



Utah County Birders Newsletter

March 2025

CONTENTS:

- [Monthly Meeting, Announcements](#)
 - [Upcoming Field Trips](#)
 - [President's Message](#)
 - [Bird of the Month](#)
 - [Field Trip Reports](#)
 - [Art Gallery](#)
 - [Backyard Birds](#)
-

MARCH MEETING

Thursday, [March 20th](#), 2025 7pm Bean Museum and on Zoom

NOTE-THIS IS A WEEK LATER THAN USUAL

Danielle Finlayson will be our guest speaker and is giving a presentation on an important topic that I think is good for birders to be aware of: **Lead Poisoning in Raptors**. Hope to see you all there!

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

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

WEDNESDAY MAR 12, Bird Walk

We will meet at 8 AM for a morning bird walk at the Provo River Delta. Please Park at the new Provo River Delta parking lot and plan for a 3 mile loop walk that will follow the delta trail, and loop back on the Provo River Parkway Trail.

AND

SATURDAY MAR 22, Greater Sage Grouse Lek

We will be meeting at 5:30 AM at the park and ride located in front of Palisades Park in Orem at the mouth of Provo Canyon. We will carpool from there to go and watch the grouse lek, and then we will head to Echo Reservoir, and then Rockport Reservoir to see what birds are around. We will then head back to Orem and be home around 1 P.M.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On our field trip last Saturday on the 22nd, we had a number of students from the Ornithology class at BYU. I don't know if there were any of those students who were brand new to watching birds. There were a few who seemed to have had experience watching and identifying birds. And that made me think back to my first "Ah-ha" moment with a birding group. In fact it was part of the Great Salt Lake Birding Festival with several members of our UCB members. I know I have related that story before in a previous issue of the newsletter.

Which leads me to several points I would like to mention. Always find opportunities to share this marvelous activity of bird watching with your family. Most of my 8 children live in other parts of the US and the world. So either here in Utah or in their resident states, my children or grandchildren have been birding with me and my husband. It gives them the opportunity to be more aware of their areas, and gain a better appreciation of nature. Yes, some get bored and others are always letting me know of some experiences they have had or questions on particular species they have watched. And they have sometimes texted me a picture of a bird they saw. I have shown them the marvelous apps of Merlin and Ebird to help them along.

Another activity that can help your family is the Great Salt Lake Bird Festival in May that has some excellent field trips with knowledgeable guides that are a great help for beginner birders. So, check out the website for the festival.

It's warming up and spring migration will soon be here!

Happy birding!
Yvonne

BIRD OF THE MONTH

We had 2 submissions for Juniper Titmouse, for the March *and* April Bird of the Month Articles, so we decided to put them both in this month. Thanks KC and Lynn for spotlighting this fun bird!

Juniper Titmouse

Baeolophus ridgwayi

Article by KC Childs



If you pull up your Merlin Bird App and start to read the description for a Juniper Titmouse, you will see that it is described as: "Possibly the plainest bird in North America." I can't imagine the person describing this bird has had much interaction with this Paridae of the juniper woodlands in the western United States. The Juniper Titmouse and Oak Titmouse used to be known as a single species called the Plain Titmouse, but in 1996 the Juniper Titmouse was determined to be its own species. It is distinguished by its prominent gray crest on its head, dark black eye, and different gray tones throughout the body. It has a bubbly personality as it hops around, often doing one of its distinctive calls while jumping limb to limb looking for food. It is related to chickadees, and very close to the same size, with it only being slightly bigger. Also like chickadees, it can be found year round locally here in Utah. It is most readily found in juniper forests throughout the state, including locally here in Utah County. During some winters you will find it showing up in areas like cemeteries, established neighborhoods, and the foothills. I challenge that next time you are in a juniper forest to stop, listen, and find a Juniper Titmouse and let me know if you'd describe it as the plainest bird in North America.

Sources: Merlin Bird App

Juniper Titmouse

Baeolophus ridgwayi

Article and Photos by Lynn Garner



The Juniper Titmouse is a small, drab cousin of the chickadees (family Paridae) that is an uncommon year-round resident of the arid scrub-oak, juniper, and pinyon woods of the Great Basin, including all of Utah and most of Nevada, and of the Rocky Mountains in about half each of Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona, as well as in extreme southern Idaho and extreme western Texas. I have seen it several times in Rock Canyon, where these photos were taken. The Juniper Titmouse is small, less than 6 inches long, weighing about 0.6 oz. It is just gray, with little variation and no particular markings, having only the small crest to identify it as a titmouse. Some individuals have faint brownish tinges on the outer primaries. Its voice includes a variety of rapid, low-pitched rattles, which it utters frequently as it gathers seeds and insects from the trees. It nests in cavities, with six to eight white eggs with brown speckles in a clutch. Though uncommon, its population seems to be stable.

Sources: Sibley V2 app; Utah Bird Records Committee, *Taxonomic List of Birds of Utah*, 2024; Audubon, *Birds of North America*, NY: Knopf, 2021.

