



# Utah County Birders Newsletter

April 2024

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## APRIL MEETING

Thursday [April 18<sup>th</sup>](#), 7pm at Bean Museum and on Zoom

**\*\*NOTE THIS IS NOT OUR REGULAR MEETING NIGHT\*\***

Our guest speaker will be Riley Porter, who will give us an update on his Masters work with cavity nesting ducks and owls that they compete with for nesting space. There will be baby duck and owl photos to enjoy. Please join us!

LINK TO 2024 Challenge: <http://utahbirds.org/ucb/Newsletters/2023/2024Challenge.pdf>

LINK to 2024 Planned Field Trips: <http://utahbirds.org/ucb/FieldTrips/2024FieldTrips.pdf>

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

We've been invited to bird the Provo River Delta on Saturday May 11<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am while it is still closed to the public. If you are interested, please RSVP to Keeli at [keeli.marvel@gmail.com](mailto:keeli.marvel@gmail.com). Because it is being restored as a wildlife management area it will count towards our birding challenge.

The Smith Family Archaeology Preserve (located south of Saratoga Springs) is doing spring tours of the property in April and May. The tour consists of a two-hour hike on the preserve's property located on the west side of Utah Lake. During the tour we view dozens of rock imagery panels and talk about the history and importance of Utah Lake and the surrounding areas. Signups go fast! Click on this link to sign up:

<https://forms.gle/D1JMRpPfdp3aCfQw8>

(This is also posted on our Facebook page)

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## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup> - Ouray NWR, Pelican Lake Angler Access, and Starvation SP

Meet at 7:00am at the Orem Center Steet Park & Ride. We will be gone all day so bring a lunch. Also, if you have a State Parks Pass to bring, we could carpool into the park.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Yes, Spring is here despite the surprises we get with the fluctuating weather. The Great Salt Lake Bird Festival is happening on May 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup>. This year they are not mailing out their brochure. All of the information is online, listing activities and field trips, plus the classes and extra activities and family activities, and the fees. Registration is online and when you have registered for a particular field trip, you will receive a QR code which is needed to participate in the field trip. The field trips go from Thursday the 16<sup>th</sup> through Sunday, the 19<sup>th</sup>. Our own Keeli is leading two field trips and KC Childs and Esther Sumner are leading a field trip, in Utah County. The field trips are conducted all along the Wasatch Front from Utah County to Box Elder County and Cache County. Also, take a look at the classes that are offered, which are mainly held on Saturday, May 18<sup>th</sup> throughout the day.

I highly recommend the bird festival for those who desire more experience and confidence in birding, especially beginners. When I was just starting out birdwatching, the bird festival was a great help. I have also attended a few other bird festivals, especially in Florida, which really opened my eyes to bird watching opportunities in other states.

As a sidenote, I discovered that the program, Nature, on PBS, has a special program each season on just birds. They are well-produced, so check out that program.

Happy birding!  
Yvonne

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## BIRD OF THE MONTH

Kalij Pheasant

*Lophura leucomelanos*

Article and photos by Dan Simmons



Hawaii is a great place for a vacation and there are lots of birds to be seen, but relatively few of these are native land birds. When the first Polynesian settlers arrived on the islands they found many fascinating endemic birds, but over time most of those have either become extinct or been reduced to very small populations. The majority of the birds now seen away from the coastline are non-native species. It is one of those, the Kalij Pheasant, that I will cover in this article. A few years ago, while attending a medical conference on the Big Island (and of course doing a little birding) Leesa and I came across several Kalij Pheasants in the area of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. I took the accompanying photos in that area.

Kalij Pheasants are native to the Himalayan foothills, being found from Pakistan and Nepal down through Myanmar to western Thailand. There are nine different subspecies that vary somewhat in appearance across that range. The birds found in Hawaii are the descendants of 67 individuals that were introduced as game birds in 1962, reportedly from breeding facilities in Texas and Michigan. They were apparently introduced to both the Big Island and Oahu, but I did not find them listed on a current online list of the birds of Oahu.

As with other pheasants, Kalij Pheasants display marked sexual dimorphism, with the males being mostly a dark bluish/black and white while the females are a mottled brown or tannish color with darker tail feathers. Both sexes have crests of varying sizes.

Kalij Pheasants are omnivorous and there has been some concern about them eating, then spreading weed seeds as they have extended their range across the Big Island. The pheasants in their natural habitat in Asia are primarily monogamous, but a study by a researcher from UC Riverside on the Hawaiian population found that the Hawaiian birds tend to form groups of one female with several males. It is speculated that the unusually high density of the Hawaiian population has influenced their breeding behavior. The birds on the Big Island have apparently been well-studied, as noted by the tag or tracking device attached to the female in the photos.



