

# Utah County Birders Newsletter

May 2015



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## MAY MEETING:

**Thursday, May 14th, 2015** - 7:00 pm

**Keeli Marvel** will give a presentation on **birding in England and the Netherlands**.

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

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## FIELD TRIPS:

**Saturday, May 9th, 2015.** Bird walk - 8am-11am. **Skipper Bay and Provo River Trails.** Led by Keeli Marvel. Meet at Skipper Bay trail. <http://www.utahbirds.org/counties/utahco/SkipperBayTrail.htm>

- Possible Lytle Trip **May 29th-31st or June 5th-7th.** Looking for anyone who has a higher clearance vehicle and would be willing to drive. Email Keeli if interested/willing to drive.

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](mailto:bt_shirley@hotmail.com)

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## Utah County Birders Captain's Log: May 2015

by Keeli Marvel

Sorry for the short message but I am currently writing this from a small, rainy, coastal town in Cornwall, England. The Blackbirds are singing outside just like our robins at home, and the Carrion Crows are calling from the trees next door. Hope you all are enjoying the spring birding! I'll report back on my trip at this month's meeting. Happy Birding and Happy May Day to you all!

Keeli

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## Bird of the Month

### Barred Owl

*Strix varia*

by Machel Johnson

The Barred Owl has been on my must-see and must-hear list for a long time. I was finally able to see and hear one on a recent trip to Florida with my friend Sheryl. We planned this trip last September and went in early April. Wow, so many birds! It was an awesome trip! We had been watching a couple of Face Book pages and getting ideas of where we wanted to go, and after our first day in the Tampa area, we saw a post of a place called Lettuce Lake that was only 5 miles North of our hotel. The post was about Barred owlets that were close to fledging. We went to Lettuce Lake the next day and were able to find the place where the owlets were. There was already a couple there and they were able to point out one owlet. They hadn't been able to spot the second one, or an adult. If they hadn't been there to show us the owlet I doubt we would have seen it. It was very still and looked like a clump of Spanish moss. (See photo 1) After a time of looking unsuccessfully for the second owlet we went on birding around the lake. Later on we saw the couple that had first pointed it out to us and they said the second owlet had been found, so we went back and were able to see it as well. It was larger and not as downy. (See photo 2). We really wanted to see an adult and it was getting to be late afternoon, so we decided to go to the hotel to rest up a bit. We went back to the lake around 6pm. As we were walking to the trail we heard some hooting, it didn't really sound like a Barred owl, but it could have been, we weren't quite sure, but we were hopeful. We got to the owl spot and saw both owlets in basically the same place as before. This time the older owlet was hissing. We looked in the direction it seemed to be hissing and spotted the adult. (See photo 3) Wow, that was so awesome! A Barred Owl family, just sitting there looking at us! How cool is that! Sheryl was able to get these great photos. (We were able to really hear a Barred Owl hoot when we went to the Orlando Wetlands.)

I enjoy Pete Dunne's description of the Barred Owl. First of all, he calls it the 'Maniacal Forest Owl', because in addition to the classic two-part series: "Who cooks for you; who cooks for YOU All?", "the birds also (and commonly) emit a varied and maniacal cacophony of barks, laughs, cackles, and hooted guffaws. Such recitals often engage multiple pairs." Go to this Cornell site to listen to the various sounds:

[http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/barred\\_owl/sounds](http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/barred_owl/sounds)

Dunne describes it as "A big, imposing, barrel-shaped, somber-eyed owl that looks like it's wearing a shabby stain-streaked coat with a closed fur collar. In flight it looks like a greyish brown barrel with broad blunt wings. Flight is quick and surprisingly nimble, with birds commonly maneuvering around brush."

They are common and widespread residents of mature forest, found across the entire Eastern US and Canada, as well as the Pacific North West. They prefer mature deciduous and mixed deciduous-coniferous forests. Most partial to extensive closed canopy and mature or old-growth forest near water. They like big trees and sturdy limbs beneath a shadowy canopy. They usually perch high in trees close to the trunk.



**Barred Owlet (first downy owlet)**

photo by Sheryl Serrano



**Barred Owlet (second, larger owlet)**

photo by Sheryl Serrano



**Barred Owl (adult)**

photo by Sheryl Serrano

They hunt primarily from perches that may be at times less than 10 ft. from the forest floor. A great variety of animals is taken, among them mice and voles and other mammals, birds up to the size of a Ruffed Grouse, amphibians (which may be hunted on foot) and reptiles, and numerous invertebrates, including crayfish, which, along with fish, may be caught by wading in shallow water. The bird is also fond of bathing.

Owls continue to fascinate me and I hope to see and hear more in the future!

