



Utah County Birders:

June 2018 Newsletter

UCB Captain's Log, June 2018:

by Keeli Marvel

Hi guys! It's been an eventful month for birders in Utah. Lots of movement the last few weeks has produced some cool migrants. The Great Salt Lake Bird Festival just had another successful weekend of field trips, workshops, and banquet. I saw a few of you out on trips that I led this year and I think we had some good trips. The best bird of either of the trips I led was probably the Black Phoebe we found in the pond at the Diamond Fork turnoff. Last I heard that bird was still hanging around if you haven't had a chance to go see it.

Sam and I just got back from spending three fantastic days banding birds at the University of Utah's Rio Mesa banding site about an hour outside Moab. Rio Mesa is the U of U's version of Lytle, and it was every bit as awesome. The mist nets are set up along the Dolores River corridor and during peak can pick up some really fantastic migrant species that use the river corridor to refuel along their migratory journey. We visited right at the tail end of migration just as everything is starting to settle down and nest, but we still got to see and help band some pretty cool species such as **Blue Grosbeak**, **McGillivray's Warbler**, and **Lucy's Warbler**. I really think the birds made a major migratory push overnight the second night we were there as the first morning several species of birds were singing during the dawn chorus, and by the next morning and the one after, that had changed drastically.

We did have one consistent singer the entire time (day and night) we were at Rio Mesa – a **Northern Mockingbird** with quite the impressive repertoire. I started keeping track of all of the species he was mimicking and came up with the following list: **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Say's Phoebe**, **Northern Flicker**, **Western Kingbird**, **Rock Wren**, **Juniper Titmouse**, **Cedar Waxwing**, **Plumbeous Vireo**,



By Keeli Marvel

Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, Bullock's Oriole, Broad-tailed hummer (male flight noise), and various gull and shorebird alarm noises. He was so good; in fact, some of the local vireos and kingbirds seemed quite put out he kept singing their songs.

Banding occurs between sunrise and 6 hours after sunrise so we had some free time in the afternoons to do a little exploring and birding around the area. We headed out to Castle Valley one afternoon on our trip, drove up toward the La Sal Mountain loop into the Ponderosa forest, and hiked out to an amazing viewpoint that looked down over Castle Valley. On that hike we picked up a breeding pair of **Western Bluebirds, Hammond's and Olive-sided Flycatchers, Pygmy Nuthatches**, and a few other species, which wasn't bad at all considering it was the middle of the afternoon. On our drive back down I pulled the car over to take a picture of the valley and it happened to be right next to a flock of Bushtits. If you are ever in the Moab area, and you have some time to kill, I highly recommend driving up along the Colorado River, up into Castle Valley, and into the La Sals. You won't be disappointed, that's for sure.

That's all I've got for now. Hope you are all having a wonderful spring migration, and as always, Happy Birding!
Keeli Marvel

APRIL MEETING:

Thursday, June 14, 2018, 9pm: Owling Nebo Scenic Loop

Meet at the Payson Canyon Kiwanis Park at 9 pm. Hoping for Common Poorwill, Flammulated, Northern Saw-whet and Western Screech Owls!

Payson Canyon Kiwanis Park
S Payson Canyon Rd, Payson, UT 84651
<https://goo.gl/maps/c6AN4tiMMUx>

Field Trips:

Friday & Saturday, June 1-2 - 6:00 am
WASHINGTON COUNTY

We will be doing a Washington county trip. Put it on your schedule for June 1st and 2nd. You will need your own accommodations.

We will meet at the McDonald's on Bluff Street Friday morning June 1st at 6:00 am to head out to Lytle Ranch. Bring a lunch and snacks. On the way back we will stop by Utah Hill to look for the Black-chinned Sparrow, then look for a Bell's Vireo and Common Blackhawk along the Santa Clara River. Saturday, we have a big day planned for visiting Confluence Park, Dalton Wash, Brooke's Nature Park, Spring Estates Park, Boots/Cox Park....We will meet at 7 am at the Wal-Mart in Hurricane in the SW corner of the parking lot. It is located east of the Sand Hollow turn off, along Hwy 9, 180 N 3400 W Hurricane)

Bird of the Month:

The Frogmouth Hop

Tawny Frogmouth (*Podargus strigoides*)

by Jesse Lee

Our family recently had the opportunity to do a little bit of birding in Australia, and the species at the top of our list was the Tawny Frogmouth. Though common, frogmouths are known to be masters of disguise, and are notorious for being difficult to locate, even when you know exactly where to find one.

