

Utah County Birders Newsletter

July 2016



Contents

[July Meeting](#)

[Upcoming Field Trips](#)

[Captain's Log](#)

[Bird of the Month](#)

[Field Trip Report](#) - Chimney Rock Pass

[Field Trip Report](#) - Soldier's Pass

[Backyard Bird of the Month](#)

JULY MEETING:

Thursday, July 14th, 2016

Our meeting this month will be an **evening field trip** on Thursday, July 14th. Stay tuned for more details.

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday, July 9th, 2016: - **Mirror Lake Highway.** Meet at the mouth of Provo Canyon at 6am to carpool (parking lot on the north side of 800 North just before you enter the canyon). We will plan to be back by mid afternoon. Bring an Interagency or Forest Service pass if you have one, or cash to help pay the use fee if you don't. Also bring bug spray and a lunch. We will bird various stops along Mirror Lake Highway looking for specialties such as Clark's Nutcracker, Gray Jay, and Red Crossbills.

Thursday, July 14th, 2016: - Our meeting this month will be an **evening field trip** on Thursday, July 14th. Stay tuned for more details.

Saturday, July 30th, 2016: - July 29-30 - **Join us in search of Ptarmigan!** - It is up to you to find a place to stay in Vernal (or camp) for Friday night. We will meet Saturday morning in Vernal and drive to the trailhead for **Leidy Peak**. Plan on walking a few miles. Bring water and a lunch. Other targets will be the regular Uinta specialties. - Meet at the Maverick Gas station 951 US-40, Vernal at 7 AM. Contact Bryan Shirley with any questions. 801-722-9346 bt_shirley@hotmail.com

Utah County Birders Captain's Log: July 2016

by Keeli Marvel

July is upon us! The days are long and hot, and it's time to head to the mountains.

I read an article recently about a study that was done on great frigatebird flight using satellite transmitters and body function telemetry data and it reminded me of the Magnificent Frigatebird that graced southern Utah with its' presence this last spring. In the study, they discovered that great frigatebirds fly up to 12,000 ft. above sea level and they do it expending very little energy by using thermals or updrafts inside clouds. What was cool to me is they're literally hitching a ride on the clouds and they're one of the only bird species

known to do it. Using those thermals helps them save energy, to the point where one bird in the study flew 40 miles without a single wing flap. That's incredible! Frigatebirds aren't waterproof like many ocean birds, so they can't actually land on the ocean. They've adapted instead by taking flight efficiency to the max. The study also showed that they can fly for weeks continuously – up to two months in one case—and average around 300 miles a day. With those numbers it's not hard to see how one wrong turn could put a Magnificent Frigatebird on our doorstep. I wonder if the day after he left he was down having fish tacos in Baja California and reminiscing about his vacation in Southern Utah.

If you'd like to read the article from NPR, or the abstract to the study published in the journal Science, the links are here:

<http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/06/30/484164544/non-stop-flight-how-the-frigatebird-can-soar-for-months-without-stopping>

<http://science.sciencemag.org/content/353/6294/74>

I wish you all a happy, safe, and birdy 4th of July! The baby birds are cheeping and fall migration will be here before you know it.

Happy Birding!

Keeli Marvel

Bird of the Month

Long-tailed Jaeger

Stercorarius longicaudus

by Mabelle Johnson

In May there was a Long-tailed Jaeger at Sand Hollow Reservoir in Washington County. If this were the Arctic during breeding season this would be a common sighting. If this was well off-shore in the Pacific Ocean during migration this would be an uncommon sighting. But a landlocked reservoir in Utah, in May! This is awesome!

It's not the first time we've had a Long-tailed Jaeger in Utah. There are photos on utahbirds.org from 1993, 2007 and 2014. But they were juveniles, this was a beautiful adult. In 2013 there was a Parasitic Jaeger seen from the Big Sit at the Provo Airport Dike. There are also records of Pomarine Jaeger sightings in Utah.



Long-tailed Jaeger (Nome, Alaska)

photo by by Mike Hearrell

My sister and I didn't make it to Washington County with the Utah County Birders the last weekend of April, but we were able to go the following weekend. The Jaeger was spotted on May 3rd by Rick Fridell. We drove out to Sand Hollow and scanned the area for about 30 minutes. No sign of the Jaeger. We decided

to drive around to the other side but no luck there either. We drove back to the boat ramp one last time. The Iron-Man race was gearing up and the parking lot was being blocked off but we were able to sneak in for one more look. We weren't disappointed! We spotted it flying right away. Wow! This bird is so beautiful, so graceful, so different! We watched for about 20 minutes, he was just cruising around the boat launch area and the island. There were swimmers and boaters oblivious to this rare treat. Just a few weeks earlier, in April a Magnificent Frigate bird was seen at Sand Hollow. This is an equally awesome bird for Utah.