References

- Pete Dunne’s Essential Field Guide Companion
- Field Guide to Owls of California and the West, Hans Peeters
- Cornell All About Birds website
- Photos by Sheryl Serrano

If you would like to write an article for the Bird of the Month, please contact Mabelle - [mabelle13johnson@yahoo.com](mailto:mabelle13johnson@yahoo.com)

**Field Trip Report**

**South Utah County Hotspots - April 18, 2015**

by Keeli Marvel

It was a beautiful morning for a birding trip today. We spent the morning birding Lincoln Beach, Benjamin Slough, and Sandy Beach at River Lane today. Highlights were Snowy Plover, Willet, Marbled Godwit, American Avocet, Least Sandpipers, and Black-necked Stilts at Lincoln Beach, Wilson's Snipe and Virginia Rail in the marshy fields south of Lincoln Beach, an Osprey, Semi-palmated Plover, Willet, American Avocet, Black-necked Stilts, Franklin's and Bonaparte's Gulls, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and a very confiding Lincoln's Sparrow at Sandy Beach at the end of River Lane. The water was dismally low at Benhamin Slough.

Thanks to all who joined us! It was nice to get some FOY birds and to see some I don't get to see all the time. Complete checklists for each site are below.

Happy Birding!

Keeli

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<p><b>Lincoln Beach</b> 30 species</p> <p>Canada Goose 3 Cinnamon Teal 2 Northern Shoveler 7 Green-winged Teal 1 Ring-necked Pheasant 1 Virginia Rail 1 Heard only in marsh south of Lincoln beach Sandhill Crane 1 Black-necked Stilt 4 American Avocet 6 Snowy Plover 8 Killdeer 3 Willet 3 Marbled Godwit 1 Least Sandpiper 12 Wilson's Snipe 3 Seen in marsh south of Lincoln beach. 2 seen, 1 heard only California Gull 1 Prairie Falcon 1 Say's Phoebe 1</p>	<p>Black-billed Magpie 2 Tree Swallow 20 Violet-green Swallow 1 Bank Swallow 10 Barn Swallow 5 Rock Wren 1 Heard only Marsh Wren 3 American Robin 1 Song Sparrow 2 Red-winged Blackbird 5 Western Meadowlark 2 Yellow-headed Blackbird 4 ----- <b>Benjamin Slough</b> 19 species</p> <p>Canada Goose 10 Gadwall 4 American Wigeon 2 Mallard 4 Cinnamon Teal 6 Northern Shoveler 12 Green-winged Teal 10 Swainson's Hawk 1</p>	<p>American Coot 1 Sandhill Crane 1 Black-necked Stilt 50 American Avocet 10 Killdeer 4 Say's Phoebe 1 Black-billed Magpie 2 European Starling 2 Red-winged Blackbird 2 Western Meadowlark 1 Yellow-headed Blackbird 3 ----- <b>River Lane -- Sandy Beach</b> The beach end of River Lane 27 species</p> <p>Cinnamon Teal 4 California Quail 3 Ring-necked Pheasant 1 Heard only Osprey 1 American Coot 6 Sandhill Crane 2 Heard only Black-necked Stilt 2</p>	<p>American Avocet 5 Semipalmated Plover 3 Confirmed with scope by several members of the group Killdeer 6 Willet 6 Marbled Godwit 2 Bonaparte's Gull 2 Franklin's Gull 2 California Gull 1 Downy Woodpecker 3 Northern Rough-winged Swallow 6 Barn Swallow 1 Black-capped Chickadee 2 Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 1 Heard only American Robin 15 Yellow-rumped Warbler 2 Spotted Towhee 1 Heard only Song Sparrow 3 Lincoln's Sparrow 1 White-crowned Sparrow 11 Lesser Goldfinch 1</p>
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## Backyard Bird of the Month

April 2015

Jack Binch - Sandy

The male **Kestrel** chased my owl away, but at least they decided to nest here. Two eggs so far.

Lyle Bingham - Payson

**Lazuli Bunting** males arrived 20 April.

Herb Clayson - Salem

**Lazuli Bunting**, first ever in my yard, just installed 6' tall feeder to dissuade cats.

Jeff Cooper - Pleasant Grove

Two **Franklin's Gulls** flew over my yard in a very buoyant manner.

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

**Townsend's Solitaire** - There were so many fun birds to choose from this month. My favorite was probably the Solitaire feeding on crabapples just a few feet from my bedroom window in early April!

Bruce Robinson - West Jordan

**Swainson's Hawks** - I'm hoping they nest here again.

Dennis Shirley - Shemya Island, Western Aleutians, Alaska

My best Big Back Yard Birds here on Shemya Island, Western Aleutians, Alaska, so far (4/29 & 4/30) have been - **Smew**, **Tufted Duck**, and **Black-headed Gull** - none of which are new ABA birds, but still dynamite birds.

Alton Thygerson - Provo

**California Quail** - While a neighbor a block away living next to a large gully/ravine has 25-30 quail at a time, only four make it to my backyard.



**American Kestrels in nest box**  
photo by Jack Binch (nest box camera)



**Nest box**  
photo by Jack Binch

Report your favorite backyard bird each month to Eric Huish at 801-360-8777 or [erichuish@gmail.com](mailto:erichuish@gmail.com)

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**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](mailto: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.