

Utah County Birders Newsletter

September 2016



Contents

[September Meeting](#)

[Upcoming Field Trips](#)

[Captain's Log](#)

[Bird of the Month](#)

[Field Trip Report](#) - Tabiona

[Field Trip Report](#) - Nebo Bench

[Backyard Bird of the Month](#)

SEPTEMBER MEETING:

Thursday, September 15th, 2016 (Note Date: This month's meeting is on the 3rd Thursday, not our usual 2nd Thursday)

Celebrating the 100th birthday of the MBTA - 7:00 pm.

Thursday, Sept 15, 2016 Celebrating the 100th birthday of the MBTA. What is MBTA and why should birders care? Keeli Marvel will give a fun and informative presentation in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on the history and importance of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Meet at 7:00 pm at the Monte L. Bean Museum. 645 East 1430 North, Provo, UT

FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday, September 10th, 2016: 8am- noon. **Utah Lake State Park.** We'll look for continuing migrants around the State Park and the surrounding area. Meet at the pull off just past the bridge but before the State Park entrance on the north side of Center St. Bring a Utah State Park pass and a spotting scope if you have one.

Saturday, September 17th, 2016: 10am-3pm. The Utah County Birders are partnering with Hawkwatch for a day of **hawk watching at Squaw Peak**. Bring a chair to sit on and a scope if you have one. All birder experience levels are welcomed! <https://hawkwatch.org/participate/calendar/migration-sites/350-hawkwatching-at-squaw-peak>

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 Keeli at - keeli.marvel@gmail.com

Utah County Birders Captain's Log: September 2016

by Keeli Marvel

Migration is in full swing! I'm in the process of a temporary migration from my summer vacationing grounds back to real life again so this article will be another short one. I just got back from a week spent immersed in bird biology and conservation at the North American Ornithological Conference in Washington D.C., where I was honored to be surrounded by 2000+ of the best and brightest (and possibly, nerdiest) minds working towards bird conservation. The reports are less than comforting on the future of many bird species, but I was comforted by seeing the passion and dedication of the researchers and conservation biologists who are working toward a better future for birds and for our planet. It's something else to be completely surrounded by that many like-minded people who are all in some form or another working towards a common goal. It's inspiring, to say the least.

As significant a change as I could possibly get from muggy and hot D.C., this last week I've been vacationing on the coast of Puget Sound in the Pacific North West. Notable bird sightings this week have been few as I have been wrapped up in family activities, but at the house on the Sound where I've been staying I've seen many squeaky-toy- impersonator-Chestnut-backed Chickadees, a family of Anna's hummingbirds who have staked their very vocal claim on the feeders next door, a grumpy Great Blue Heron who drops by occasionally to perch precariously and improbably on the pine tree off the back deck, and a Belted Kingfisher who patrols up and down this portion of the coast. On the ferry between Coupeville and Port Townsend yesterday I picked up mixed flocks of Western and Heerman's Gulls, and a raft of what I believe were mostly Rhinoceros Auklets (I couldn't get the ferry driver to pause long enough for me to confirm – go figure). Earlier this week in the sound I snapped an iphone bino pic of a bird I'm tentatively calling an immature Pigeon Guillemot, although I welcome input on the ID.

That's all the cool birds I've managed to see this last week. I'm pretty excited to get home and see if I can catch up with that Buff-breasted Sandpiper reported down at Utah Lake State Park! Hope ya'll are getting out, enjoying the cooler weather, and seeing some migrating birds!

Happy Birding!
Keeli



photos by Keeli Marvel



Bird of the Month

Black-billed Magpie

(*Pica hudsonia*) – order: Passeriformes, family: Corvidae

by Yvonne Carter

[Rerun article from August 2009]

You say, What?! That ubiquitous bird that we see everywhere we go in Utah? Yes, we look at it that way but a couple of years ago, I had a reality check as a group of birdwatchers from China were ecstatic as they viewed these black and white birds, since they do not have this bird in China. (Maybe we could start a new export business)

But be that as it may, their excitement over magpies gave me a different perspective. So as you look at a map in your bird guide, you will notice that the range for magpies is basically the west half of the United States (except at the coast), ranging south to approximately Prescott, Arizona and into New Mexico a little. They are also found through the western half of Canada. Yellow-billed Magpies are found in the United States along coastal northern California.

Its length is about 19 inches, wingspan is 25 inches, and weight is approximately 6 ounces; the male being larger than the female. Their wings and tail have an iridescent shine, almost appearing greenish.

Historically, the magpie is associated with early North American Indians. This bird would follow the bison hunts of the Indians and lived on the refuse of the hunts. When Lewis and Clark encountered these birds in 1804

in South Dakota, they noticed that the magpies were bold, even entering tents to take meat and food from the hand.

