



Utah County Birders Newsletter

July 2024

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JULY MEETING

We will not be having a meeting this month, but we will have a field trip the Saturday following our regular meeting night instead.

Saturday July 13, Wasatch Mountain State Park, 7:am to noon. Meet at the park and ride by Culver's in Orem, 708 N 1200 W. We will meet to carpool and then travel up to the state park and bird until we have our 24 species. Bring a state park pass if you've got one, and water, snacks, sunscreen, and bug spray.

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>

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday July 20th Dairy Fork WMA

Meet at 7:00 am on the south side of the Little Acorn 2600 E Canyon Spanish Fork.

**There is an overnight trip planned to Escalante NM, Kodachrome Basin SP, & Escalante Petrified Forest SP Sept 12 to 14th. If you are planning to go on that trip, please email machelle13johnson@yahoo.com so we can get an idea of the interest for that trip.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President's Message:

Two thoughts have crossed my mind lately. Be ready and stay alert to see the marvels of this world of ours—referring of course to this physical earth. I was driving south on the overpass of 5th East and I-15 in American Fork. On looking up, I saw a huge flock of American White Pelicans high up in the sky. You know how they are, soaring around in informal circles. It was such a marvel that I pulled over to the side of the road, when I safely could, to watch the Pelicans. Another time, I was driving north through Alpine and again, looking up, I noticed about 15 Turkey Vultures soaring around. What a marvelous earth we have to live on.

And second, be ready for surprises. Bart and I were doing a little day trip up in Heber Valley. Finishing up Wasatch Mountain State Park, we drove over to the east end of Jordanelle Reservoir to Rock Cliffs. They now have an active 'gate' or toll booth, and I caught site of a sign saying the Nature Center is open. This Nature Center was closed for a long time due to the inability to keep it staffed. I am not sure if this is the first year but the staffer (and they only have one) thought it was the first year for it to be open again. Note that they are only open on Thursdays and Fridays and SOME Saturdays. I got over 20 birds in a short time. That was a delightful surprise for me while out birding.

Happy birding!
Yvonne

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Chestnut-sided Warbler

Dumetella carolinensis

Article by Keeli Marvel, Photos by Esther Sumner



As many of you were aware (or had a chance to see for yourselves), we recently had a vagrant Chestnut-sided Warbler that was spotted on the Three Falls trail in Alpine. It was a very attractive looking breeding plumage male who was (possibly still is?) singing on territory hoping to attract a female who unfortunately will likely never show up. It took me a couple tries to see this crisply decorated little bird in Utah. Sometimes life runs in parallels and strangely enough, here I am again experiencing the species up close and personal in Maine. I'm up here this week attending my very first Department of Defense Partners in Flight meeting with a group of similarly minded bird nerds, biologists, and conservation professionals discussing how best to lead and guide bird conservation on military bases within the DoD. Fortunately, the chestnut-sided warbler I just got to see up here was about a hundred feet away from our meeting room and didn't require a 2-mile hike to observe.

Chestnut-sided warblers breed regularly up here in Maine, along with several other amazing warbler species, and I got to watch a beautiful male with his bright yellow cap and striking reddish brown flanks gathering food to take back to a nest right next to an access road at our meeting facility. As I gathered information for this article I learned several cool things about them. Their call is described as saying ‘*pleased, pleased, pleased to meatcha*’, kinda like a yellow warbler with a Mainer or northeastern accent, which I think is totally appropriate given the range of their breeding habitat.

Chestnut-sided warblers are migrants and spend their winters in a variety of habitats in Central America, included shade-grown coffee plantations (a good reason to support ethical coffee sourcing). On their wintering ground their primary food source shifts from the high protein insect diet they eat all summer to more of a fruit-based diet. On their breeding grounds, which stretch from Canada through the northeast down to Pennsylvania and into the Appalachian Mountain range, they nest in younger successional deciduous forests, usually no more than six feet off the ground. This means they prefer habitats that have been disturbed and are starting to regrow, or forests that have been stunted by disturbance. This preference means that they are actually more resilient than some species because they actively seek out sites that have been previously disturbed (which can occur from logging, fire, storm damage such as flooding, development, etc...). Adult Chestnut-sided warblers form monogamous pair bonds and the males will protect the female while she builds the nest and incubates eggs, and defend his territory from other males. What I thought was really cute was their form of territorial defense – the males scare off other males by straightening or lowering their tails, fluffing out their chestnut feathers, and yelling at other males. They lay 3-5 eggs which they incubate less than two weeks before they hatch, and the nestlings spend another 10-11 days in the nest before fledging. They’re fantastic little warblers and I’m so glad I got to experience them up close and personal and learn a little more about them writing this article.



Happy Birding!

