

# Utah County Birders Newsletter

May 2016



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## MAY MEETING:

**Thursday, May 12th, 2016** - 7pm at the Bean Museum.

Our monthly meeting will be a presentation by Jordan Herman, a graduate student from The University of Utah. She will be presenting on some research she is currently working on with birds here and abroad.

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:

There are potential plans for another field trip down to St. George to bird Washington County. Check the hotline and Facebook page for details and potential dates or contact Machel Johnson at [machelle13johnson@yahoo.com](mailto:machelle13johnson@yahoo.com).

The Great Salt Lake Bird Festival is May 12-16, 2016. The festival features various field trips, workshops, a vendor display, presentations, and a Dutch oven dinner with keynote speaker Julie Zickefoose. For more information go to: <http://www.daviscountyutah.gov/greatsaltlakebirdfest>

**Saturday, May 21, 2016:** 8am-12pm - The UCB is partnering with Payson City to host a field trip to a new park in Payson called **Hollow Park**. They would like to know what birds can be seen in the park so we will bird the park and report our field trip lists back to them. Meet at Hollow Park, 400 E 800 S in Payson at 8am. For those coming from the north end of the county, contact Keeli marvel at 801-602-9566 to arrange to carpool. If we get done birding at the park early enough we will also continue the field trip in the surrounding area.

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: April 2016

by Keeli Marvel

Utah County Birders Captain's Log: May 2016

I'm sitting here looking out my office window at a Barn Swallow on the power line and a Red-tailed Hawk nesting in a tree across the field. On the other side of the parking lot a Say's Phoebe is perched on a pavilion roof flying up to catch insects and returning to the same spot to perch in typical flycatcher fashion. All signs of spring having sprung. Never is there more excitement on a daily basis than during spring migration, and what an exciting spring we've had! I envy all those who made it down to see the Magnificent Frigatebird. What an astounding species to show up in Utah! It feels like rarities are popping up every day.

Last Wednesday I stopped at Clover Springs Campground and picked up a FOY Broad-tailed Hummingbird and a whole flock of Evening Grosbeaks, which made for a nice birding morning for me. Over the weekend I spotted a FOY Western Kingbird in my yard. I've been over to Powell Lake a couple of times to check out the species that others have been reporting and seen the terns and the grebes and the Spotted Sandpiper. If you're out birding, keep reporting your finds so others like me can follow in your footsteps! I love it!

In a week I'm headed back east for some training, and I've arranged to spend a couple of days birding along the coast of Lake Erie. Magee Marsh is on my itinerary and I expect it will be epic. Stay tuned next month for a trip report! Lifers will be gotten! I may even hit 500 species on my life list!

I love this time of year. It's the light at the end of the wintry tunnel. Keep birding my friends and happy spring migration!

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## Bird of the Month

### Lazuli Bunting

*Passerina amoena*

by Dennis Shirley

Lazuli Bunting – An All American Bird

I couldn't remember whether this popular songbird has been spotlighted as a bird-of-the-month, but no matter, it is one of Utah birders' favorite birds. It meets all the criteria for a "hook" bird – striking coloration, fairly easy to find, and a great song. The thing that perked my interest was the fact that it just showed up this week at my feeders with a single male on the 23rd of April. We now have about a dozen, and they are all males. What's really interesting is that it first appeared on the 23rd of April 2015, exactly one year ago to the day, and it's always here by the third week of April.

The Lazuli Bunting's closest relative is the Indigo Bunting, which takes its place in the Eastern half of the United States. The Lazuli Bunting's distribution is the western states to the Great Plains. In the Plain States, the Indigo and Lazuli overlap and are known to hybridize with each other. This is a new phenomenon which has taken place due to extensions of preferred brush habitats of the Lazuli Bunting moving east.



**Lazuli Bunting**

photo by John Crawley

The scientific name of the Lazuli Bunting is *Passerina amoena*. In addition to the Indigo Bunting, the other species of *Passerina* buntings include Painted and Varied Bunting and Blue Grosbeak. Each of these neotropical passerines breed in the United States and winter in Central and South America.

