



Utah County Birders Newsletter

December 2024

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DECEMBER MEETING

Thursday, December 12th, 2024 7pm at the Monte L. Bean Museum and on Zoom

Christmas Bird Count Review. We will go over plans for the Provo and Payson Christmas Bird Counts, hand out assignments to anyone who hasn't signed up yet, talk about the history of the longest running bird count in the world (the CBC!), and do a little ID review to go over some tricky species identification that might be handy for the count. This will be a great meeting for many of the newer birders who have joined us in recent months even if you can't join us for a count.

(The zoom link will go out in an email the day before the meeting.)

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

How are you doing on the 2024 UCB Challenge? You have about 5 more weeks to finish up. Here is the link to the level goals: <http://utahbirds.org/ucb/Newsletters/2023/2024Challenge.pdf>

If you have already met your goal, please send me your name (as you would like to see it on a certificate), and what level you have completed, Gold, Silver or Bronze.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

No field trips are planned for December. Please plan to help with the Christmas Bird Count for Provo and Payson!

Provo CBC Info: The Provo CBC will be on Saturday, Dec 14th. If you'd like to participate in the Provo CBC please shoot me an email (keeli.marvel@gmail.com) and we'll get you signed up. Let us know if you're a beginner and would prefer to be paired with a team. We will meet for a potluck and the tally at 6pm at Utah Lake State Park in the main building. You don't need to pay the park entry fee to get in.

Payson CBC Info: The Payson CBC will be on Saturday, Dec. 28th. We will meet at 8am at the Payson McDonalds to finalize assignments, but you can sign up early by sending me an email. All counters can either arrange to drop off their totals with me at the end of the day, or send me an email with your count totals and total time and mileage

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President's Message:

It's the 'giving spirit' season of the year with Christmas right around the corner. Although we should be giving all through the year, Christmas gives us the opportunity to share with family members and friends our love and knowledge of birds. There are beautiful and knowledgeable books on the market that instruct and help identify birds, besides pictorial illustration books that can be purchased and given to those special people. For family gatherings, there are games like "Wingspan" or beautiful puzzles to gather around and do. And don't forget bird feeders as well. I remember during the 2020 'Covid year' one of my daughters gave me a puzzle with all sorts of birds, produced by National Geographic which gave me the opportunity to discuss and ID each of the birds. I have 8 children spread out all over the country and each family posted their completed puzzles on our "Whats Up" app. So spread the love and knowledge you have with family members and friends during your time of gathering.

Our Christmas Bird Count is coming up on December 14th, and Keeli Marvel is in charge of that traditional activity. So, give her your support. Keeli is also in charge of the Payson CBC.

Happy birding!
Yvonne

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Redpoll

Acanthis flammea

Article and photo by KC Childs



One of my favorite birds this time of year to run across is a Redpoll. Until recently the Redpoll was considered two separate species: A Hoary Redpoll and a Common Redpoll. Now they are considered a subspecies of the Redpoll. In Utah we rarely see Redpolls, but when we see them, they offer a beautiful pop of color during cold winter days. They are known as acrobatic little finches that have adapted to feed on different small seeds. During winter in Utah, they can be seen occasionally on thistle bird feeders, grass seeds, or feeding on the catkins of birch trees. They however do not summer in Utah, but breed in the northern tier of Canada and in Alaska in the boreal forests near streams and forest edges. So, if you want to see a Redpoll in Utah, you will have to get out and look for them during winter. When looking for these nomadic finches in Utah there are a few things you will want to look for when trying to get a look at this beautiful small finch. The first thing you want to look for is catkins in birch trees, they are often found feeding in these trees. Next, you will also want to listen for their finch-like chid chid chid call, and like other finches they can often be heard calling during the winter. Finally look for a small black and white streaked bird around the size of a Pine Siskin, with a red cap, black lores, black beard, a bright yellow bill, and if you see a male, a rosy pink chest. They're truly a bird that can cheer anyone up on a gloomy winter day. As you get out on winter walks, or feed birds in your backyard, keep your eye out for these beautiful little colorful acrobatic wonders.

Sources: The brain of KC Childs and the Sibley Guide.

