



Utah County Birders Newsletter

November 2024

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NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday, November 13, 7pm BYU Bean Museum and on zoom

****NOTE DIFFERENT DATE THAN OUR USUAL MEETING DATE****

Bryan Shirley will be presenting Delta to Dunes: a birding safari from the Okavango delta of Botswana to the sand dunes of Namibia. Hope to see you all there!

(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>

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

I've noticed that we have some very talented artists and photographers in our group. I'm creating a new section in the newsletter to showcase your talent! If you would like to submit your bird art, including photos, paintings, sketches, needle art, etc, please email as an attachment or do a screen shot (snip) in the body of the email, and I will put it in the newsletter. Please include your name, the bird(s), and the type of art it is.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Saturday NOV 9th Loon Loop-East Canyon, Rockport and Echo Reservoirs

Meet at 8 am at the 800 N Orem Park and Rice. We will hopefully meet Weston Smith and get all 3 State Parks done for the challenge. It will be an all day trip, bring a lunch!

Saturday NOV 16th Provo River Delta

Join us as we bird the newly opened Provo River Delta! Meet at the new Skipper Bay Trailhead off of Boat Harbor Drive just west of Lakeview Pkwy

here: https://maps.app.goo.gl/3kTMtqnfzUuoZj9GA?g_st=com.google.maps.preview.copy

We will walk down the new Provo River Delta trail to the birding tower and back.

Saturday NOV 23rd Turkey Trot

Meet at 8 am at the 800 N Orem Park and Ride. We will have our fun Turkey Trot cookies! We will begin at South Fork, then go to Diamond Fork, Payson Canyon and end at Santaquin Canyon. We will be out most of the day, bring a lunch.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President's Message:

Time and again I witness the great people who make up this Utah County Birders group. They are sort of 'unsung heroes' working backstage for us. Keeli Marvel this last weekend represented the UCBs at the open house for the Provo Delta opening. Machel Johnson is always there to organize the monthly newsletter plus keeping an eye open for any problems, and Holly is getting the information out to you folks. Milt Moody is our superhero for the computer site which is so important. And Suzi conducts great field trips, two of which are coming up so check the schedule.

I had an occasion during my daily walk this weekend which I would like to share with you. I was walking along a trail in a ravine near my home, looking for birds at the same time. I had stopped to watch a Northern Flicker, and a walker came up to me on the trail, asking if I was a birdwatcher. She had a few experiences with birds which has made her want to learn more about birding. Sure enough, it gave me an opportunity to chat with her about several apps she could use on her phone and especially encouraged her to check out our website and our information. Look for opportunities to let others know about our organization.

You might think last month's message from me was crazy. I was in a hurry preparing for a trip to Ireland and forgot to send a link to a story about an autistic boy. My daughter came across a unique video regarding a student, obviously loving birds, presenting a little program at his school. I think you will realize that no matter our circumstances or situations, we can do awesome things as this boy can show you.

Enjoy the short video, copy and paste this link in your browser:
<https://x.com/gunsnrosesgirl3/status/1830214540753035549?s=48>

Happy birding!
Yvonne

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus bachmani* Article and photo by Steve Van Winkle



This past late August I had the opportunity to explore the sandy and rocky beaches and headlands along the coast of upper Oregon. Specifically, while birding near Connon Beach at Silver Point headlands I encountered several Black Oystercatcher's easily identified by their long, straight and bright red bill, pinkish legs and feet, in addition to deep orange eye rings, solid black head and rich brown upper body.

This stocky shorebird is a permanent resident throughout the Pacific coast from the Aleutian Isl. To central Baha California.

The first indication of their presence amongst the intertidal rocky shoreline was their high pitched queep, queep, queep piping whistle made whilst they probed the sea skimmed beach and creviced rocks for mussels, limpets, barnacles and small crabs scurrying the rocky shoreline. Other invertebrates, including jellies and marine worms make up their diet. I suspect that where I encountered the Oystercatcher's their primary diet consisted of the ubiquitous mass of mussels attached to the rocks at this particular intertidal site.

The Black Oystercatcher's breed as monogamous pairs, performing piping and side-by-side running while maneuvering their head down and sharp bills straight away. Nests are placed high above the high tide line on rocky shorelines, headlands (spits) or beaches with cobble and shell fragments, that may also be used to line their very shallow and smallish nests; both male and female Oystercatcher's incubate and care for the precocial chick that may include 1-4 offspring per mating season.

Partners in Flight, Continental Concern Score and Yellow Watch List indicate a species of concern due to several factors, including habitat loss, disturbance by humans and predation by feral cats, foxes and degradation of habitat via oil spills.

It was an absolute pleasure to watch this pair of Oystercatcher's for a good half an hour.

References: Birds of North America-Western Region Smithsonian handbooks and allaboutbirds.org

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

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Big Sit

October 12, 2024

Article by Suzi Holt



Sunrise from 'The Circle', Suzi Holt

Nine of us arrived at the beginning of the Skipper Bay trail and made our way to the big sit location some walked while others rode their bikes and scooters making for a good time! We chalked and rocked off the circle and began our checklist at 7:06 am! Throughout the day we had more birders join us totaling 28.

