



Utah County Birders Newsletter

October 2024

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OCTOBER MEETING

Thursday, October 17, 7pm BYU Bean Museum and on zoom.

****NOTE THIS IS A WEEK LATER THAN OUR USUAL NIGHT****

Our guest speaker will be Jeff Cooper. He's been conducting an unofficial research endeavor to document Boreal Owls in Utah. Join us as he shares what he's learned about their range and about juvenile nestling behavior from his efforts to document them across northeastern Utah this past summer.

(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>

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

October 12 Big Sit

Skipper Bay Trail 7am. Meet at the north end of Skipper Bay trail. Suzi will be there at 7am, hoping to have people there throughout the day until about 5pm. Come join us! If you get 24 species you can use it for the Challenge since it is the new Provo River Delta area. You can use it as a field trip as well.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President's Message:

I know in the past year I have mentioned several media sources that help inform us about birds. And I have mentioned the wonderful program on PBS called 'Nova' which has a segment or program on birds each month. The other night I watched a wonderful program on 'Eagles' and I thought this should be passed along to all of you. Because now that it is October, our winter birds will be showing up in the next month or so. Watching this program ahead of time will give some appreciation for Bald and Golden Eagles, so you can more appreciate what wonderful creatures you are observing.

My youngest daughter came across an interesting video showing an autistic student who has a great interest in birds and an unusual talent. This meant a lot to me since one of our children had learning disabilities that he had to overcome. I think you will really enjoy this video.

Happy birding!
Yvonne

BIRD OF THE MONTH

Article coming soon

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

FIELD TRIP REPORT

Kodachrome SP
Escalante Grand Staircase NM
Escalante Petrified Forest SP
September 11-14, 2024
Article and photos by Suzi Holt



We started the trip on Wednesday rockhounding in Manderfield, then stopped by Cove Fort and ended the night searching for Scorpions in Fremont Indian SP. We met up with the Glassfords in the morning and started birding/fishing. Fishing was better than birding, but we added a few species! **Pinyon Jays, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Chipping Sparrow, Northern Flicker, Plumbeous Vireo, Common Raven** and the **Belted Kingfisher** were the highlights. We stopped by Piute Reservoir SP and saw a ton of **Vesper Sparrows**, a few gulls and some **American White Pelicans**!

Next stop was Otter Creek SP. Tatum and Lynne caught fish and we all managed to get our 24 species there! We made camp close to Bryce with a cold 28° F chill during the night. It was cold!

In the morning, we drove up and birded Pine Lake hoping for a rare Hermit Warbler. No luck on the warbler but what a beautiful place! We saw a lot of the mountain species up there plus an **Osprey** and **Ruddy Ducks**! My favorite were the **Clark's Nutcracker** and the flyover **Red Crossbills**. Tatum and Ember had a blast in the spring and playing in the mud! The views were amazing! I loved seeing the chipmunks too!

From there we headed to Kodachrome SP to meet the rest of the crew at noon. It was pretty hot. We ate lunch then started birding at the picnic area. We had quite a few **Vesper** and **Chipping Sparrows**, a **Northern Mockingbird**, an **Orange-crowned Warbler** a few **Woodhouse's Scrub Jays** and a **Common Raven**. A **Black-chinned Hummingbird** kept buzzing by as well. It was really slow birding, so we drove down to Cottonwood Creek. It's in the Escalante Grand Staircase NM. With the water we added a few more species.

Gray Flycatcher, Common Raven, **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, **Bushit**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, **Rock Wren**, Orange-crowned Warbler, **House Finch**, **Lesser Goldfinch** some even got a **Western Tanager** and some **Cliff Swallows**. We then decided to take a break to set up camp. Rich and I walked around and added a few other birds like a **Loggerhead Shrike**. He also saw a **White-throated Swift**, but it was tough birding.

Keeli, Sam, Casey and Esther had some drip ponds by there camp site and added quite a few species. So, at 7 pm when we met at Arch Campground by Hinckley's campsite and after only seeing one **Green-tailed Towhee** we decided to hunker down in the Esther's campsite. We added **Wilson's Warbler**, **White-crowned Sparrow**, **Lincoln Sparrow**, **Bushtit**, **American Robin**, **Spotted Towhee** and Green-tailed Towhee. Some went to bed, and some did the scorpion hunt that evening. Tatum and Ember did both and saw one scorpion then fell asleep!

We woke up at 7 am and walked around the Campground and took a little scenic trail. We added Pinyon Jays, **Say's Phoebe**, House Finch, **Juniper Titmouse**, Rock Wren, **Broad-tailed** and Rufous Hummingbirds. A few still lacked a couple species so we continued the search and added **Calliope Hummingbird**, Lesser Goldfinch and Gray Flycatcher. As we enjoyed the chairs, sand box and hummingbirds at the visitor's center everyone finally made it to 24!! It took us 24 hours to get 24 species!! What a challenge!

