



# Utah County Birders Newsletter

August 2023

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## August UCB POTLUCK:

**Thursday August 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm at Vivian Park in Provo Canyon**

**(This is a week later than our usual monthly meeting)**

In place of our regular meeting this month we will have a potluck on Thursday August 17th at 7pm at Vivian Park in Provo Canyon. We will be at Pavilion #2 (the one to the right as you turn on to South Fork Rd.) Bring a food item to share with the group and join us for a fun evening of food and friends.

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## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS:

**Friday August 25<sup>th</sup>, 7am **\*\*NOTE THIS IS A FRIDAY\*\*****

Meet at 7:00 am at the Orem 800 N Harmon's grocery store to the west of the gas pumps. We will stop at Soapstone CG area. Then head up to Mirror Lake. Hoping for the usual mountain birds like American Three-toed Woodpecker, Canada Jay, and Clark's Nutcracker. Bring your National Park Pass or pay the fee. Bring your lunch/snacks, water, bug repellent, sunscreen, you know the drill.

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## President's Message – August 2023

By Yvonne Carter

Birds are fun to watch. A while ago I noticed a male and female house finch on the railing of our deck. They were about 7-8 inches apart. He started doing a funny little 'bird' dance. She just looked at him and did nothing. This went on for a couple of minutes, so he fluttered up and landed on the other side of her at about the same distance. He started the same little dance, and this went on for a couple of minutes. I guess she got bored and flew off! Did he fly after her? We will never know.

In a previous President's Message, I mentioned several sources to further one's knowledge and appreciation of these incredible creatures called birds. I hope you are doing that. Despite the heat, still make the effort to get out there in your favorite birding hotspots and enjoy, even though it seems to be a little quieter than usual. At least, that's the way it has been for me. In fact, one of our daughters just rented a house near Powell Lake, and as I drove by the 'lake' there was very little activity. Whoa! So, I just drove to another of my favorite birding spots.

Happy birding!  
Yvonne

For Birding Suggestions for our "ODD" Year click [here](#)

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## BIRD OF THE MONTH

By Stephen Minor

### Ridgway's Rail (*Rallus obsoletus*)



Ridgway's Rail  
*Rallus obsoletus*

San Elijo Lagoon  
San Diego County, California  
12 Jun 2011

by Kendall Brown  
©Kendall W. Brown

I am relatively new to the birding scene, being only recently introduced to it by my wife Holly. My background is actually in chemistry and mathematics, but my love for the outdoors allowed me to enjoy the search for birds. One particular bird that we quested for while in San Diego was *Rallus Obsoletus*; Ridgway's Rail. The way we found this bird definitely showed what it is known for.

We started out early in the morning at San Elijo Lagoon, one of San Diego's largest wetlands. This lagoon was the perfect habitat for the rail. Marshy wetlands within half a mile of the Pacific Ocean. Fresh water or brackish water would make no difference to the rail, as it has a special salt gland that enables it to drink salt water. There were all sorts of shore birds around here, searching for mussels, crabs, clams.... the normal fare for our rail. The search was not going to be easy, as the rail is known to be an expert in concealment, and secrecy.

We were confident, however, that we would see the rail. Since California is home to one of the largest populations of Ridgway's Rails, we were certain that one had to be at this lagoon. Our task was a formidable one. The rail looks for wetlands that contain pickleweed and cordgrass, which if you have ever encountered those plants then you know just how difficult it is discern detail. Also, the rail is a master at hiding in these plants and with its coloration makes it near impossible for a human to see it.

After several hours of searching, Holly decided to coax the animal by playing the bird call from her iPhone. We have all seen this done before, and it generally gives good results. However, I was unaware that I should be looking in the cordgrass. But even if I had, I would not have seen the bird.... but I heard it. The rail responded to the iPhone call....and it was 2 ft away from me. I jumped out of my skin, as it was very loud, and unexpected. Staying on the path, we followed it but lost it in the cordgrass. Next time, I will be ready and know where to look.

Source: [allaboutbirds.org](http://allaboutbirds.org)



*San Elijo Lagoon, San Diego, CA. Photo by Stephen Minor*

[\[See past Bird of the Month articles\]](#)

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## FIELD TRIP REPORT:

### Alpine Loop Fieldtrip

7/15/23

Report and photos by Suzi Holt



*Cascade Springs*

We headed out bright and early around 7 am. We decided to stop at the Bridal Veil Falls overlook to look for Black Swifts. There were a few swallows and one **White-throated Swift!** Some saw a **Lazuli Bunting** and an **American Robin**. We also saw a **Golden Eagle** and an **Osprey**. The wind was blowing, and it was cold so we gave up.



*Female Broad-tailed Hummingbird on her nest*

Around the next corner there were **Song Sparrows**, a couple **Cedar Waxwings**, and a couple American Robins hanging out with a **Swainson's Thrush**.



*Swainson's Thrush*



We continued on the path and there just weren't a lot of birds. We did find a few service berries to munch on though. We managed to add a couple **American Goldfinch** and a **MacGillivray's Warbler**. From there we went up to the meadow. It was really quiet there as well. We heard a few **Dark-eyed Juncos** and that's about it. We were headed back to the cars when Jess spotted Bullwinkle the **Moose** with teeny tiny antlers. A great consolation prize!

Down at Salamander Flat we hiked a little ways down the trail. We found an area with a good variety of birds. We saw **Pine Siskins**, a **Mountain Chickadee**, **Warbling Vireo**, **Ruby-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, **Western Tanager**, American Robin, **Orange-crowned**, **Yellow-rumped** and MacGillivray's **Warblers** and a **Northern Flicker** flew over a couple times. We also heard a Hermit Thrush and a **Cordilleran Flycatcher**. Some even saw a pair of **Red-naped Sapsuckers**.



*Orange-crowned Warbler*

Most everyone headed home but we stopped at Aspen Grove. We added a **Hairy Woodpecker**, tried hard for a **American Three-toed Woodpecker**...we thought we heard one drumming. We also had **Western Wood Pewee** and a **Chipping Sparrow**!! Thanks for coming!



*Hairy Woodpecker*

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## Back Yard Birds

**Yvonne Carter – Highland:** I returned from a trip to Oregon and Washington and noticed my birdfeeders in the backyard of our home in Highland still had birdseed. Our Coppers Hawk was back! Birds were hiding out.

**Dave Hanscom – Park City:** Western Kingbirds in Park City. New yard bird, and the first time I've seen them at this high an elevation.

**Holly Minor – Erda:** I've had a pair of Swainson's hawks with the recently fledged juvenile hanging out on our land in Erda. They've been very protective of the juvenile and even made me a little late to work one morning because one of the parents wouldn't let me near my car!

**Milt Moody – Provo:** This year's crop of newly hatched **Band-tailed Pigeons** is showing up at my feeders later this year (by at least 3 weeks, in the 7 years I've kept track). They've usually started to show up at my Provo feeders in June. Here's a photo of an adult with the first youngster to make an appearance this year, as well as a close up of this minor celebrity.