References: 1. Hawaii Birding Trails ([hawaiibirdingtrails.hawaii.gov/bird/kalij-pheasant](http://hawaiibirdingtrails.hawaii.gov/bird/kalij-pheasant)). 2. Birds of Hawaii ([birdsofhawaii.info/p/about.html](http://birdsofhawaii.info/p/about.html)). 3. Audubon Magazine, Sept. 8, 2016.

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

## FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge 3/9/24  
(Article and photos by Suzi Holt)



*Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge Auto Loop*

19 birders met up at the refuge at 9:30 am. It was a beautiful day. A little chilly but so beautiful! We started our list at the Visitor's Center with a couple **Bald Eagles**, lots of **Canada Geese**, a couple **Northern Harrier's**, a few **Song and House Sparrows**. **Red-winged Blackbirds** and **Western Meadowlarks** were singing too. We had a **Common Raven** and a pair of **American Kestrels** sitting on top of the nesting box!!

As we made our way toward the auto loop we saw a **Great-horned Owl** roosting in a tree, had 3 **Sandhill Cranes** fly over the road in front of us, saw **Gadwall**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Great Blue Heron**, **American Coot**, **American Wigeon**, **Eurasion-collard Dove**, **European Starlings**, **Mallards**, a **Red-tailed Hawk** and a couple **Rough-legged Hawks**. We passed a few distant **Tundra Swans** and had a few **Double-crested Cormorants** fly by and saw a **Horned Lark**, **Brewer's Blackbirds**, **Killdeer** and **Northern Pintails**. We had 24 species before we started the auto loop!!!



*Great Horned Owl*



*Rough-legged Hawk*

As we started the loop we saw **Ring-billed** and **California Gulls**, heard **Marsh Wrens** and **Savannah Sparrows**. Added more **Tundra Swans**, **Buffleheads**, **Common Goldeneye**, **Common Merganser**, **Lesser Scaup**, **Redhead**, **Hooded Merganser**, **Green-winged Teal** and **Canvasback!!** We saw

a couple more Marsh Wrens and heard lots more songs Sparrows. Some heard a **Virginia's Rail** too. We found some closer Swans and tried to pick out a Trumpeter to no avail. We saw **Clark's** and **Western Grebes** together. And we found a "**Whistling**" **Tundra Swan**! Oh and one car saw an **American Avocet**. Our final total was 48 species!!!



*Tundra Swans*



*Canvas Back and Redhead*



*Western Grebe*



*Tundra Swan "Whistling" variety*



We also enjoyed the exhibits in the Visitor's center and Tatum completed his jr. ranger for BRMBR and also completed the fishing one too! He got two new pins to add to his ranger hat!! Thanks to all those who came! Some headed up to Weston's to see the Brambling. Our car stopped by Lee Kay Ponds and found 25 species. Yippie!!



*Suzi, Ember & Tatum*



*Ranger TNT*

Warm Springs WMA and Utah Lake Wetlands Preserve (Goshen unit) Field Trip 3/23/24  
(Article and photos by Suzi Holt)

We had a great group of birders show up this morning for our Warm Springs WMA fieldtrip. 29!!! Although the rain didn't show up the wind did. So, it was a tough go. We managed 21 species here. Starting off with **Eurasian-collard Doves, House Sparrow, California Quail, and European Starlings**. We parked the cars and began walking Warm Springs Road. We added **Canada Geese** and heard **Western Meadowlarks**.

We climbed up on the Railroad tracks and added **Cinnamon Teal, House Finch, Red-winged Blackbirds, Black-billed Magpie, and American Robin**. As we walked the road we added **Song Sparrow, California Gull, Mallard, Sandhill Cranes, and Northern Harriers**. We heard a **Ring-necked Pheasant** too. We also saw one **Tree Swallow**.



Warm Springs Road-Railroad Tracks



Sandhill Cranes

From there we decided to go to the Goshen Ocean which is part of the Utah Lake Wetlands Preserve. We saw **Eared Grebe, Northern Pintail, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon, Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Killdeer, Canada Goose, Red-winged Blackbird, American Robin, Black-billed Magpie, California Gull, American Kestrel, Common Raven, European Starlings, Northern Harrier, and Northern Flicker**. We got 20 species there!



We stopped along Warm Springs WMA on our way back and added **White-crowned Sparrow** and **American Kestrel**. That put us at 21 species for Warm Springs WMA. These could be 2 different areas. WARM SPRINGS WMA and UTAH LAKE WETLANDS PRESERVE if you want to go back later and add more birds to get to 24 species. Thanks for coming!!



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## Back Yard Birds

**Bruce Robinson – West Jordan:** Spotted Towhees, I love their “attitude”!

**Suzi Holt – Payson:** Pine Siskins and Woodhouse’s Scrub Jay.