



Utah County Birders: September 2018 Newsletter

UCB Captain's Log, September 2018

by Keeli Marvel

Greetings fellow Birders! It was good to see those of you who made it out to the summer potluck! Hope you are all doing well and seeing fun birds!

I was hoping to have something interesting to report this month about birds seen during a recent trip to St. Louis. Alas, I

tried 3 different mornings on my trip to find a Mississippi Kite and some Eurasian Tree Sparrows without any luck. I did have a nice time birding in my limited free time. In the small park in front of the St. Louis Arch I saw a **Gray Catbird** and a **Carolina Wren**. Following my visit to the arch, I went to Tower Grove Park chasing recent reports of Mississippi Kite. I wasn't successful in finding one but I did see several other interesting species including **Eastern Kingbirds, Yellow shafted Northern Flicker, Carolina Wren, Blue Jay, Northern Cardinal, Common Grackle, Red-bellied Woodpecker, and a Red-tailed Hawk** fledgeling begging for food.

Later that week I tried again at Jefferson Barracks Memorial Park south of St. Louis. I was skunked again on the kite, but I saw **Tufted Titmice, Chipping Sparrows, Northern flickers and Red-bellied Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and a Flycatcher** species that was likely an **Acadian**. I also saw several white-tailed deer does with fairly new fawns.

I was bummed I wasn't able to add any new species to my life list on my recent trips, but I'm optimistic I'll be able to report back next month on a bunch of European species I'll be seeing as I'll be spending a couple weeks in Ireland and mainland Europe.

Until then I hope you're enjoying the heck out of migration.

Happy Birding!



Red-bellied Woodpecker By Mike Hearell

AUGUST MEETING:

Thursday, September 13, 2018, 7:00 PM at the Bean Museum on BYU Campus - Map to Museum

700 Species, by Bryan Shirley

For a lot of birders, seeing 700 species in ABA is a lifetime goal. Bryan Shirley recently reached that goal with a Black Rail in California. Come hear his report, hear about recent changes to ABA listing rules, and strategies on how to get your own list up to 700.

Field Trips:

ANTELOPE ISLAND

Field trip on September 14th. Meet at the Pioneer Crossing park and ride at 6:30 am. We will bird the Causeway, Island, and Garr Ranch until 2:30. Bring a lunch and a jacket.

Migration Day at Squaw Peak

Saturday, September 22nd, 10 am to 2 pm

In-flight identification of birds of prey for all levels of raptor enthusiasts, with knowledgeable birders on hand.

Here a [link to our event page for the field trip](#):

Feature Article:

A Big Year of Birding for Utah County as of September 1st.

Article and photos by Cliff Miles

Doing a big year in Utah County has had some very fun moments that I am happy to have shared with so many of you. Also I managed to get photos that I will add to the Utah Birds.org Web-site at the end of the year Here are some highlights

On January 1st I went out with the Utah County birders. By the end of the day I had 46 birds to start the year. When I heard that Bryan Shirley and Suzi Holt were doing a big month I decided to see if I could break 100 for January. On January 30th I started the day with 94 birds and ended the day with 94 birds. On January 31st I desperately wanted to break 100, needing 6, I had an idea of what I wanted to do. I started early in the morning and picked up a **Pine Siskin** at the home of Milt Moody. Next I got the **Red-naped Sapsucker** at the church in Linden, 3rd time was a charm. Next I went up to Dry Canyon and picked up A **Bewick's Wren**, **Golden Crowned Kinglet** and **Canyon wren**. I got a **Ruddy Duck** thanks to Bryan Shirley and **Sandhill Crane** thanks to Suzi Holt. I went up Payson Canyon for a Golden Eagle and struck out. So I decided to try visiting a good location for **Virginia Rails** shown to us by Dennis Shirley and called one in. I tried a spot that I had found for **Wilson's Snipe** and I flushed out 2. Suzi Holt called me and let me know that she had just got an **American Tree Sparrow** on the Provo Airport Dike. It was getting very late so I rushed over to get the bird and got my very own "Big Year" movie moment. I had just called up the bird out of the brush and was trying to get my binoculars on it when a car drove up. I did not look to see who it was because I didn't want to lose the bird. As I heard the doors close, I saw the Sparrow and I felt



people near me. I looked left and saw both Dennis and Bryan Shirley looking at the American Tree Sparrow with their binoculars. They had rushed over to get the bird before it got to dark. That for me was a Big Year Moment. I later learned that as they drove up they had talked among themselves and said that Cliff would have the bird when they got there which I did. It was quite a rush for me to have those two very good birders show up at that moment to get their last bird of the day and get it in less than a minute. I ended the day with 104, which is 5th place for January. I was very pleased that I had found 10 birds that day. This gave me the bug to try for a Utah County Big Year.

