



Utah County Birders Newsletter

June 2023

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JUNE MEETING:

Thursday June 8th at 7pm

Come join us for a *BIRD WALK* with Dennis Shirley along Skipper Bay Trail. We will meet at the parking area.

Skipper Bay Trail

(Part of the [Provo River / Jordon River Parkway](#) going north from Utah Lake State Park)



Directions: Go west on Center Street in Provo until you cross the bridge across the Provo River (just before you enter Utah Lake State Park). Turn right immediately and go north about a block to the "T" where you turn left into a small parking lot. The trail goes north from the west end of this narrow parking lot.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS:

Saturday June 3rd, 8am **DIAMOND FORK CANYON**

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/NDmBtk1dHu3bjWHa7>

Meet at 8am at the Chevron at Powerhouse Rd and HWY 6 in Spanish Fork. We will drive up Diamond Fork Canyon looking for canyon specialties like MacGillivray's Warbler, Gray Catbird, Fox Sparrow, Green-tailed Towhee, and Vireos.

Thursday June 15th, 6pm **MT NEBO SCENIC LOOP**

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/J2X9AhXo6ySgJmQo9>

Meet at 6pm at the Tesoro gas station at the mouth of Nephi Canyon. We will bird Bear Canyon and try to get up to Devil's Kitchen if it is open.

For most field trips it is best to carpool as much as possible, many places that we go can be narrow canyons, or other busy roads. Bring a walkie-talkie if you can, it helps the convoy relay what is being seen, and reasons for stops.

President's Message – June 2023

By Yvonne Carter

A couple of weeks ago, I was in the east foothills of San Diego with my daughter and family. As I drove along a highway in the late afternoon, ahead of me in some tall trees, a turkey vulture sprang up out of the large, tall tree with 3 or 4 sparrow-sized birds chasing it. And this morning, I stepped out the front of my home to check the sprinklers and looking up, I saw a Red-Tailed Hawk being chased by, sure enough, sparrow sized birds. We know these parents were trying to protect their young. Despite the difference in size, these parents were doing their duty.

In our world today, our young children and grandchildren are being exposed to dangers the likes of which could cause emotional and/or physical harm, worse than ever before in our society. Can the sparrows teach us a lesson?

Which brings me to another related topic. I was chatting with a fellow birder on a recent field trip, and we were talking about the challenge of trying to go birding while on trips with family. A while back, I had two sons in Florida at the same time and I always made sure I was there between November and February. My sons would jokingly ask me, "Mom, are you here to visit or are you really here to go birding?!!" It is a challenge to try birding while with family out sight-seeing or other family activities. Wherever you are going, before you leave home make a list of hotspots in the areas you will be traveling to. Just bring along extra equipment--you never know!

Happy birding!
Yvonne

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

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Article and photos by Danny Nelson

Sandhill Crane

Antigone canadensis

LENGTH 42"

WINGSPAN 77"

WEIGHT 10.4 lb.

The loud call of the Sandhill Crane flying over lets you know they are in the vicinity. The sound can be heard for a great distance and they are extremely noisy. They travel in family groups and their spring migration is from mid-February to late May with peaks from March to early May. Fall migration is from September to December with peaks in October and November. They migrate ahead of the frozen water where they group together in shallow ponds for security and feed in fields and farmlands. Sandhills are one of the two cranes in America this is the Gray Crane. They are easy to identify flying by their extended neck, the legs trail behind and distinctive red crown.

Breeding season begins April in Utah with a single-brood with usually 2 eggs rarely 1 or 3. Eggs are laid every 2 days they are incubated by both sexes for 30-32 days. Young tended by both parents. Hatch 1 day apart and leave the nest soon after hatched. Fed by adults on small items, feed themselves by the second week. Young can fly at 70 days and remain with the family group until the following year.

We have several Wildlife refuges with the Sandhill Crane the main attraction. I have enjoyed two of them:

Bosque del Apache NWR in Socorro New Mexico, thousands of Sandhill Cranes and snow geese in November.

North Platte NWR near Scottsbluff Nebraska this is a good spot for spring migration.