There are 12 subspecies through northern Europe and Asia and with the Bering Land Bridge as a connection, making the Black-billed Magpie similar to the Yellow-billed Magpies. Cornell Labs state: "Eurasian Black-billed Magpies are well known for their ceremonial gatherings in early spring. Interpreted as territorial probings by dominant young birds, these gatherings have never been observed in either of North American's magpie species, probably owing to fundamental differences in the types of territories they hold."

The Black-billed Magpie nests in deciduous trees or on tall 20 to 30 foot shrubs and you have probably seen plenty of their spherical nests which have a side entrance and inside a cup of mud lining with soft material. It breeds in Utah in lowland riparian and also pinyon-juniper habitats. They lay 2 to 9 eggs that are blue-green with brown speckles. During the breeding season, it is an insectivore, a ground gleaner, omnivore, and a ground scavenger, mainly eating insects, berries, fruit, bird eggs, and nestlings. And during non-breeding seasons, the magpie is not an insectivore, but is an omnivore as a ground scavenger and forager, meaning carrion (roadkill) at roadsides.

If you would like to write an article for the Bird of the Month, please contact Machele - machele13johnson@yahoo.com



photo by Kendall Brown

Field Trip Report

Pat Jividen's place in Tabiona - August 6th, 2016

by Deloy Pack

On August 6th 10 birders visited Pat Jividen and the Hannah Hummingbird Haven to see the Hummingbirds coming to their feeders. We were fortunate to see all four north Utah species, including a lovely male Calliope that posed for good pictures at Pat's place (a lifer for some of the group).

Field Trip Report

Nebo Bench Trail - August 15th, 2016

by Suzi Holt

Here is our checklist for today's field trip plus on the way up the canyon we got wild turkeys, swallows and turkey vulture. Thanks to all who joined us our list of 22+ was not bad. But a no show on the American Three-toed Woodpecker today!!

Visit this page for list with photos - <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S31110146>

22 species (+1 other taxa) total

- 1 Sharp-shinned/Cooper's Hawk
- 2 Red-tailed Hawk
- 1 Broad-tailed Hummingbird
- 5 Hairy Woodpecker
- 7 Northern Flicker
- 1 American Kestrel
- 2 Olive-sided Flycatcher
- 2 Western Wood-Pewee
- 1 Plumbeous Vireo
- 1 Steller's Jay
- 2 Common Raven
- 4 Mountain Chickadee
- 6 Red-breasted Nuthatch
- 1 House Wren
- 4 Ruby-crowned Kinglet
- 1 Yellow Warbler
- 2 Yellow-rumped Warbler
- 5 Dark-eyed Junco
- 4 Green-tailed Towhee
- 13 Western Tanager
- 4 Black-headed Grosbeak
- 4 Cassin's Finch
- 2 American Goldfinch-----

After the mountain a few of us went to Utah Lake SP to look for shorebirds. A couple lifers for me and a few others (not bad) Baird's Sandpiper and Semipalmated Sandpiper! Thanks Milt Milton!!! Great day had by all!!

Visit this page for list with photos - <http://ebird.org/ebird/view/checklist/S31110423>

28 species (+4 other taxa) total

- 5 Mallard (Domestic type)
- 3 American White Pelican
- 2 Great Blue Heron

1 Snowy Egret
120 White-faced Ibis
1 Osprey
4 American Avocet
1 Snowy Plover
100 Killdeer - Approximately
6 Baird's Sandpiper - I sent these to Bryant Olsen and he confirmed these for me
5 Least Sandpiper
2 Semipalmated Sandpiper - I sent these to Bryant Olsen and he confirmed them for me
65 peep sp. - not sure on some of these :) this is a low number
1 Wilson's Snipe
2 Spotted Sandpiper
1 Solitary Sandpiper
2 Greater Yellowlegs
1 Franklin's Gull
30 gull sp.
27 Caspian Tern
1 Western Kingbird
1 Northern Rough-winged Swallow
1 Tree Swallow
1 Bank Swallow
1 Barn Swallow
1 Cliff Swallow
200 swallow sp.
2 Marsh Wren
28 European Starling
1 Yellow Warbler
3 Red-winged Blackbird
10 Yellow-headed Blackbird

Backyard Bird of the Month

August 2016

Jack Binch - Sandy

On the 20th I had a **Western Screech-Owl** calling in the front yard. I did not see it. That leaves the **four species of hummingbirds** as my favorites.

Jeff Cooper - Pleasant Grove

Calliope Hummingbird - At least two young male Calliopes visited my feeders during the month of August. I think that makes four years in a row now for Calliopes in my yard in August. They are one of the gems of fall migration here in Utah County.

Eric Huish - Pleasant Grove

Cooper's Hawk - stopped by several times this month to take a bath in our pond.

Milt Moody - Provo

A **Western Screech-Owl** -- heard only -- and an **Orange-crowned Warbler** -- seen only.

Alton Thygerson – Provo

Cooper's Hawk - Three in the neighborhood which may explain the scarcity of birds in my backyard other than hummingbirds.

Report your favorite backyard bird each month to Eric Huish at 801-360-8777 or erichuish@gmail.com