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

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Lee Key Ponds, Great Salt Lake SP, Oquirrh Lake

February 22, 2025

Article by KC Childs, Photos by Marissa Noelle



On Saturday February 22, 16 birders departed for a day of fun in the sun. Our first stop of the field trip was at Lee Kay Ponds to see what was lurking around. We entered via the gated section and started searching the different ponds and grasslands in the area. We were quickly greeted by a pond full of ducks that held a large variety including an interesting hybrid duck that was a cross between a Gadwall and Mallard. Also on the pond were **Cinnamon Teal, Common Goldeneye, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon**, and a lone **Northern Pintail**. On the shore of the pond was an adorable **American Pipit** giving great close views. We kept on driving around to the other side to the large ponds and were greeted with lots of more ducks, gulls, herons, blackbirds, and the common birds you see at a dump. We saw stunning diving ducks like **Lesser Scaup, Canvasback, Common Merganser, Hooded Merganser, Redhead, and Ruddy Duck**.

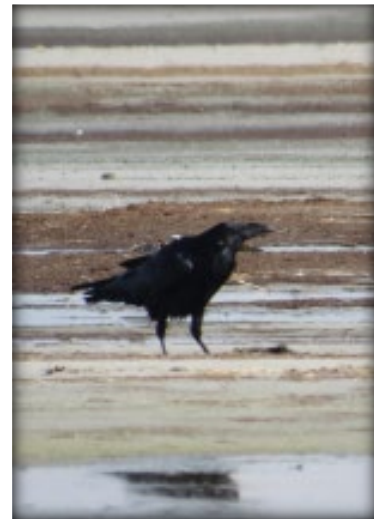


We were able to see four species of Gull including a couple **Herring Gulls**, and a beautiful adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull**. The **Great Blue Herons** had begun to set up shop and it appeared as they were readying a rookery, and amongst them was a beautiful adult **Black-crowned Night Heron**. We Then circled out of the area, but before leaving we were treated to great looks of a **Loggerhead Shrike**, several **Neotropic Cormorants**.

A lone **Double-crested Cormorant** flew over, and there was a beautiful **Bald Eagle** keeping watch over the action. After Lee Kay Ponds we headed over to the Great Salt Lake Marina and checked Sunset Beach and the beach east of the visitor center. It was many people's first visit to this area and the views were beautiful. We were hoping to find some of the shorebirds reported here recently. We took a walk out on the beach that resulted in a few wet shoes, but we did manage to find a few shorebirds. We found **Killdeer**, and a sizeable flock of **Least Sandpipers**.



We checked the gulls and could only find **Ring-billed, California, and American Herring Gull**. We watched as the **Ravens** enjoyed feeding on their choice of the hundreds of dead Eared Grebes that had washed ashore.



Some of the group decided to make a quick stop at Oquirrh Lake and see what was around. We found a lot of the same waterfowl we had been seeing during the trip, and also found **Ring-necked Ducks**, and a lone female **Greater Scaup** out on the open water. All together we saw 43 species and enjoyed a great day as a group. I appreciate everyone who showed up and hope to see some people next month!



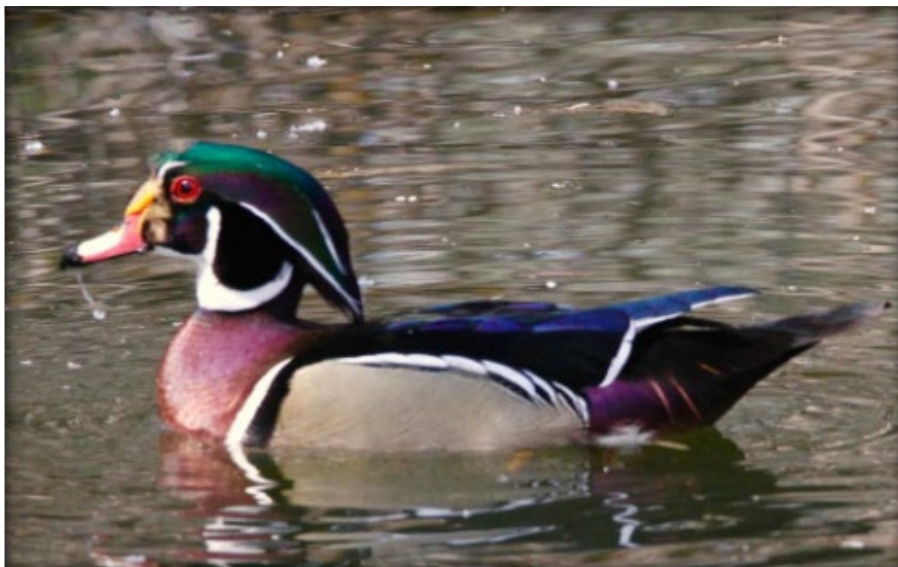
~Art Gallery~

Jim Strong-Photography

Lazuli Bunting, Perry UT



Wood Duck
Tributary of the lower Provo River



Holly Minor-Cross-stitch

Kingfisher

First Place winner at the Utah State Fair 2023



Back Yard Birds

Devon Harbaugh – Cedar Hills: I had a Merlin in my yard in Cedar Hills on Feb 2.



Bruce Robinson-- West Jordan: Meet "Stumpy" a one legged Scrub Jay that frequented my feeder most of the winter. He/she is one tough bird!

Yvonne Carter – Highland: We have a Great Horned Owl who lets us know he is around at early dusk, but usually at dawn between 5 and 6am.