The male Lazuli Bunting is easily recognized because of its bright turquoise blue head, back, and throat, rufous brown buffy breast, white belly, and prominent white wing-bars. The female is much trickier to identify but does still have a tinge of grayish blue in the rump, but overall color is grayish brown. Like all buntings, they are seed eaters and regularly frequent feeders with black-oil sunflower seeds and other seeds. They are commonly found in the oak brush, and mixed woodland areas along the Wasatch benches and canyons.

Their song is distinctive, with a long series of high-pitched phrases. The singing male is usually in the top of a bush in an obvious position and easy to see.

When birding tours come to Utah, the Lazuli Bunting is always a favorite and is on everybody's list to see. Birders are never disappointed by this gorgeous little bird.

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

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## **Field Trip Report**

### **Utah County Evening Field Trip** - April 21st, 2016

by Dennis Shirley

Last evening's Utah County Birders Field Trip was a good time for all. Twenty-eight birders spent three hours in a half dozen or so birding spots in south Utah County. We tallied 42 species and got our ten target birds, including: Osprey, Caspian Tern, Virginia Rail, Sora (heard only), Blue-winged Teal, Marbled Godwit, Western Screech Owl (heard only), American Coot, European Starling, and Eurasian Collared Dove. Notable misses: Short-eared Owl, Carol Jean Nelson. Better come next time and join the fun!!

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## **Field Trip Report**

### **Washington County** - April 29th - May 1st, 2016

by Dennis Shirley

Twelve Utah County Birders braved the elements to cover Washington County this past three day weekend. Between sheets of rain, winds and snow squalls in the high country, we had a great birding time. We covered the ground from Lytle Ranch /Beaver Dam Slope to the upper areas of Zion's N. P., Kolob areas.

The trip list totaled 123 species, many of which were FOY birds, Utah lifers, or even lifetime lifers for members of the group. We got most of our target birds and several bonus birds to boot.

Extreme rarities included:

Orchard Oriole - Ivin's

Painted Redstart - Tonaquint Nature Park

Broad-winged Hawk - Ivin's/Kayenta

Lark Bunting - Washington Fields

Washington Specialties included:

Hooded Oriole, White-winged Dove, Abert's Towhee, Crissal Thrasher, Vermillion Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Greater Roadrunner, Common Gallinule, Green Heron, Gambel's Quail, Costa's Hummingbird, Common Black-Hawk, Bell's Vireo, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Black-chinned Sparrow, Gray Vireo, Scott's Oriole, Lucy's Warbler, Verdin,

Ladder-backed Woodpecker, Cactus Wren, Black-tailed Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla, Summer Tanager, Grace's Warbler.

Lots of spring migrants were arriving including:

Western Kingbird, Plumbeous Vireo, Bullock's Oriole, Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow, Orange-crowned, and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Green-tailed Towhee, Brewer's, Lark, and Black-throated Sparrows, Semi-palmated Plover.

Misses included:

Lesser Nighthawk, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Acorn Woodpecker, Anna's Hummingbird, Inca Dove, Cassin's Kingbird, Spotted Owl, California Condor, Resplendent Quetzal.

Will do it again (next year). Hope you can Make it.

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## Backyard Bird of the Month

April 2016

Jeff Cooper - Pleasant Grove

A large female **Cooper's Hawk** flew low to the grass across my backyard and then landed and perched momentarily in one of my locust trees.

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

**Canada Geese** - A pair flew over. I heard them first from my bedroom window. I don't often get them in my neighborhood.

Milt Moody - Provo

There were two female **Cassin's Finches** hanging out in my Provo yard early in the month and then two males showed up a little later and by the end of the month I noticed they were kind of paired up maybe ready for nesting season -- spring is in the air.

Bruce Robinson - West Jordan

**Swainson's Hawk** - They are not nesting in my yard this year, but still hanging out nearby.

Dennis Shirley - Elk Ridge

**Lazuli Bunting** - see this month's Bird of the Month article above.

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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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.