Our first bird was a **Mallard**, quickly followed by **Killdeer**, **American Coot**, **Western Grebe**, **Eurasian Collared-Dove**, **Black-billed Magpie** and a huge flock of **European Starlings**. A large **Red-tailed Hawk**, **Ring-billed Gull** and **Great Blue Heron** flew by as well! We heard a couple of **Sandhill Cranes** calling towards the east end of the Delta.



Killdeer, Richard Glassford



Great Blue Heron, Richard Glassford

There were **Gadwall** and **Northern Pintail** in the Delta. A **Ring-necked Pheasant** flew off in the distance. A few **Greater Yellowlegs** flew in as well.

We had continuous string of **Double-crested Cormorants** flying over and a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** chipped above us in the trees.

We saw **White-crowned Sparrows** on the brush piles, and a **Bald Eagle** stopped in and grabbed a fish for breakfast!!

We heard **Dark-eyed Juncos** and heard and saw **Song Sparrows**.

On the lake we had more Western and **Clark's Grebes**, **Green-winged Teal** and **Ruddy Ducks**.

A flock of **Canada Geese** flew by in the distance. **Brewer's Blackbirds** filled a tree.

An **American White Pelican** flew into the Delta. A **Northern Flicker** flew by heading south crossing paths with a magnificent **Osprey**!



Osprey, Richard Glassford

We heard then saw the **Belted Kingfisher**. Rich saw a couple of **Mourning Doves**. A small flock of **Barn Swallows** headed south while some **American Robins** headed north. Rich saw a couple **Great-tailed Grackles** over on the north dike in the SP too! We had **American Goldfinch**, **Orange-crowned Warbler** and a **Downy Woodpecker** in the trees beyond the fence. And an **American Kestrel** sat atop the brush piles. A **House Finch** joined the others in the trees across the fence and a few **American Pipits** called as they flew by. We heard a **Black-capped Chickadee** and coaxed it in for a closer look.



Downy Woodpecker, Richard Glassford

A couple **Western Meadowlarks** replaced the American Kestrel, and a **Northern Harrier** flew over.

We saw **Pied-billed Grebes** in the Delta and on the lake. Then a **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** swiftly flew by.



Great Egret, Richard Glassford

We had a **California Gull**, **Franklin's Gull** and **Great Egret** fly by too! We teased a **Marsh Wren** but never got eyes on it, but it did chatter! KC found a **Mallard x Mexican Duck**!



Mallard x Mexican Duck, KC Childs

A **Say's Phoebe** landed on a fence post.
Esther took a walk to find the duck and found a
Long-billed Dowitcher which KC relocated in the scope. I think it was the shore bird Dennis and I saw with
the Geeater Yellowlegs in the morning.
KC found a **Wilson's Snipe** hanging out with the Dowitcher and the Killdeer!
Just as we decided to call it a day a **Rock Pigeon** flew in! **54 species** not too shabby!! Thanks to everyone
who came! It was a warm day for October and so good to see everyone! Plus who doesn't like to get to ride
your scooter!!



Back Yard Birds

Holly Minor - I was in southeastern Queensland for most of October, so I had great backyard birds! **Crimson Rosellas** were in the backyard, front yard, and one even came into the living room of our rental to steal a potato chip off the coffee table.



Lynn Garner – Provo: This is not about my back yard, but in the county's back yard, Spring Lake, the Mandarin Duck is still there as of Friday. Just wanted to let everybody know—this is really a rare bird! And Beautiful!

Esther Sumner – Lindon: We had two fun yard birds this month that are not typical visitors for us here in our home in the Lindon foothills. The first was a pair of **Ruby-crowned Kinglets** chasing each other around the yard. I noticed them through the kitchen window. We have a lot of Lesser Goldfinches (that are also small and yellow) but I could tell immediately that the shape and the way it was moving was a Kinglet, so I watched until one popped back out of the tree again. It stopped in an open spot just long enough for me to take a quick picture. Then, on Sunday, October 27, I was in the backyard and was surprised to hear a **Song Sparrow** chipping. I walked over to the edge of the grass and sure enough, a Song Sparrow popped out on top of one of the branches of our ornamental plum tree. This Song Sparrow was a new lifer yard bird for us. One other notable thing is that this is the first year that we've had Juncos arrive before the last hummingbird has left our yard for the season. There is usually no overlap, but we saw our last backyard **Black-chinned Hummingbird** very late, on October 5 this year, and we saw our first backyard **Dark-eyed Junco** on the same day.



Paul Killpack – Lindon: I had a **Red-tailed Hawk** show up momentarily. It landed on a corner of the roof and then flew off.

Dennis Shirley – Elk Ridge: Had an amazing observation in my yard. I had a "Kettle" of 28 **Red-tail Hawks** circle and climb high over Loafer Canyon, then stream singly in a line to the south. Have seen this before in other areas but never from my yard. Made my day!

Lyle Bingham – Payson: No big news on my end. The **Scrub Jays** are cleaning out the sunflower seeds in my feeder though.

Yvonne Carter – Highland: I'm starting to have Junco's appear at the feeders. And most evenings lately, a mature Great Horned Owl has been perching on our roof or tall trees and starts hooting just at dusk when there is barely light in the sky.