You can hear the sound of the sandhills when the sun is just rising and the clouds are low or watch them take off into the wind and seem to fly right in front of you going the same speed as the wind.

Something you will never forget!



Sources: Sibley Field Guide to Birds; Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion

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

FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

UAH COUNTY HOT SPOTS

Monday May 15, 2023

Report by Suzi Holt



Goshen Canyon (Richard Glassford)

12 Birders got up early and met at 7 am at Walmart in Payson. Our first birds were **Great-tailed Grackles**, **Eurasian-collard Dove** and **California Gulls**! On our way to Warm Springs, we saw **Cliff Swallows**, **Canada Goose**, **Brewer's Blackbirds** and **Western Kingbirds**.

First stop was Warm Springs WMA.

Of course, our first birds were **Eurasian-collard Dove**, **European Starling** and **House Sparrow**!

We also saw **Black-billed Magpie**, **Western Kingbird**, **American Robin**, **Bullock's Oriole**, **Mourning Dove** and **American Kestrel**.



Kitty and Rex (Esther Sumner)

Around the corner up on the railroad tracks we saw **Yellow Warbler**, **Eastern Kingbird**, **Northern Rough-winged Swallow**, **Red-winged** and **Yellow-headed Blackbird**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Yellow-rumped Warbler**, **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, **Brown-headed Cowbird**, **Song Sparrow** and heard a **Marsh Wren** and **Sandhill Crane**. We found a tiny gray meowing kitty, poor baby! We tried to leave him, but he kept following us. So, we called my aunt Geniel, the "cat lover", and she came to the rescue. After that we saw **Western Meadowlark**, **Common Yellowthroat**, **Northern Harrier**, **Wilson's Snipe** and heard a **Willet**.



Eastern Kingbird (Suzi Holt)

Next stop was the Goshen Ocean. There were a few **Mallards**, **Willetts** calling and displaying, **Gadwall**, a couple **Canada Goose**, a cute **Semipalmated Plover**, **American Avocet**, **Killdeer**, **Horned Lark** and Eastern Kingbird.

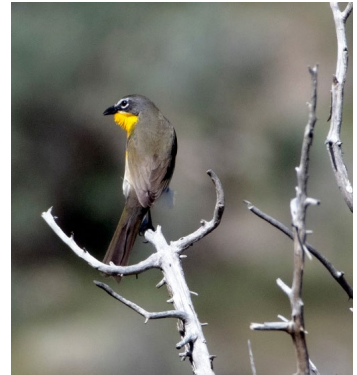
Up we went to Goshen Canyon. We saw **Lark Sparrow**, lots more Kingbirds, Barn, **Rough-winged** and **Cliff Swallows**, **Lazuli Bunting**, **Yellow-breasted Chat**, **Bullock's Oriole**, **White-crowned Sparrow**, **California Gull**, and **Wilson's**, **Yellow and Orange-crowned Warblers**. Up the road we saw a **Rock Wren**, heard a **Canyon Wren** and saw lots more Yellow-breasted Chats! There were also Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, a **Virginia's Warbler** and a **juvenile Great-horned Owl**! As we turned around in Juab County we stopped and heard a **Chukar**, saw more Yellow-breasted Chats, an American Robin, Yellow Warbler, **Golden Eagle**, and Barn Swallows. On the way down the canyon, we added **Woodhouse's Scrub Jays**.



Lazuli Buntin (Suzi)



Juvenile Great-horned Owl (Richard Glassford)



Yellow-breasted Chat (Suzi Holt)

Along the backroads in Elberta we added **Common Raven**, **Great Blue Heron**, **Swainson's** and **Red-tailed Hawk**.



Brewer's Sparrow (Amanda Tinoco)

Along Elberta Slant we had more Lark Sparrows and Horned Larks, lots of **Long-billed Curlews**, a couple **Ferruginous Hawks** and a **Burrowing Owl**. Up the road a little way we added **Gray Vireo**, **Black-throated Gray Warbler**, **Spotted Towhee**, **Brewer's Sparrow**, and **Turkey Vulture**. With so much snow the streams were running along both sides of the road undercutting it in a few spots and at one point we had to cross through the water.