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

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Loon Loop Rockport, Echo, East Canyon SP

November 9, 2024

Article by Suzi Holt



Rockport Reservoir-Suzi Holt

Rockport State Park

We Began our trip at Rockport SP. Our first pullout we had **Common Loon, Western and Clark's Grebes** and **Black-billed Magpie, California Gull** and **Franklin's Gull**. A beautiful **Bald Eagle** was sitting on top of the power pole. We heard **American Pipit, American Goldfinch** and a **Black-capped Chickadee**. We also saw **Common Raven, Redhead, Lesser Scaup** and **Common Mergansers** and an active **Golden Eagle**. Next stop we saw **Pied-billed Grebes, Eared Grebes, American Coots**, another **Bald Eagle** and **European Starlings**. Some walked out on the mudflats and saw **Herring** and **Ring-billed** and lots of **California Gulls**. We went to the other side and got the same but added a **Red-tailed Hawk**. We joined the rest at the Campground and saw **Dark-eyed Juncos, Downy Woodpecker, Song Sparrow** and **Eurasian Collared-Dove** and **Mallard**. Some saw a **Canada Goose** as well. At the next pullout in the Campground, we saw **Bufflehead**, and a **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was a great sight! We also added **Green-winged Teal! Wild Turkeys** were just along the road too! At the marina we added **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** and saw some more **Black-capped Chickadees**. A couple **Northern Flickers** flew over one with **yellow** under the wing, possibility of a **Yellow-shafted!** We also saw **Red-breasted Mergansers**. We totaled 35 at Rockport others got 36 with an **American Kestrel**.



Bald Eagle, Jessica Holt



Golden Eagle and gull, Richard Glassford



Bufflehead, Suzi Holt



Lesser Black-backed Gull and California Gulls, Suzi Holt

Echo Reservoir SP

We stopped first at the river inlet. We saw Canada Goose, **Black-billed Magpies**, Western and Pied-billed Grebes, Common Loon, Common and Red-breasted Mergansers, Mallard, Green-winged Teal, **Double-crested Cormorant** and **American Coot**. A Bald Eagle flew up high over the cliffs. We also added an **American Goldfinch** and a **Western Meadowlark**. At the next stop we added **Common Goldeneye**, **Northern Shoveler** and a **Pacific Loon!!!** We also saw a Red-tailed Hawk and another Bald Eagle.

One carload decided to go on to East Canyon and get the **Surf Scoters** and 35 other species. It took us a while, but we added Dark-eyed Junco, **Vesper Sparrow**, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden Eagle and more Black-capped Chickadees. We still had a few species left to get. We added Wild Turkey, European Starling, **Pinyon Jays** and Eurasian Collared-Doves! All of us getting 27 species!! The weather wasn't too bad, and we all had a great time!



Red-breasted Mergansers, Suzi Holt



Pacific Loon, Amand Tinoco



Provo River Delta

Saturday NOV 16

By Keeli Marvel



On the chilly morning of Nov 16th 14 birders met to bird the newly opened Provo River Delta. We started at the parking lot which is now the newly designated Skipper Bay Trailhead and walked from there down to the tower and back, ending the trip with 32 species. Despite the cold weather we managed to pick up several good species. One of the great birds we saw was a **Merlin**, which was a first for this winter for me. The **Mute Swan** was still hanging out in the river inlet of the delta, and we had **White-crowned** and **Song Sparrows** along the trail in the brush. Ducks were pretty scarce, likely due to the presence of duck hunters on the other side of the delta, but we picked up **Gadwall**, **Mallard**, and some **Buffleheads**. Later we spotted a huge raft of ducks too far out on the lake to ID. Two surprising late season highlights were an **Osprey** and a **Spotted Sandpiper**. Down by the birding tower we picked up a **Western Grebe**. We walked all the way to the end of the trail at the mouth of the delta and picked up a whole bunch of **Killdeer** with **American Pipits** and a sneaky **Least Sandpiper** mixed in on the spit of land across the mouth of the delta. A pair of **Bald Eagles** were present in their usual place in the trees on the far side of the delta and gave us a nice flyby. Overall, it was a great trip with some new faces and it was really neat to see the Provo River Delta Project come to fruition. I anticipate it being a great place for birders to visit for years to come.