I learned that May was probably the best month for birds showing up for the summer, so I decided to do another big Month. I reasoned that by doing so I could get a great many birds out of the way and use the rest of the year to get the hard ones.

On the 13th of May I started the day thinking that I would go over to Lincoln beach for shore birds. On the way I saw a large flock of **White faced Ibis** on the corner of 4000 South and the road to Palmyra. I wasn't going to stop but I noticed that they were in perfect position in the way they were all feeding parallel to me and the light was right. I stopped and proceeded to work through the flock for a Glossy Ibis, which would be a lifer for me. In the past I have searched through many flocks of hundreds of birds. This flock was around 300. After 45 minutes I found a bird that I thought that I could see blue on its face. It was at the back of the flock so I grabbed my camera and proceeded to get pictures to confirm. When I zoomed in on my photo I could see the blue on its face and I had my very own **Glossy Ibis**. Not one that someone else had already found. I immediately called Suzi Holt knowing that she needed the bird. When she arrived she let me know that it would be a lifer for her also and I told her I would stay and help her "until hell froze over." We both searched the flock very hard to re-find the bird. After about 30 minutes a cow mooed and the birds blew out of there. I told Suzi not to worry because they had done this once for me and came back and settled down. Boy was I wrong. They headed for parts unknown and never came back.

On May 31st I had arranged to do a big day of birding with my brother Clark. I had 188 birds to start the morning. I wanted to break 190. We started out at the Pioneer crossing Ponds and to my delight I got a **Cattle Egret** right off and a few minutes later I got a **Ruddy Duck**. I had touched 190 before we left our first stop. Over the course of the morning Clark and I were on track to break 100 for the day. Later were on the Provo Airport dike, calling up a **Sora**. Clark found it really wonderful that you could call in birds. After getting the Sora we went back to the car and I noticed oil all over the ground from my car. I had cracked the oil pan. This put a 4 hour delay in our big day. That cost \$667 to repair. The delay made it so we ended the day with only 75 birds. I ended the day with 190 birds for the month of May, which I found to my delight is 3rd all time for any big month.

Suzi was especially helpful during the month. When I couldn't find something she would take me out and point my nose to the bird.

I heard the **Red Naped Sapsucker** before I ever saw it. I had just arrived up at Aspen Grove and as I exited the car I heard a tremendous clatter coming from across the road. I couldn't see what was making the racket I proceeded to go over to where the sound was coming from. I discovered the bird on the back of a no parking sign using the sign to make his presence known. This bird was not skittish and let me get good photos of it.



The **Summer Tanager** was another fun lifer for me. I had been looking for the bird where it had been reported on the Spanish Fork River, for about an hour. I had been calling the bird so often that I had the call ingrained in my noggin. I had decided to head back to the car for a drink and then I was going to head the other direction from where it was found. As I was just heading out I got a call from Suzi Holt and she let me know that they were on their way and would be there shortly. I figured that shortly meant 20 minutes not 2. They arrive so fast that I hadn't even had the chance to try for the bird again. When Suzi arrived she was with her young daughter and Steve Clark. They asked me if I had had any luck and I told them that I could show them where it wasn't. I said that I wanted to try to the North. We all started down the path and began to play the call. I heard the bird return the exact same call I had been playing less than 10 minutes after we started. I said to Suzi, "I think that's it" She heard it too and agreed that we were right on top of the bird. Suzi was the first to see it. They had the Summer Tanager for their UCB challenge and I had a Lifer for mine.

The **Common Poorwill** is a bird that I have coveted photographing ever since I saw it on the Utah Birds web site. I had seen Jeff Cooper's post about finding a nesting bird. I called him and practically begged him to take me out to photograph the bird. He said that he would and would let me know when he could get away. He took me out to his area which, I agreed to keep the exact location confident until next year. After we arrived we went up the hill and got near the nest. He set up a blind and together we shimmied over to the bird. He saw that it was still there and then let me photograph the bird. After we backed off it flew away and I pursued it very quietly and took this photo from some 25 feet away. A great day of birding.