Gray Vireo (Amanda Tinoco)

We finally made it to the Fill R Up gas station in Eureka for lunch! Up the road in Juab County we had **Swainson's Thrush, Plumbeous and Warbling Vireo, Black-throated Gray, Virginia's, and Yellow-rumped Warblers**. We also saw **Green-tailed** and **Spotted Towhee, Broad-tailed Hummingbird, Gray Flycatcher** and **Mountain Bluebird**.



Green-tailed Towhee (Suzi)



Broad-tailed Hummingbird (Richard)



Mountain Bluebird (Suzi)

Next, we took Dividend Road. First stop had **House Finch, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Mountain Bluebird, Spotted Towhee**. Up around the corner we had **Chipping Sparrow, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Western Tanager, Dusky and Gray Flycatchers, Juniper Titmouse**, and more **Black-throated Gray Warblers**! Down in the ghost town of Dividend we added **Say's Phoebe, Rock Wren and Ash-throated Flycatcher**!!



Western Tanager (Suzi)



Ash-throated Flycatcher (Suzi)



Dusky Flycatcher (Suzi)



Gray Flycatcher (Suzi)

At Goshen Reservoir we saw **Redhead, Eared Grebe, American Coot and Bufflehead!**

In Goshen Fields we had a family of Great-horned Owls, Virginia's and Yellow Warbler, a Lazuli Bunting and watched a Great Blue Heron take off with a snake down Goshen Bay Road. It was an awesome day!! I got a bad sunburned face but had a lot of fun!! Thanks to everyone who joined and for contributing a few photos! Happy Birding!



Great-horned Owls in Goshen (Richard)

Pinyon/Juniper Specialties

5/27/23

Report by KC Childs

A group of 9 birders met at the Payson Wal-Mart early on Saturday May 27th. The objective of the trip was to head to the other side of Utah Lake and try to find as many of the nesting Pinyon/Juniper species as possible. It was decided that Soldiers Pass on Lake Mountain would provide the best opportunity to see most of them.

The trip started off with the traditional **Great-tailed Grackles, Barn Swallows** and **California Gulls** at the parking lot. We then proceeded to head west through Santaquin and down Redwood Road toward Soldiers Pass. While we were driving out it was obvious that **Swainson's Hawks** were abundant along the power lines, with a few **Red-tailed Hawks** mixed in. We pulled off of Redwood Road onto Soldiers Pass Road and stopped to look for any Burrowing Owls right away. Unfortunately, no owls were seen, but we were able to get some good looks at some **Horned Larks**.



Horned Lark by Yvonne Carter

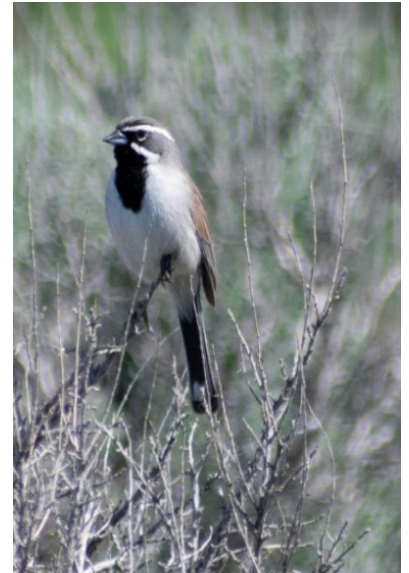


Lark Sparrow by Yvonne Carter



Bewick's Wren by Matt Bekker

We started creeping up the road and added **Lark Sparrows**, **Common Ravens**, and **Western Meadowlarks** in the grasslands. At our first stop in the junipers, we were able to see a **Chipping Sparrow**, **Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher**, more Lark Sparrows, and a Red-tailed Hawk perched on the junipers. We crept up the road a bit further and at the next stop we were able to get great views at a **Gray Vireo**, **Juniper Titmouse**, **Bewick's Wren**, and some glimpses at a **Gray Flycatcher**. We headed up the road and as we got out, we were treated to an **Ash-throated Flycatcher** calling, another Gray Flycatcher, some **Western Kingbirds**, **Mourning Doves**, another singing Gray Vireo, **Rock Wrens**, and Machel heard a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** singing, which helped in us locating him. We then headed to the other side of the pass where we were able to get great looks at a **Black-throated Sparrow**, a late White-crowned **Sparrow**, **Brewer's Sparrow**, and a **Sagebrush Sparrow**. Also, while driving on that road, we saw **California Gulls** and **American White Pelicans** flying over.