With a little research, along with help from a newly found friend (a local volunteer I connected with on birdingpal.org), I was overly optimistic concerning our chances.

Our birding pal kindly informed us that there were a pair of frogmouths that live in Centennial Park near the central business district in downtown Sydney. The park is made up of nearly 500 acres of beautiful gardens, ponds, and groves; a birding hotspot filled with cockatoos, splendid fairywrens, and hopefully, tawny frogmouths.

She even went as far as providing us with a map with an annotation marking the exact stand of trees where they were likely to be found. With this information, locating the frogmouth, I thought, should be easy peasy.

The Tawny Frogmouth rocketed to the top of my target list of Australia after I learned about their cryptic plumage and deadpan mimicry. During the day, the nightjar like birds will perch unflinchingly, blending in with nearby tree bark which makes them nearly invisible, even in broad daylight. The frogmouth will sit with its head thrust upwards at an acute angle using its very large, broad beak to lead the viewer to believe that they are merely looking at an old broken tree branch.



by Kaisa Lee

Thanks to our detailed map, I knew exactly where the birds should be found. However, locating a frogmouth turned out to be a bigger challenge than we had expected. No matter how hard our intrepid army of birders (my wife and 3 boys) looked, we could not track one down. Feeling

desperate, knowing that this was our last day in Australia, I decided to phone a friend. Our birding pal came to the rescue, and relayed that she was only a few minutes away from the park and would be happy to join the search party (even though she had spent the entire previous day with us).

Upon arrival, she shared that it can be helpful to peruse through the trees at different angles. We traversed slightly to the right, and then to the left, then, suddenly there it was in frogmouth fashion, perched motionless with its beak pointed in the air, perfectly blended in with its surroundings.

Sometimes all it takes is some advice from a good friend, and a slight change in perspective.

Apart from the ever-present threat of snakes, birds of prey, and nest thieving rodents, frogmouths are facing new challenges from human activity and pets. Many are killed on rural roads, while attempting to feed on insects illuminated by car headlights. They also often fall victim to house cats, due to their lackadaisical return to perch after catching a meal. Insecticides and rodent poisons are also taking a toll on frogmouths when the birds feed on tainted prey.

Tawny Frogmouths are often mistaken for owls due to their mottled patterns, large heads, and forward-facing eyes. However, owls have strong legs and powerful talons which they use to capture their prey. Frogmouths, in comparison, have weak feet, and prefer to catch prey with their wide, forward facing beaks, typically pouncing from trees or elevated perches to the ground. Frogmouths feed mainly on nocturnal insects like moths, spiders and worms along with an occasional rodent or frog when the opportunity arises. Occasionally, they will catch moths or other insects in flight.

If you just happen to find yourself in the land down under, I would recommend meeting up with a local friend in a nearby park to do the frogmouth hop. Find a stand of eucalyptus trees, take two steps to the left, followed by three steps to the right, and you may get lucky enough to spot a masquerading phantom frogmouth down by the Sydney Opera House.

Sources:

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>

<https://www.bushheritage.org.au>

<https://www.wikipedia.org/>

Field Trip Reports:

Spanish Fork River Trail / Payson Hollow Park - 5 May 2018

by Lyle Bingham

We started out at the park on top and it was WINDY and cold. So we went down to the bottom to the sports park, where I knew it wouldn't be as windy. We had a good walk to the first footbridge upstream from highway 198.

Birds seen: Mallard, California Quail, Ring-necked Pheasant, **Cooper's Hawk**, Red-tailed Hawk, Killdeer, gull sp., Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove (5), **Lewis's Woodpecker**, Downy Woodpecker (3), **Say's Phoebe**, Black-billed Magpie, Barn Swallow, Black-capped Chickadee, **House Wren** (3), American Robin, **Cedar Waxwing**, Yellow Warbler (4), Song Sparrow, **Brown-headed Cowbird**, Lesser Goldfinch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow

[View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45309149>]

Then we walked back, drove up to the trail crossing at 1100 East and walked for 3/4 mile. Good birds there too.