The **American Bittern** was a bird that I had decided that I was going to work very hard to get. I don't know why but I wanted it very badly for the challenge. I knew that one had been seen over at Warm Springs, last year by Dennis. I had looked for it a couple of times after Steve Clark had found the one this year. Later I was invited to go with Dennis Shirley and his wife, Bryan Shirley, Suzi Holt, Amanda Holt and her boy friend. When we arrived I was told that we were planning to stay until dark. We got out lawn chairs and set up on the bank overlooking the spring's area. Bryan went to the West a little ways and played the call. The bird must have jumped up with the very first call. I saw it right out in front of us and I said "There it is" Dennis said "Where" and silly me I said "right there" which was nothing helpful for locating the bird. I pointed and said "Out in the middle, right in front of us." We had the American Bittern in 15 minutes. Later Jeff Cooper and one of his friends went out to find out how many individuals there were. They located three, a set of parents and a juvenile.

This big year for me would not be possible with out all the help that I am receiving. Suzi Holt, Bryan Shirley, Dennis Shirley, Steve Clark, Jeff Cooper have been especially helpful as well as Milt Moody, Peter and Sharon Anderson, Andrew Judd, and Merrill Webb.

I am currently at 241 birds as of September 1st. and I have 357 points for the Utah County Birders Challenge.

Field Trip Reports:

Mirror Lake Hwy

24 Aug 2018
by Suzi Holt

Final Count:

51 SPECIES!!!

On August 24, 2018 thirteen birders set off at 6:30 am for the Mirror Lake Hwy, with a few target birds set. Along the way we saw **Western Meadowlark, Red-tailed Hawks, Rock Pigeon, Turkey Vultures and Magpies.**



Our first stop was the Soapstone Basin. We quickly found some **Black-capped** and **Mountain Chickadees**. We also saw a **Dusky Flycatcher**. We walked down closer to the Upper Provo River and ate a few wild raspberries and some currents. In the willows we had **Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned, Wilson's,** and **Virginia's Warblers**. There was also a **Lincoln's Sparrow** in the mix. In the river we saw a **American Dipper** doing his thing---dipping. A flyover of a **BELTED KINGFISHER** is always a plus! We also saw **Pine Siskins** and a **HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER** and heard a **Gray Catbird**. As we left and got back on the highway we saw a **Townsend's Solitaire** and a few **Ravens**.

Next stop was the look out up past Mt Baldy. We were really successful. Amanda heard some drumming and we quickly located Two **AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKERS** and a **HAIRY WOODPECKER**. We saw lots of **Dark-eyed Juncos, Robin's, Flickers, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Mountain Bluebirds, Cassin's Finch, Pine Siskins** and two **PINE GROSBEAKS!!! Yippie!!!**

Our final stop on the Highway was Mirror Lake. We promptly found a few **CLARK'S NUTCRACKERS** stealing dog food and picnic scraps from the campers. We saw a few more **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **Mountain Chickadees** as we walked around the campground. By the parking lot we saw a **SPOTTED SANDPIPER** and had a awesome flyover of a **OSPREY** with a fish in tow. In the parking lot we waited for a few minutes for others who had driven around the campground. After about 15 minutes they still hadn't returned so we decided to load up and go find them (thinking they had possibly located something awesome).

As we drove around the horse campground we quickly found them and they were excited to tell us that they had seen two **CANADA JAYS!!!** Well, we were going to camp out until they came back!!!! After about 10 minutes and another **AMERICAN THREE-TOED WOODPECKER** one came in to the top of the tree. Needless to say, I was pretty excited. We had decided sit down for lunch, when the first one was spotted! While jumping up and down seeing this Canada Jay, another one snuck around back and grabbed a bite of my homemade blackberry jam and peanut butter sandwich. **CAMP ROBBERS!!!!** We enjoyed these two, another Clark's Nutcracker, and a beautiful **Orange-crowned Warbler**.

We decided with all our success of finding our target birds by noon, we would try for the Baltimore Oriole on Jeremy Ranch Road. We didn't have any luck, :(but there were **Willow Flycatcher, Cordilleran Flycatcher, Western Tanager,** lots of **Yellow Warblers, Black-capped Chickadees, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers** and **Robins!**

On the way through Heber we stopped on Potter's Lane just to see if we could luck onto a Bobolink. No luck, but we saw a **Wilson's Snipe, Sandhill Cranes, Killdeer, Cedar Waxwing, Brewer's Blackbirds,** and **Vesper Sparrows!** It was a great day, we had a total of 51 SPECIES!!! Thanks for coming! We love birding with all of you!

