



Utah County Birders: March 2020 Newsletter

President's Message - March 2020 *by Mabelle Johnson*

We live in such a beautiful state! I hope you are taking advantage of the challenge this year to get out all over Utah!

Two of the challenges are to visit 20 Utah lakes and reservoirs and 20 State or National Parks.

The best site for information about birding in Utah is at utahbirds.org. If you click on "County Pages" (<http://utahbirds.org/counties/>) you can see a list of birding sites including lakes, reservoirs, parks and refuges. There are detailed directions to each place as well as birds typically found there and a link to ebird for further bird information.

For more information on state and national parks you can visit this site, [Utah State Parks](#)

This would be a great year to purchase a Utah State Parks pass for \$75.00 which you can purchase at the gate of any state park, or online

here: <https://stateparks.utah.gov/resources/passes/>

The pass will pay for itself within the year. Be aware that there is a \$2.00 Causeway fee when going to Antelope Island that is separate from the entrance fee, that you have to pay even if you have the pass.

This site gives a list of lakes in Utah:

Category: (Google "Lakes of Utah")

And this site gives a list of Reservoirs in Utah:

Category: (Google "Reservoirs in Utah")

Our field trips this year will be centered around the challenges so we'll be targeting many of the parks, lakes and reservoirs, but as you go out on your own, this information may help you make the most of your time!

I'll see you out there! Good Luck and Good Birding Everyone!

Mabelle



Rainbow Bridge NM by Merrill Webb

March Meeting:

Thursday, March 12th, 2020, at 7pm

at the Monte L Bean Museum in Provo, UT [Map to Museum](#)

“Birding in the Wilds of Papua New Guinea”, a presentation by one of our club members, **Robert Parsons**. Come join us for an interesting night hearing about Robert’s experiences birding in exotic Papua New Guinea.

Up-coming Field Trips:

Saturday, March 14, 2020

Juab county!

Meet at 8 am at the Payson Walmart NE corner of the parking lot. We will go to Juab county. Starting at Burraston Ponds and then Mona Reservoir. We may add a few more waterfowl to our lists as well!

Saturday, March 28, 2020

Greater Sage Grouse-Emma Park Road

Meet at 6 am at the Harmon's parking lot 870 E 800 N, Orem. We will meet by the gas pumps to carpool.

We will head straight to the Henefer Lek!!! After we will check out some of the reservoirs up that way...East Canyon Reservoir, Echo Reservoir, Rockport, Jordanelle and Deer Creek...so if you have a State Parks pass please bring your pass. We should be able to add a couple county lists, add some more waterfowl and hopefully some early migrants for our 2020 Challenge!

As of today March 12...17 Greater Sage Grouse were seen!

Field trip leader Machel Johnson

Bird of the Month:

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)

Article and Photos by Lynn Garner

The Great Egret, *Ardea alba*, of the family *Ardeidae*, is uncommon in Utah, but found here throughout the year. It is a tall, white bird with an extremely long neck, by far the largest egret in Utah, over three feet long and with a wingspan of over five feet. It flies slowly but powerfully, wingbeats at two per second, traveling about 25 miles per hour. It weighs about two pounds. Its yellow bill is long and thin and its legs and feet are black. Its sounds are unmusical, deep and gravelly croaks or barks, *quok* or *karr*.

It nests in extreme northern Utah and is a migrant in extreme southern Utah, according to Sibley. For its nesting sites, it chooses trees on islands or trees standing in water. Where numbers are sufficient, particularly along the southern Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific coasts of North America, they establish nesting colonies that birds of other species will also join. The nest is a platform of sticks covered with plant parts that dry to make a bed and the clutch is



by Lynn Garner ©Lynn Garner

one to six plain bluish-green eggs. Hatchlings compete fiercely with their siblings, quite often ending in the death of a smaller chick.

The Great Egret forages mostly in shallow water in coastal, brackish, and freshwater wetlands. Their diet is mainly fish, but they will eat a variety of amphibians, reptiles, small mammals, worms, and insects.