Black-throated Sparrow by Matt Bekker

We as a group decided to head over to Elberta Slant Road and look at a **Burrowing Owl**, and some **Long-Billed Curlews**. Unfortunately, the owl was way out in the distance, though we were able to see him. We also saw some **Ravens**, Horned Larks, Lark Sparrows, and a male **Northern Harrier**.

We decided to go out into the Goshen Fields and see if we couldn't see some **Great Horned Owls**. We luckily were able to see 3 owls and added some more birds in that area including **Bullocks Orioles**, **Yellow Warblers**, **Red Winged Blackbird**, **American Goldfinch**, **Black-billed Magpie**, **House Sparrows**, and some **European Starlings**.



Great-horned Owl Juveniles by Yvonne Carter



Mamma Owl by Matt Bekker

We decided to call it a day, but on our way back to Payson we saw some **Sandhill Cranes** flying over Warm Springs. It was a wonderful day with many beautiful and quality species. It was nice to be out on a beautiful morning with a wonderful group of birders that all aided in helping make the trip a successful and great one! We saw about 36 species, and many in the group got life birds, and everyone in the group got at least one new year bird. It was a successful morning!

Back Yard Birds

Tammy Northrup – Lindon: On May 9 and 10 we had several **Evening Grosbeaks** visit our Lindon backyard. I counted 5 the first morning! They flew back and forth between our trees. A couple of them ate some seeds on the ground under one of our feeders. It was such a fun surprise!

Noel Zaugg – Springville: I live in Springville, and my little stream, with its adjacent steep brushy and woody slope, serves as a migrant trap during spring and fall. Between April 8 and May 10, I saw (in chronological order) **Ruby-crowned Kinglet; Yellow-rumped Warbler; Cassin's Finch; Lazuli Bunting; Blue-gray Gnatcatcher; Yellow Warbler; Green-tailed Towhee; Black-chinned Hummingbird; Virginia's Warbler; Orange-crowned Warbler; Dusky Flycatcher; Bullock's Oriole; MacGillivray's Warbler; Black-headed Grosbeak; Barn Swallow; Tree Swallow; Western Tanager; Common Yellowthroat; and Black-throated Gray Warbler.** I was gone from May 12 to May 18, so I'm sure I missed some that came through during that week. I often get Olive-sided Flycatcher and Western Wood-Pewee and some other empids, but not this year.

I also had a **Belted Kingfisher** pause to check out the stream, only the fourth time I have seen one in my yard in seven years. It stopped long enough for me to get a picture.



Milt Moody – Provo: I've seen **Band-tailed Pigeons** every morning in May except for two, here in my yard in Provo. (They come every day but I don't always see them -- the seed level tells the tale). Love to see the subtle beauty of these tastefully attired birds up close -- the yellow bill with the black tip, the red eye ring the white collar with the gold and green iridescent patch below and the purple cast on the head and down the front. What a pleasure!

Yvonne Carter – Highland: It is a delight to stay home in the morning! I work part-time for Canyons School Dist. and leave at 7 a.m. so I miss the birds in my yard at that time. Yesterday, I stepped out to do some gardening and found 2 new yard birds: Western Tanagers and a Warbling Vireo! Schools out! I'll watch for more new birds in my yard. It also pays to do gardening, this morning I had two Sandhill Cranes fly over!

Suzi Holt – Payson: On May 4th I had a male **Calliope Hummingbird** come and stay for 4 days! Usually he comes in the spring, gets a drink and moves on! A few birders were able to come by and see him and some got a lifer! It sure was a fun visitor!