

Utah County Birders Newsletter

January 2016



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JANUARY MEETING:

Thursday, January 14th, 2016 - 7:00 pm.

Dinner at Golden Corral on University Parkway in Orem. Pay on your own when you arrive. We will have tables in one of the back rooms reserved for our group. Come join us for dinner and for the 2016 UCB birding challenge big reveal!

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday, January 9th, 2016: 8:30am-early afternoon. Meet in the Provo East Bay Sam's club parking lot and dress warmly for the weather. We will bird the **south end of Utah County** including East Bay, Spanish Fork, and Salem Pond.

Utah County Birders Captain's Log: January 2016

by Keeli Marvel

Well it's happened again. Another year has passed. I hope yours was full of good things, good people, and good birds! I think mine was.

I spent New Year's Day recovering from a night of revelry and putting in a little bit of time counting birds in my own neighborhood for the Jordan River Christmas Bird Count. It was a good way to start the new year, and one I hope to continue in the future! My sister and I tromped around our neighborhood and the lakeshore, trying to keep our toes warm, and picked up a Ruddy Duck, a pair of killdeer, a Greater Yellowlegs, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, a couple of Kestrels, a smattering of Northern Harriers, lots of Sparrows and American Coots, and a late-in-the-day Barn Owl. At my feeders yesterday, I got my FOY Dark-eyed Juncos, a White-crowned Sparrow, and an American Goldfinch. Definitely not a bad start to the New Year! Today I participated in my 3rd Christmas Bird Count for the year and picked up a few more species.

I set a goal last year to hit 500 species on my life list. I picked up 53 new life birds in 2015. Looking back over my list, I decided my favorites were either the Long-tailed Tit and Northern Lapwings at the London Wetland Centre, or the Groove-billed Ani at the Mitchell Lake Audubon center outside San Antonio. Well, life and stuff got in the way and My life list stalled out at 584 species, but I'm redoubling my efforts this year and shooting for 600. Here's to New Year's resolutions!

In a couple of weeks we will meet for our annual winter dinner and we will reveal the birding challenge for 2016. I hope you can all join us, and I hope the best of everything for you all in the new year to come!

Happy Birding! Keeli Marvel

Bird of the Month

Northern Pygmy Owl

Glaucidium gnoma
by Suzi Holt

On December 24th I decided to go with my cousin Steve and my Aunt Geniel and daughter Jessie to look for the Eurasian Wigeon in East Bay. I thought I would go in hopes that we would have time to go up South Fork to look for the Pygmy Owl Steve had seen a month or so ago. Well we found the Wigeon quickly, so we headed for South Fork. Steve said. "This is the day!" The Pygmy Owl has been my nemesis!

We got to the location and It was around 20 degrees but the wind chill made it feel so much colder. We tried for about a half hour in this freezing cold until we decided we needed to head home for Christmas Eve activities. On the way down the canyon Steve spotted a bird in a tree. He said maybe a Kestrel. Well we pulled up alongside the tree and I looked up and said, "no too small for a kestrel" then at the same time we both said, "It's a Pygmy Owl!!!" I had to try hard to contain my excitement. If you have been birding with me, you know how excited I get over birds. I love birds! WOW! Merry Christmas to me! The best present ever! Jessie was with me and had been asking what I wanted for Christmas? Well we got it!



photo by Suzi Holt

After getting some awesome photos, we decided it was time to go, Jess looked over by the river and saw a little sparrow, it was a song sparrow. Well the next day Keeli went up to locate the owl and it was having sparrow for lunch. Bye bye song sparrow.

The Northern Pygmy Owl according to Sibley's second Edition:

"A very small owl active in daylight, with relatively long tail that is often jerked sideways when perched. Note bold streaks on underparts, false eye spots on nape, and dark head with short white eyebrow"

These small owls like to hang out in Oak trees and Conifers with a clearing and patches for brush, perching on small branches to hunt for small birds. The Pygmy Owl is solitary.

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

Backyard Bird of the Month

December 2015

Jack Binch - Sandy

I had fifteen **Yellow-rumped Warblers** at home in December. Still here, but right now I am watching four male Flickers trying to get the attention of one female. (1/1/2016)

Yvonne Carter - Highland

We have had the usual Juncos, Western Scrub Jays, House Finches, Chickadees, but one or two **Great Horned Owls** have come into the yard in pre-dawn hours hooting away occasionally.

Harold Clayson - Salem

Brown Creeper! How focused is a birder when as soon as he sees a great bird he can't wait for Eric's BBotM email?

Jeff Cooper - Pleasant Grove

The **Dark-eyed Juncos** began making their regular appearances. It's time to start looking for a rare one among those coming to the feeders.

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

Merlin - a Taiga Merlin tore through the yard like a bullet a couple of times.

Milt Moody - Provo

On the Provo Christmas Bird Count we got one of the best birds of the day in my own yard -- a **Brown Creeper** which was hanging out with three Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Leila Ogden - Orem

A **Red-breasted Nuthatch** came to my feeders several days. But I haven't seen it lately. I wish it would come back.

Dennis Shirley - Elk Ridge

Best yard bird in Dec was a **Brown Creeper**. He was around for a few days.

Alton Thygerson - Provo

Spotted Towhee - A daily visitor. December was the "same-o-same-o" birds.

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



Yellow-rumped Warblers in Jack's yard.
photo by Jack Binch

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.