Pete Dunne: "The Long-tailed Jaeger is the smallest, sleekest, lightest and grayest of the jaegers. The plumage of adult Long-tailed looks trim, crisp, expensive, and tastefully coordinated. Breeding adults show a trim limited black cap, pale grayish to grayish brown upperparts, a creamy white breast and upper belly, a long, narrow, flagellum-like tail that extends half the body length beyond the end of the wings. Flight is light, leisurely, fluid, buoyant, and dreamlike. At sea, most often seen flying very high and directly (50-200 ft. high). Foraging birds cruise low and slow, swoop to pluck prey from the surface, and are reported to plunge dive. They pursue other seabirds less often than does Parasitic Jaeger."

There have been some great birds seen in Utah this year, but this one is my favorite. In 2013 a group of UC Birders went on a Pelagic trip out of Monterey, CA with Shearwater Journeys. Some Jaegers were seen by some on the trip but they were quite far out. I didn't see one on that trip. I was sure we would see all 3 Jaegers but we didn't. But, we got to see one here in Utah! Seems odd, but so what! Utah is a great place for birds and birders!

Reference: Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion

Field Trip Report

Genola and Chimney Rock Pass - June 10th, 2016

by Suzi Holt

UCB Chimney Rock and Eureka Fieldtrip

10 Birders braved the 95 degree heat and wind on Friday Evening. It was a pretty slow with only 35 species. But we had lots of fun! Here is our list for the night,

House Sparrow	Western Kingbird
Yellow-headed	California Gull
Blackbird	Lark Sparrow
Cliff Swallow	Mountain Bluebird
Eurasian Collared Dove	Horned Lark
Spotted Sandpiper	Common Raven
American Avocet	Turkey Vulture
Black-necked Stilt	Empid
Swainson's Hawk	Blue Gray Gnatcatcher
Mallard	Orange-crowned Warbler
Brewer's Blackbird	Warbling Vireo
European Starling	Hermit Thrush
Northern Harrier	Juniper Titmouse
Burrowing Owl	Mourning Dove
Western Meadowlark	Red-winged Blackbird
Northern Mockingbird	American Robin
Rock Wren	Black-crowned Night Heron
Barn Swallow	Common Nighthawk



Field Trip Report

Soldier's Pass - June 18th, 2016

by Keeli Marvel

Last Saturday 9 birders met to bird Soldier's Pass over Lake Mountain. It was a pretty slow morning, but highlights were seeing a Gray Vireo just past the summit of Soldier's Pass on the west side, and a couple of Sagebrush Sparrows down in the Sagebrush Flats on the west side of the pass. Thanks to all who joined us! It was good to see some new faces.

Our ebird trip report for Soldier's Pass is below.

Lake Mountains -- Soldiers Pass Rd, Utah, Utah, US

14 species (+1 other taxa)

Swainson's Hawk 1

Red-tailed Hawk 1

gull sp. 120 Lots of high flyover gulls

Mourning Dove 13

Common Nighthawk 4

Western Kingbird 1

Loggerhead Shrike 1

Gray Vireo 1

Western Scrub-Jay 1

Common Raven 3

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher 3

Northern Mockingbird 2

Lark Sparrow 5

Sagebrush Sparrow 2 West side of soldiers pass.

Sagebrush for miles. Calling many times. Visually confirmed

Western Meadowlark 3

Backyard Bird of the Month

June 2016

Jack Binch - Sandy

I had several **California Quail** in my yard at once.

Jeff Cooper - Pleasant Grove

I heard then saw a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** while I was out doing yard work. It was a new species for my yard list.

Suzi Holt - Payson

Mine was the **Cassin's Finch**. I love that in the summer they will sometimes make a visit. A little more exciting and more color than the regular visitors like the house finch and the house sparrow.

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

Yellow Warbler - pleasantly singing all month.

Keeli Marvel - Saratoga Springs

A **Western Kingbird** is nesting on my house again in Saratoga Springs. And yesterday I had flyover Bonaparte's Gulls - that was a new yard bird for me.

Milt Moody - Provo

My favorite yard birds this month were the "**young'uns**" -- American Robin, Black-headed Grosbeak, Lesser Goldfinch and Cassin's Finch.

Dennis Shirley - Elk Ridge

House Wren - Was singing all around yard and checking out bird box cavities. Stayed from June 14 to June 18. Had one in yard last year about the same time and he didn't stay also (same bird?).

Leena Rogers - Provo

Have enjoyed seeing a delightful **Black-headed Grosbeak** family at our feeders these few weeks.

Alton Thygerson - Provo

Warbling Vireo - A Warbling Vireo was singing and seen during the early part of June.