

Utah County Birders Newsletter

September 2017

Contents

[September Meeting](#)
[Upcoming Field Trips](#)
[Captain's Log](#)
[Bird of the Month](#)
[Field Trip Report](#)



SEPTEMBER MEETING

Thursday, September 14th, 2017: Bean Museum, 7:00PM

Our meeting will be a focus on migration. In preparation for our upcoming hawkwatch field trip we will talk about migration and focus on some of the species that we may see during migration.

Address for the Monte L. Bean Museum is 645 East 1430 North, Provo, UT

<http://mlbean.byu.edu/>

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday, September 16th, 2017: Squaw Peak Hawkwatch

Migration Hawk Watch with Hawkwatch and GSLA starting at 10am at the Squaw Peak lookout (accessed from Provo Canyon). Here are the event details with a map:

<https://hawkwatch.org/participate/calendar/migration-sites/350-hawkwatching-at-squaw-peak>

If you're planning on going, PLEASE REGISTER for the trip on the event page (it's free) so that we have contact information for everyone planning to attend should we have to cancel or change plans due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

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 Keeli at - keeli.marvel@gmail.com

Utah County Birders Captain's Log: September 2017

by Keeli Marvel

Hello friends! I was hoping to have an awesome story to tell you about new birds seen on my most recent trip to Glacier National Park, but sadly, I got totally skunked! It's been awhile since I've bombed on every single one of my target birds. I blame the abnormally warm August weather and the wildfires currently ravaging Montana, but also, bad luck sometimes just happens, right? Right? Maybe it's just me. Hah! I guess I'll tell you what I was hoping to find but didn't. My husband and I spent two days in Glacier NP. The first day we spent on one of the famous Red Bus Tours. One of our old UCB members, Doug Mead, has been driving the tours the last couple of summers in the park.

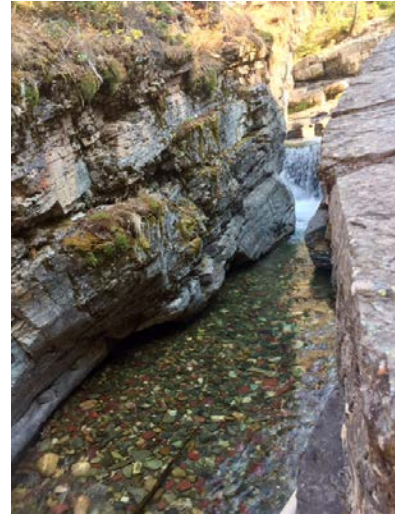


Keeli with Doug Mead in Glacier National Park

Our tour was the Mountain Majesty tour which drove up the Going to the Sun Road from the Apgar Lodge with our turn around point at Two Dog Flats Grill on the other side by Lake Mary. This was hands down the best tour I've ever been on in a National Park, and Doug has a gift for storytelling! It was so great to see him and, while we didn't see much in the way of birds on our tour, we did see Mountain Goats and Bighorn Sheep and a bear and the most amazing scenery with a fascinating narrative from Doug describing the geology and history and biology of the park. Doug gave me pointers for birding the next day, so the next morning I headed back into the park from the East side. My first stop was at the overlook for Goose Island on Lake Mary on the East side of Glacier NP. There I saw Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Mountain and Black-capped Chickadees and House Finches. From there, I drove up Going to the Sun Road to the burned area around Sunrft Gorge where I hiked a short way up the trail looking for Black-backed Woodpeckers. No luck. Dead quiet actually, but the gorge itself is beautiful.



Remnants of the 2015 burn near Sunrift Gorge



Sunrift Gorge

Then, I headed up to Piegan Pass for a short hike into the high altitude scraggly conifers to look for Boreal Chickadees. I found a Steller's Jay, some White-crowned Sparrows and one very skulky warbler that was either a Nashville or a MacGillivrays. But, no Boreal Chickadees. Lots of quiet. I pulled off at most of the turnouts on the way back to listen for birds, but it really was strangely quiet. I guess that's the way it is sometimes with birding in August.



Piegan Pass

I just heard actually that they closed the Lake McDonald lodge in the park and shut down the tours right after we left because of the fire, which is unfortunate! I guess we got lucky that we

got to see what we did. Even with the heat and the smoke from the fires, the views were unforgettable. I highly recommend a visit to Glacier, and taking Doug's tour if he's back there again next year!!

In other news, I'm writing this before jetting down to St. George for a quick overnight stay. I'll report back if I see anything interesting in the way of birds down there. Migration has started! Keep your eyes to the skies and Happy Birding!

Bird of the Month

Northern Goshawk

Accipiter gentilis

By Mabelle Johnson

It seems to me that there have been more sightings of Northern Goshawks this year than in recent years, or maybe it's because more and more people are using eBird.

Unfortunately I haven't been one of the lucky ones.



Photo by Jerry Liguori, taken in the Goshute Mountains, Tooele County, UT 1999

This beautiful accipiter is one that I would really like to see and watch. There's something about the blue-gray coloring, the broad eye stripe, the red eye, and the overall bad-boy look to this bird that makes it intriguing to me. It is the size of a Red-tailed Hawk with a smallish head, a long neck, a long tubular body, and a long broad tail. Overall gray – darker gray above, pale gray below with dense barring on the breast. It is considered an 'uncommon but widespread' raptor of northern and higher-altitude forests, and a permanent resident in most of Utah.

They are stealthy predators that watch for prey from a perch and then attack with quick, agile flight, even through dense trees or cluttered understory. Pete Dunne says "this perch-hunting raptor has little patience. Hunts by alternating short flights and periods of perch-hunting that commonly do not last longer than 10-15 mins. Generally hunts low, taking perches in the understory level. Using surprise, Goshawk may glide to a kill, but accelerates quickly if detected, often crashing through brush in the process. If unsuccessful, pursues prey tenaciously both in the air and not uncommonly on foot." Wow, wouldn't that be something to watch! (One time I saw a

Sharpie take a Robin in the air, it took it right to the ground, in the snow, and sat on it for a second, then it took off with it. Amazing!)

We are so lucky to live in Utah and have such a wonderful variety of habitats and birds! It is truly awesome to me to think that I can drive up to the mountains in the morning and out to the lake in the afternoon and evening, and see so many different and amazing birds and wildlife. Facebook and eBird have changed the birding game by getting information out quickly when rare and exciting birds are spotted. I don't know about you but I am often 'skunked' when I 'chase' something that's been reported, but in reality, a bad day birding is better than a good day at work any day right!!

References: Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion, allaboutbirds.org

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

Field Trip Report

No official reports from the August field trips.
