw were:

- 1- Black-crowned Night Heron
- 2- Killdeer
- 3- Song Sparrow
- 4- Red-winged Blackbird
- 5- Sandhill Crane
- 6- Caspian Tern
- 7- Marsh Wren
- 8- White-crowned Sparrow
- 9- American Coot
- 10- Spotted Towhee
- 11- Ring-necked Pheasant
- 12- Snowy Egret
- 13- American White Pelican
- 14- Belted Kingfisher
- 15- Black-capped Chickadee
- 16- Northern Flicker
- 17- Pied-billed Grebe
- 18- Great Blue Heron
- 19- European Starling
- 20- Ring-billed Gull
- 21- Double-crested Cormorant
- 22- Western Grebe
- 23- Gadwall
- 24- American Pipit
- 25- California Gull
- 26- Northern Pintail
- 27- Northern Shoveler
- 28- Franklin's Gull
- 29- Downy Woodpecker
- 30- Clark's Grebe
- 31- Lesser Scaup
- 32- Canada Goose
- 33- House Finch
- 34- Barn Swallow
- 35- American Robin
- 36- Eurasian Collared-dove
- 37- American Kestrel
- 38- Black-billed Magpie
- 39- Mallard
- 40- Western Meadowlark
- 41- American Goldfinch
- 42- Northern Harrier
- 43- Cedar Waxwing
- 44- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- 45- Red-tailed Hawk
- 46- Osprey
- 47- Mountain Chickadee
- 48- Orange-crowned Warbler
- 49- Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- 50- Rock Dove (Pigeon)



The Big Sit, Provo Airport Dike
photo by Eric Huish



The Big Sit, Provo Airport Dike
photo by Alona Huffaker

Backyard Bird of the Month

October 2015

Jack Binch - Sandy

On 27 Oct. I had two **Mountain Chickadees** in the yard. Pretty rare for me.

Lyle Bingham - Payson

Mountain Chickadee -the first we identified at our feeder in five years.

Yvonne Carter - Highland

We still have **Western Scrub Jay's**, **Junco's**, **Chickadees**, at the feeders and I spied **Goldfinches** in the trees.

Jeff Cooper - Pleasant Grove

Tis the season for accipiters to visit yards with feeders. I didn't have any active feeders out, but I had a **Sharp-shinned Hawk** make a brief pass through the yard October 30th.

Suzi Holt - Payson

I had a **Cooper's Hawk** on October 1st. I have had several sharp-shinned hawks in my yard, but never a Cooper's Hawk. Although it didn't land in the yard, I did enjoy watching it fly over :)

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

Cedar Waxwings - a flock has hung out in the yard a few times this month.

Milt Moody - Provo

I was taken aback when a **Clark's Nutcracker** visited my birdbath in Provo -- it came two days in a row. The second day I took a picture so I could prove to myself that I wasn't just imagining things!



Clark's Nutcracker in Milt's yard.
photo by Milt Moody

Kay Stone - Lehi

We have had two or three **Scrub Jays** in our yard for about three years. I put peanuts on the windowsill every morning and try to imitate their call. They come in sometimes while I am still putting the peanuts out and then bury them in my or my neighbor's backyard. They will later come and dig them up and eat them. If I am late putting the peanuts out they will be waiting on my rain gutter waiting for me to supply the food. They will bob their heads up and down and click their bills together very rapidly waiting for their food. I guess I have made them welfare birds, but they are really fun. - p.s. My neighbor Jim Strong also feeds the same birds

Alton Thygerson - Provo

Spotted Towhee - not a frequent visitor but should be as the winter approaches.

Report your favorite backyard bird each month to Eric Huish at 801-360-8777 or erichuish@gmail.com

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.

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.