Turkey Trot

Saturday November 21, 2024
Article and photos by Suzi Holt



2024- can you believe it is our 6th TURKEY TROT!!! It was our biggest trot ever!!!

We began at Vivian Park just off South Fork Road, at the end home we started our count with 8 turkeys and a couple Stellar's Jays! Then up South Fork Road we went. In the small subdivision it was a real turkey chase! As Tatum and Ember chased, we counted. Turkeys were all over the place I think we added 132 just around the lawn. Tatum was set on having turkey for dinner tonight. Fortunately, there was no catch there but he did find a feather! We added some **Black-capped Chickadees**, a few **American Robins** and **Common Ravens** at Big Springs Park. Up towards the end of the road we chased a few more gobblers and added them to our tally. On the way back down 18 more were at Conrad ranch. A few were crossing the bridge over the ponds. We enjoyed our tasty turkey cookies (the only turkey we'll be eating today) while watching the resident **American Dipper!** Our total for the South Fork was 285!! Our highest count ever in that canyon!

We tried East Lawn Cemetery and only came up with a few rabbits, a couple **juncos**, a **Townsend's Solitaire**, a few American Robins and a **Red-naped Sapsucker!!!**

We called Dennis as we headed for Diamond Fork. He had done Woodland Hills and tallied 57!! In Payson Canyon they also got 151!!!

Diamond Fork was a big fat 0 for turkeys but we had 14 **Lewis's Woodpeckers!!!!** We stopped for lunch at Red Ledges and had just started assembling our chicken salad sandwiches as some idiot drove by and we seriously thought we'd been shot. Merlin picked up the big bang as the smoke dissipated. It gave us a pretty big scare. We drove over and found what looked to be a homemade firework. Not a funny trick! We decided it best to eat somewhere else, so we drove up Juan Rhodes. This is where the huge family of Lewis's Woodpeckers were hanging out.

Our next stop was Santaquin Canyon. We caught the last 4 turkeys of a flock of 18 going across the road! Tatum tried to catch one but once again came up empty handed.

Last stop was Payson Canyon. We figured if we found more than Dennis we'd add ours to his tally but we only found 80. My Aunt Geniel had at least 30 in Elk Ridge!!

Final count for the 2024 Turkey Trot was 553!!!! We smashed our record of 491!! Thanks for coming and enjoying the turkeys! We hope you have a Happy Thanksgiving! Rest assured all the Utah County turkeys are accounted for!



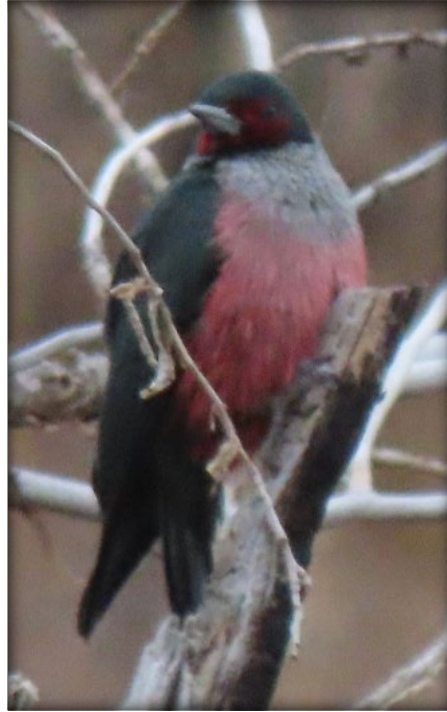
Tatum chasing down dinner



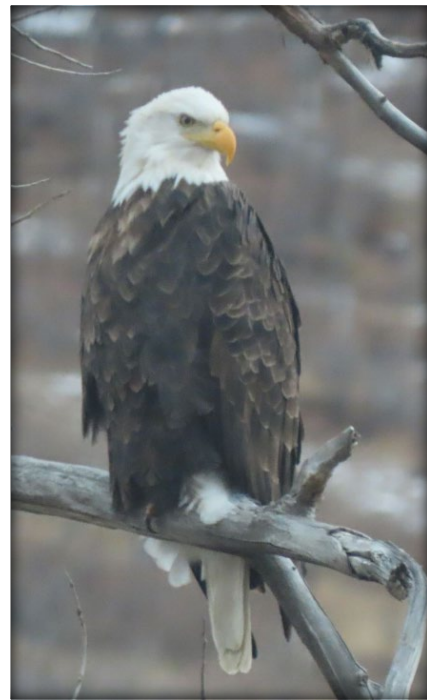
Suzi and her famous Turkey Cookies!



