



Utah County Birders: January 2019 Newsletter

UCB Captain's Log, January 2019

by Keeli Marvel

Happy New Years birders!

Another year, another challenge on the books. If you haven't sent me your challenge totals yet, now is the time! We will celebrate with our awards ceremony dinner towards the end of January on the 24th. Hope to see ya'll there! I've postponed the dinner a couple weeks later than usual because I'll be traveling for work the first couple weeks in January, so I hope you don't mind! My first trip is to Florida (Florida in January, so rough, right?!) and I'm hoping to nab a few lifers on my trip, so I'll have some awesome birds to write about for our Feb newsletter.

As we start the new year it might be fun to focus our birding in a little closer to home. I wrote an article awhile back about a favorite blogger of mine who came up with the concept of the Five Mile Radius (5MR) birding challenge. A non challenge year might be a fun time to focus on the hot spots in your neighborhoods and local parks and see how many species you can round up.

Another idea for added birding fun in 2019 comes from eBird. Anyone who enters one eBird checklist every day for the entire year - 365 checklists - will be entered in a drawing to win a pair of binoculars. Doesn't matter if it's the birds in your yard or the grackles you spot in the Walmart parking lot when you go grocery shopping. More info on participating in that challenge can be found here:
<https://ebird.org/news/2019-checklist-a-day-challenge>

I'm writing this as our New Years party is getting underway, so I'm gonna keep it short tonight. Hopefully next month I'll have some awesome life birds from Florida to report on!

I wish all of you a very happy and Birdy new year! Happy Birding!

Keeli Marvel

JANUARY MEETING:

January 24, 2019, 7:00 PM - Bird Challenge Awards Dinner at the Golden Corral in Orem. Pay on on your own. We will have a room reserved for our group.

Up-coming Field Trips:

1 Jan 2019 - East Bay and Salem Pond: Led by Josh Kreitzer. Meet at 8am at Sam's Club, in Provo. After visiting East Bay and Salem Pond, we may check for recent rarities depending on time.

January ?? (date/time TBA) **Gull ID "meeting/field"**, presented by Billy Fenimore at the [George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Wildlife Education Center](#). (by Farmington Bay)

Bird of the Month:

Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*)

by Alona Huffaker

I know the Grey Catbird has been done a few years ago, but I wanted to do it again because of an experience I had this summer.

The Grey Catbird is about 9 inches long, mostly grey with dark on the wings and tail. The cap is black and he has a rusty patch under his tail. They eat insects, spiders and berries that they find in the dense shrubs and bushes where they live.

The Grey Catbird lives in most of the United States (except the far western states) and in the winter migrates to the South and East and down into parts of Central America and the Caribbean Islands.

The Grey Catbird makes various calls, one of which sounds like a cat meowing, hence its name.

I sometimes see a Catbird along the Provo River Trail heading west from the Vivian Park area, and near the bridge in the Diamond Fork Campground. This summer, while birding along the Spanish Fork River trail by the ball parks Kathleen and I heard the typical "mew" and thought we would call it out, so we played the song. Sure enough it answered and was coming closer and closer through the dense bushes. As we heard it again, we were getting more excited to see it and out came a grey.....kitten! What a laugh we had! The real thing is a treat to hear and see, too!



Gray Catbird
by Leena Rogers ©Leena Rogers