



Utah County Birders:

September 2019 Newsletter

UCB Captain's Log, September 2019

by Keeli Marvel

Greetings birders! Fall migration is here! I haven't had time to bird much in the last month but when Bryant posted this last week that there was a **Wandering Tattler** on the Antelope Is Causeway, as soon as I had the chance to go see it, I did! It was possibly one of the easiest lifers (bird number 595) and state list lifer species I will ever get.

If you haven't gotten a chance to go see it, it's been really reliable and it's easy to pick out from the Willets, Gulls, and Phalaropes as it is smaller than the Willets, very gray, and has bright yellow legs that make it stand out pretty noticeably.

EBird lists records of a Wandering Tattler showing up in Utah in 2001 and 2005, although I heard that this year's bird is actually the 4th state record. The Tattler is a coastal bird, regularly showing up along the Pacific coast from Alaska down to Baja California, Hawaii, and has been reported along the Pacific coast of Australia. It's quite a bit lost out here in Utah, but of all the places to be lost, the causeway with its' over abundance of brine flies right isn't a bad place to get lost.

I read an interesting article recently about why birds get lost and end up in weird places. There's two reasons: 1- Storms blow them off course 2- Their navigation malfunctions (think GPS rerouting...). Either way, occasionally birders benefit from vagrant birds showing up in the wrong places and we get unusual lifers. Hopefully this one sticks around long enough for everyone who wants to, to see it!

Hope you enjoy migration!

Happy Birding!

Keeli Marvel



by Keeli Marvel

AUGUST MEETING:

Thursday, Sep 12, 2019, 6 PM, River Lane and Lincoln Beach.
Meet at the Springville Walmart, northeast corner of the parking lot.

FIELD TRIPS:

Nebo Bench Field Trip

Saturday, September 14th, from 7-11:00 am
Meet at Payson Canyon Kiwanis Park in Payson Canyon

Antelope Island - TBA. (We can see the Wandering Tattler if it sticks around).

Pinyon Jay *(Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus)*

by Alona Huffaker

According to a Field Guide of the Birds of Utah {2004} there are six species of Jays in Utah. One of these is the Pinyon Jay.

On August 16, Kathleen Blanchard and I headed up Dairy Fork to do a little birding. (Dairy Fork is south off of Highway 6 in Spanish Fork Canyon, just past the Sheep Creek turnoff). WOW, what a mess it had been the week or so before with lots of rain, there had been flooded roads with resulting piles of deadwood washed down both canyons.

Birding was slow. We only saw 16 species of birds in the five mile ride. On the way up we did see a Clark's Nutcracker! On the way back down we stopped because we could hear a loud ruckus made by a number of birds off to the east. We could see lots of birds noisily moving around through the junipers and other brush in the distance. We thought maybe they were Magpies, from the noise, but we could see they were not black and white, WAIT! The Merlin app confirmed that they were Pinyon Jays! What a find! There were probably 30 to 40 of them squawking and moving around.



Pinyon Jay
by Cliff Miles

Pinyon Jays are bluish-grey , noisy birds about ten and a half inches long that live in areas where there are Juniper bushes and Pinyon Pines. They eat the seeds of the pines, as well as insects and fruits. They live in flocks. A good place to see them used to be on the road that went south from Goshen, but I haven't seen them there in a long time. Another area is out beyond Elberta on the Elberta Slant Road. To me it seems that it's always a gamble whether you'll see them or not.

Last fall when the wild fires were burning in the south part of the county, I heard and saw a small flock of noisy birds flying east of my yard in Springville, (noisy, flock, right size). I'm pretty sure they were Pinyon Jays displaced by the fires. So, a new bird for my yard list! (I count birds seen in or from my yard.)

These birds are always fun to hear and see.

Mirror Lake Highway Field Trip - 23 Aug 2019

Report and Photos by Suzi Holt

Wow what a trip! We had 6 birders show up at bright eyed at 6:30 am. We got to the Mirror lake hwy around 7:30 am. We passed a few **Black-billed Magpies** on our way to our first stop.

Stop 1 was Soapstone Basin: The first thing we saw was a fly by welcome from a **Belted Kingfisher**. We saw **Mountain Chickadees, Cedar Waxwings, Song Sparrows, Downy Woodpecker, Western Wood Pewees, a Mallard** and a **House Wren**. We also ate a few wild raspberries...YUM!

Stop 2 Bald Mountain Pass and Hayden peak lookout: I love this place! We saw **Cassin's Finches, Pine Siskins, White-crowned Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. Then Amanda heard drumming. Sometimes you just have to stop and listen. Then flew in the culprit a **American Three-toed Woodpecker**. We had two birders get a lifer! We got great looks and then we heard a **Hairy Woodpecker** and saw a **Wilson's Warbler**, another great bird!



Stop 3 Mirror Lake: We headed straight to the horse camp ground. I don't remember which campsite but we quickly found two **Canada Jays** in the same spot as last year!!! Kristen also pointed out a animal on a log. We got pretty excited when we realized it was a **Pine Marten**!!! A lifer for most of us!. We saw a few more **White-crowned Sparrows** and **Dark-eyed Juncos** and a **Robin**.

Stop 4 Butterfly Lake: While searching the boulders along the highway where Jim and Kay had previously found a Pika, we found no just one but 3 **Pika**!!!! Another lifer for 3 of us! What cute little guys! We also had 3 **Clark's Nutcrackers** fly over!!! 3 was the lucky number for sure!

Stop 5 Trial Lake: We didn't see anything new but we got excited watching a flock of **Mountain Chickadees, Ruby-crowned Kinglets** and **Cassin's Finches**. We also saw another **Canada Jay**.

On the way out we saw **Turkey Vultures** and **Brewer's Blackbirds**.

A beautiful day! Lots a good birds. Some great animals and a great time!