Townsend's Solitaire



Lewis's Woodpecker



Bald Eagle



Woodhouse's Scrub Jay



The Gobbler Group

~Art Gallery~
Submissions from our talented group!



Photography-Ross Bartholomew This photo is of an Oriental Pied Hornbill hunting bats as they leave the Gomantong Cave in Borneo (Sabah, Malaysia).



Holly Minor-Cross Stitch Great Blue Herons
Holly won first place for this piece at the Utah State Fair in 2021



Tammy Northrup-Watercolor Here is a watercolor I did of a Western Screech Owl. It was inspired by some juvenile Western Screech Owls we had in our backyard this summer.



Jim Strong-Photography Scaled Quail, not many of these birds in Utah. I spread some bird seed around and set up my camera on a tripod. This photo is from my son's home in Pueblo, CO.

Jim Strong-Photography
Coopers Hawk
On Antelope Island in the
back yard of the farm
He was hunting
California Quail.





Lynn Garner-Photography

Great Egret at Flowserve, Mandarin Duck at Spring Lake.

It was still there as of October 25.

The Red-breasted Nuthatch made the cavity in our old apricot tree, and the Greater Roadrunner is the one that we discovered in our yard in July; we have only conjecture to tell us how it got there.



Catherine White - Watercolor Here is a Bluebird painting I did a while back.

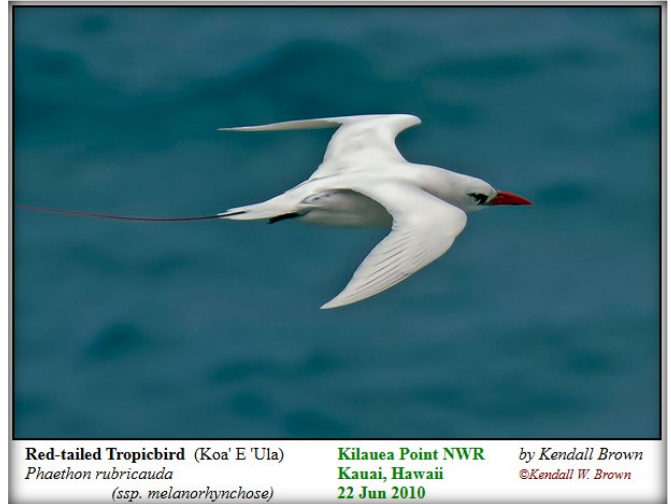


Suzi Holt-Watercolor Here are a few of my watercolor paintings they're funny but I am having fun making Christmas gifts :)

Back Yard Birds

Yvonne Carter – Highland: Ten wild Turkeys came trotting through my backyard nonchalantly. Also, we had completed a new roof on our home, so the birdfeeders had to come down while that was going on. I sure missed the birds.

Machelle Johnson – Kauai, HI: I finally got to spend 5 days in Kauai. My favorite place to go was the Kilauea Point Lighthouse NWR. There we saw Red-footed Boobies, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters, Magnificent Frigatebirds, and White-tailed and Red-tailed Tropicbirds! We just missed the Laysan Albatross, they were expected to arrive any day. It was beautiful and magical!



Dennis Shirley – Elk Ridge: 11/26/24, 17 Wild Turkeys this morning!

Keeli Marvel – Saratoga Springs: Just had a Say's Phoebe land on my back porch. Poor buddy, there's snow on the ground and it's cold outside! There's usually a few that stick around my area, maybe because of the hot springs around the west side of the lake. Never spotted one in my yard before though.