Sources: Cornell’s All About Birds and Merlin

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

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Painted Rocks-Yuba Lake SP and Palisades SP

Article by Suzi Holt, photos by Jessica Holt



We left Payson Walmart at about 8:10 am headed for Painted Rocks Campground at Yuba Lake. We had 12 and met two more at the state park. We started by the group camping spot. We got great looks at a **Lazuli Bunting**, **Mountain Bluebirds**, **Rock Wren**, **Mourning Doves** and **Barn Swallows**. We walked over to the lakeside and looked out over the water. We found a few **Canada Geese**, **Clark's Grebes** and one **Western Grebe**.



Lazuli Bunting



Rock Wren



Clarks Grebe

Then Rich said what are those white and black birds over the mountain to the west. I got my eye on them, and they were 12 **Clark's Nutcrackers!!!** We also had a lot of **Ring-billed Gulls**, a huge flock of **American White Pelicans** and a **Turkey Vulture**. We were looking at the grebes again and saw an **American Coot** and a **Black-billed Magpie**. A **Killdeer** flew over by the island. We drove down by the boat launch and to the south on a dirt road. The first bird was a **Lark Sparrow**. We also saw a couple **Gadwall** fly off. In the tamarisks were quite a few birds, we found **House Finch**, **Ash-throated Flycatcher** and then heard a **Blue Grosbeak**. We enticed him in for a look a beautiful immature male. We also saw a couple of **Red-tailed Hawks** in the distance, a **Common Raven**, **Bullock's Oriole**, a couple **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** and heard a **Western Meadowlark**. Some in the group saw some **Long-billed Curlews** too. We also had a few **Caspian Terns** and a **California Gull** fly by. In the campground we saw Lark Sparrows, **Yellow Warblers** and a **Western Kingbird**. We finished with 30 species!



Blue Grosbeak



Caspian Tern

From there we went to Palisades SP. We started off with **Brewer's Blackbirds, Red-winged Blackbirds, American Robins, Lesser Goldfinch, Great-tailed Grackle, Barn Swallows, Mallards, Canada Goose, Eurasian-Collared Dove, Yellow Warbler** and **Western Kingbird**. We continued to walk around the lake. We added **House Finch, European Starling, Brown-headed Cowbirds, Bullock's Oriole, Western Tanager, Say's Phoebe** and **Common Raven**. We then walked the dirt trail following the lake. It was so hot, and we didn't have any water but figured it was sixes either way, so we continued around the lake. We added **Rock Wren, Black-chinned Hummingbird**, heard a **Chipping Sparrow** and a **Western Meadowlark**. **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** were getting a drink out of the lake and **Cliff Swallows** and another Northern Rough-winged Swallow flew over us. We also saw **Mourning Doves** and finished with a **Red-tailed Hawk** making 25 species. It was hot and a lot of work though!! Thanks for coming!! Thanks to Jessie for taking all the photos!



Camp Floyd SP Thursday June 13th (Article by Keeli Marvel)

Twelve birders met at Camp Floyd SP in Fairfield last night to try and get 24 species before dark. With the heat these last few days and a little bit of wind, birding was a little slow, but we pulled it off. Several of the birders picked up **Yellow Warbler** and **California Quail** before I got there, and we heard both quail and Killdeer calling on and off throughout the trip. We had **Western Kingbirds** nesting and baby **American Robins** begging for food in the trees in the park. We picked up all the expected species including **House Sparrow, House Finch, European Starling, and Eurasian Collared Dove**. In the fields south of the park several distant raptors and **Common Ravens** were perched or hunting, and we picked up both **Swainson's and Red-tailed Hawks**. Also, out in those fields we saw **Barn Swallows** zooming around, a **Western Meadowlark** perched on a fence singing, and we heard a **Ring-necked Pheasant, Mourning Doves** and a **Mallard** gave us a flyby and there was a lone **Red-winged Blackbird** calling from an adjacent field. A female hummingbird flew over us (likely a Black-chinned but she didn't stop long enough for us to determine). We spotted a **Cedar Waxwing** perched in a tree in the neighborhood next to the park, a **Say's Phoebe** on a fence, and had a **Turkey Vulture** flyby north of the park.

At the state park Cemetery, we picked up a banded **American Kestrel** pair, a handful of **Brown-headed Cowbirds**, and a **Sage Thrasher** eating a late dinner that finished off our 24 species. Two of our group did one final circle around the Cemetery after everyone left and picked up a couple **Common Nighthawks**. Thanks to everyone who joined us!

Back Yard Birds

Yvonne Carter – Highland: I have had a rather quiet backyard as of late because there is a **Cooper's Hawk** in the back corner of our property. The birds are busy in the front yard feeders.

Bruce Robinson - West Jordan: **Pine Siskin**, I see them in the winter at my feeders, but on June 10th?

Dennis Shirley – Elk Ridge: We have a fresh brood of 12 young **California Quail**. Also, a nesting pair of **House Finch** in a hollowed-out tree nesting cavity I made. Fun and games always!

Dave Hascom – Park City: I had a new backyard bird this month!



Sandhill Cranes - Dave Hascom