In the breeding season, a patch of skin on the face of the Great Egret turns neon green and long white plumes grow from its back. During the late 1800's, they were hunted almost to extinction for these plumes, called *aigrettes*, which were used to ornament ladies' hats. Gilbert Pearson reported that in 1886 hunters were paid 10¢ each for the plumes. He feared that the bird, earlier seen by the tens of thousands in Florida, would not make a comeback. The National Audubon Society was formed to protect birds that were being hunted for their feathers and adopted the Great Egret as its symbol. When plume hunting was outlawed in 1910, the Great Egret population rebounded strongly. Since 1930, much of the habitat of Great Egrets has been lost or degraded, but, being a large bird, the Great Egret has adapted surprisingly well.



by Lynn Garner ©Lynn Garner

[The pictures were taken by Lynn Garner in 2017 and 2020 at the FlowServe ponds in north Springville. Sources consulted: Sibley V2 app, *All About Birds.org*, and T. G. Pearson [Ed], *Birds of America*, New York: Doubleday, 1917, 1936.]

Field Trip Reports

Friday, 21 February 2020

Delta Snow Goose Festival 2020

Text by Sizi Holt

...and photos by Suzi & Jessie Holt

We got off a little after 8 am. Fifteen birders in 6 cars, headed down Hwy 6 to Delta. We decided to try a challenge, so we set the odometer for 20 miles and counted the birds...we got outside of Eureka and made it to 12 species so we will have to try again.

On the way down to Delta we saw Rough-legged Hawks, Ravens, Horned Larks, and Prairie Falcon.

We arrived at Gunnison Bend Reservoir about 10 am. The reservoir was free of ice so there were about 850 **Snow Geese** floating on the reservoir with a few on the edges in the fields, there were a couple Blue morphs and some **Ross's Geese** in the mix. What a beautiful site. It has been as few years since there wasn't ice. We got our fill of them and proceeded to get a couple challenges done. We found over 20 species at the reservoir and completed a few

numbers...a birding day, Millard County, a reservoir, and added some waterfowl to others lists, plus a few FOY birds for some. It was a lot of fun. Highlights were of course the Snow Geese and Ross's Geese. Plenty of waterfowl including a **Hooded Merganser**. A few **Bald Eagles** and many of the regulars. It was a beautiful sunshiny day out in Delta.

On the way home we started our 20 species in 20 mile stretch again at the Tooele turn off. We added enough to surpass our goal!

Thanks to all who came, it is a fun tradition and I am glad we were able to go!



1 February 2020

Gull ID Clinic and Gullstravaganza

At the Eccles Wildlife Education Center

Photos and text by Sizi Holt

Those who attended the Gull ID Clinic and Gullstravaganza today had a great time! It started out awesome with a friendly welcome to the Eccles Wildlife Education Center from Billy Fenimore!! He sure knows how to make everyone feel welcome and thanks to James Hoffman and Ream's for the yummy pastries and doughnuts! Tim Avery did a awesome job in the clinic.

He narrowed it down to 6 main gull ID tips:

1. Size
2. Color of mantle
3. Primary color/darkness
4. Bare Parts and color of legs
5. Iris color
6. Bill size



After the clinic we set out to practice at Farmington Bay WMA.

We saw lots of California Gulls and Ring-billed Gulls, a highlight Lesser Black-backed Gull, and a few Herring Gulls. There were lots of Waterfowl there too. Along with all the Canada Geese we saw Ruddy Duck, Ring-necked duck, Northern Shoveler, Redhead, Gadwall, Mallard, Canvasback, American Wigeon, Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal, and Northern Pintail. A few other species of ducks were seen by others. We also saw White-faced Ibis, lots of Bald Eagles, a couple Red-tailed Hawks, a murder of Crows, Northern Harrier and American Kestrel, a beautiful Song Sparrow, Great Blue Heron, American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe and European Starling!

It was a beautiful bluebird day as well with a balmy 53 degree day!

Thanks to all who put on a fun event!