We made our way east down Hwy 12 towards Escalante stopping at a few pullouts to add to our Escalante Grand Staircase NM list. We saw **Mountain Bluebird**, Loggerhead Shrike, **Mourning Dove**, **Turkey Vulture** and Western Kingbird. Met up with the others and added Nashville and Virginia's Warbler, Clark's Nutcracker, Woodhouse's Scrub Jay, White-crowned Sparrow and **Mountain Chickadee**. At the Escalante Grand Staircase NM visitors center we added Broad-tailed, Black-chinned, Rufous and Calliope Hummingbirds and a **Warbling Vireo**. Some got a Green -tailed Towhee as well. Tatum and Ember added another National Park pin! We still needed a couple more to get this one finished. But the others had completed theirs!



Turkey Vulture



Rock Wren

Hinckley's needed to head home soon, so we went to Petrified Forest SP and it was hot and a lot of heat waves, but we got all 24 species. There were tons of **Canada Geese**. **American Coots**, **Mallards**, **Great Blue Herons**, **Sandhill Cranes**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Redheads**, Ruddy Duck and **Ring-necked Ducks**, a **Double-crested Cormorant**, lots of distant swallows with only one Cliff Swallow coming in close enough to ID! There were **Eared**, **Pied-billed** and **Western Grebes**. **White-faced Ibis**, **Bald Eagle**, **California**, **Ring-billed** and a **SABINE'S GULL!!!** We also had **Cooper's Hawk**, Lesser Goldfinch, White-crowned, Chipping, Lincoln's and Vesper Sparrows. We ended with **Lazuli Bunting**, Nashville Warbler and a **Western Wood Pewee!** We all finished Petrified Forest SP! Hinckley's headed for home, Keeli, Sam and Casey for the Hell's Backbone Grill and the Glassfords and us headed east on Hwy 12 to the Burr Trail. We stopped to eat dinner at our favorite lunch spot surrounded by the cottonwood trees and red cliffs.



Sabine's Gull



Western Grebes, Ruddy Duck



Sabine's Gull



House Wren

From there we went up over Boulder Mountain. Along the way we saw two families of **Lewis's Woodpeckers!!** We ended up at a pullout for the night just outside of Torrey. In the morning, we headed over to Capitol Reef NP. We birded around the picnic area, the Gifford House and the Fruita Campground.

We saw **Hairy Woodpeckers, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Rock Wrens, Common Raven, House Finch, Black Phoebe, White-throated Swift, Western Tanager, Sharp-shinned Hawk, House Wren, Brewer's Sparrow, Brewer's Blackbirds** and Robins while the others waited in line for the famous Cinnamon Rolls and Pies. We enjoyed them with ice cream for breakfast. We stopped at the u-pick orchards. They were pretty picked over, but we had fun picking a few apples and pears! Tatum and Ember also added another NP pin to their Jr. Ranger collection! We then drove through the park over to the Devil's Toenails area to rockhound and have lunch! Yes, we came home with the Devil's Toenails.

I'm not sure if the others stopped and birded a few more spots on their way home. But we stopped by the Torrey gift shop and headed for home!! A fun trip!



From Casey Richardson:

We birded/ate at Hell's Backbone Grill and got 25 species over dinner 🤪, on the drive back to Petrified Forest SP we saw two **Common Poorwill!** Canada Geese out on the reservoir provided the backing track to a symphony of crickets and campers. Woke up to **Canyon Wrens** calling from the next campsite over, and I had a **MacGillavray's Warbler** in the bushes right outside my tent, Keeli and Sam found a Virginia's warbler while looking for it later. A lone pelican hung out on the reservoir. Western Tanagers were guzzling down sap out of a stand of cottonwoods and were just fun to watch. We walked the Sleeping Rainbow 🌈 trail and admired the gorgeous petrified wood - you could still see the the rings on the trees! Insane. Driving home, we admired some giant bumblebees at Kiva Koffeehouse, kept an eye out but didn't see any Goshawks while driving over boulder mountain. We did see quite a few Clark's nutcrackers, nuthatches, and golden eagles on the drive back.



Back Yard Birds

Yvonne Carter – Highland: I was walking on a trail near our home, so this is not really a backyard bird but it was nearby and quite an unusual happening. I was on the trail in a wooded area and heard some noise coming from what I thought were two Scrub Jays, and peering through the trees I discovered it was a **Woodhouse's Scrub Jay** and a **Stellar Jay!!** Unusual for this time of year. Yes, the one jay had that noticeable dark peak and I thought they were screeching at each other. But no, it was what I first thought was a squirrel. I looked closer and discovered "No, that can't be a squirrel. It was so camouflaged against the tree trunk. It turned towards me, and I realized it was a **Western Screech Owl**, it flew from the tree and low to the ground with the two jays still after it.

Dennis Shirley – Elk Ridge: After being regular visitors at my back yard feeders for the summer these are the last dates I recorded them this year. This last record order is the same each year, and the dates are in line with other years.

Bullock's Oriole - July 10th - 1 YOY

Lazuli Bunting - Aug. 18th - 6 YOY and females

Black-headed Grosbeak - Sept. 3 - 2 YOY

Hummingbird Species - Sept. 14 - 1 YOY **Black-chinned**

Fun Huh!

Bruce Robinson – West Jordan: David and Goliath, almost. The neighborhood **Cooper's Hawk** was apparently encroaching on a **Broad-tailed Hummingbird's** territory, so the hummer kept buzzing the hawk, until the disinterested larger finally bird flew away. Probably out of boredom...