Birds seen: Mallard, **House Wren**, American Robin, European Starling, Yellow-rumped Warbler, **Chipping Sparrow**, **Brown-headed Cowbird**, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow (some saw a White-crowned Sparrow and a Black-headed Grosbeak)

[View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45310112>]

Last we drove to Payson Hollow Park and walked the concrete trails without much more than a hummingbird (sp) in silhouette.

When we walked south to the highline canal, we took the wild side and found birds.

Birds seen: Ring-necked Pheasant, **Cooper's Hawk**, Red-tailed Hawk, hummingbird sp. (probably black chinned), Black-capped Chickadee, Song Sparrow, **Spotted Towhee**, **Lazuli Bunting** [View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45310654>]

Everyone came over to the house to see Lazuli buntings, which were shy until they left. Some had seen them when we were walking the wild side :) Shortly thereafter we had 7 at the feeder.

Birds seen: Spotted Towhee, **Lazuli Bunting** (5), House Finch, House Sparrow [View this checklist online at <https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S45312615>]

Cliff and I went to the cemetery afterwards and saw a barn owl.

Thank you all for attending. [There were 19 birders in the group]
Lyle

Utah County Hotspots Field Trip – 14 May 2018 by Suzi Holt

Twenty-two Birders met early morning at 7. By Santaquin we had lost two to a flat tire :(

We started our trip at Warm Springs WMA with a BLUE GROSBEAK, Target bird -1!!!!
We also got a VIRGINIA RAIL, Bullock's Orioles and heard lots of Yellow-breasted Chats and a Common Yellowthroat singing.

Our next stop was the Goshen Ocean and it did not disappoint! There were Black-necked Stilts, Avocets, Long-billed Curlews, Wilson's Phalarope, Gadwall and Mallards.

Then we checked out the fields to the North spotting a SHORT-EARED OWL!!! Not everyone saw it :(but quite a few did as it flew into the sage.

Goshen Cemetery Target bird - 2! NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD!

Goshen Canyon we got great looks at 7 YELLOW-BREASTED CHATS Target bird -3! We also got the Canyon Wren, Rock Wren, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Belted Kingfisher, Golden Eagle, 3 Great Blue Herons and Target bird -4 LAZULI BUNTING!

We worked our way towards Elberta Slant Road for a BURROWING OWL Target bird -5, GRAY VIREO Target bird -6! We also saw Spotted Towhee, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Lark Sparrows and a Yellow-rumped Warbler.

At the pitstop in Eureka we spotted a Mountain Bluebird and Cassin's Finches and met Mayor Carlton, a really great guy.

My favorite birding is in the East Tintic Mountains/Dividend Road. First stop BREWER'S SPARROW Target bird -7, Green-tailed Towhee Target bird -8, WARBLING VIREO Target bird -9, next corner surprise PLUMBEOUS VIREO, Black chinned Hummingbird, a cute little BUSHTIT, Chipping Sparrow, Turkey Vultures. Target bird -10, -11 and -12 were GRAY, DUSKY and CORDILLERAN Flycatchers!

Next stop VIRGINIA'S WARBLER Target Bird -13. On the corner we heard a Juniper Titmouse Target bird -14. A surprise NORTHERN PYGMY OWL responded to the Titmouse call and about 10 of us heard it clearly! Down the road we got a couple a Red-breasted Nuthatch and BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLERS, Target bird -15!. Yeehaw!!! We were almost back to the main road where, by some Cottonwood trees, we saw Western Tanager, Western Wood Pewee, Yellow Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeaks and a Bewick's Wren!

At that point we were at 95 Species we had to get to 100, so we decided to stop at Goshen Reservoir. We found a Spotted Sandpiper and Yellow-headed Blackbirds. At Secret Pond we got a BLUE-WINGED TEAL and Sand Hill Cranes. On Goshen Bay road we saw Great-horned Owl, Horned Larks and a SAVANNAH SPARROW. We didn't want to quit so we went to Lincoln Beach. On the way we got Osprey, Tree Swallows, Caspian Tern and Eastern Kingbird. At Lincoln Beach there were Long-billed Dowitchers, RED-NECKED PHALAROPE, Least Sandpiper, Coots and a Ring-billed Gull. 109 Species!!!!



Red-necked Phalarope
by Suzi Holt

Amanda, Mom and I finished the night with a White-breasted Nuthatch, California Quail ending at 111 Species! What a BIG DAY!!!