



November 2025

UTAH COUNTY BIRDERS NEWSLETTER

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NOVEMBER MEETING & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thursday November 13, 2025, 7pm

Thursday, Nov 13th at 7pm at KC Child's home: 746 W 800 S Orem. Game night! If you've ever wanted to learn how to play the bird-themed game Wingspan, this is your chance! We will have multiple games set up and experienced players ready to get the games rolling.

We will have a short presentation broadcast on Zoom at the beginning of the meeting introducing the new UT DWR Birding Slam competition. Following that, let the games begin!

Bring a snack to share if you'd like and come ready to have a great bird nerd time!

If you haven't heard, the Utah DWR is sponsoring a birding challenge called the Birding Slam! Funds raised will go directly to supporting bird and other wildlife conservation and habitat improvement projects. Each slam you sign up for costs \$20 and you get a slam prize for completion.

To kick things off they're hosting a few free birding events coming up in November, See the article below for details on those events.

We will also have a presentation about the Birding Slam by the DWR at our November UCB meeting if you want to learn more!

This is a really fun way to incentivize birding and support wildlife conservation and could be done concurrently with our UCB birding challenge in 2026.

<https://ksltv.com/environment/utah-birding-slam-for-fall-migration/837379/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello to all you birders! I am amazed at this beautiful fall season we have experienced, especially with the drought and dry summer. I really wonder how long it will last for the wind was really blowing last night and there goes all the color perhaps. I have a favorite trail I walk and find a lot of species, depending on the time of year. There is something wonderful to be out there, either birding or just walking. This last week with all the rain, I was out for my walk and could just breathe in all the wondrous smells of wet earth, damp leaves and forage, and the cool fresh air. It's a wonderful time to be out there birding and enjoying this earth.

Our committee members are starting to get ideas for the coming 2026 Challenge. If you have some ideas or request, please reach out to Keeli, K C, Machele, Milt, or me and share your ideas. The Challenge which happens each even-numbered year is a big event for us and the activities we include in the Challenge help us expand our knowledge and appreciation for these birds. So if you have an idea or thought, give us a shout and share it with us.

Happy Birding!

Yvonne Carter, President

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

TURKEY TROT

Saturday November 22, 2025

It's time for the annual Turkey Trot! Come join Suzi Holt and her kids on November 22nd at 8:30 AM at Palisades Park in Orem. Suzi will lead us as we count turkeys starting up South Fork of Provo Canyon, moving to East Lawn Cemetery, going up Diamond Fork, then to Payson and Santaquin Canyon. Follow along for all or part of the day. Turkeys won't be the only bird on the trip. You never know what other birds will show up. Also, Suzi is always great to provide delicious homemade turkey shaped cookies. We look forward to seeing you there for this fun annual tradition!



BIRD OF THE MONTH

Sharp-tailed Grouse

Tympanuchus phasianellus

Article by Dennis Shirley



Photo by Jack Binch

The Sharp-tailed Grouse is one of the grouse species that we have here in Utah. It is closely related to the prairie chickens. It is found across the northern states from Washington to Minnesota, and its southern extension includes northern Nevada, Utah, and Colorado. Their northern range extends across Canada and into central Alaska. In Utah it is most common in Box Elder and Cache Counties, with smaller populations in Rich, Weber, Morgan, and Summit. They are year-round residents and are non-migratory. Their preferred habitat is an open grassland/shrub community.

My first record for Utah was on May 13, 1972 when, with Jack Rensel, the DWR Northern Regional Supervisor, we witnessed the strutting ground lek at the Catholic monastery in Weber Valley near Huntsville. It was my first experience to observe strutting male Sharp-tailed Grouse at a spring strutting ground. We counted 28 males that morning, and it was an amazing experience for a new rookie Conservation Officer stationed in this area. Since then, over the years, I have seen Sharp-tails a number of times in White Valley, Howell Valley, and near Portage. The Portage strutting ground is currently one of the easiest to watch the spring strutting activity. I have also seen a number of good populations in Alaska.

Sharp-tails are also known as Pin-tailed Grouse due to their pointed tail. Both sexes are similar and their overall plumage coloration is grayish- brown with black and buff markings. Distinctive features are their white spots on the primary wing feathers which are especially noticeable when the birds have their wings extended when the males are strutting. Also, when strutting and in flight, the large white bordering feathers to the pointed tip are distinctive. When strutting, the males have their tails cocked straight up, wings flattened out and extended, and they dance around in a circle, strutting and stomping their feet. When strutting, a purple neck skin patch and a bright orange eyebrow can also be seen. The dances are mimicked by early Native Americans in their ceremonial dances.

Where populations exist, Sharp-tails are a popular hunting species. In Utah, a special drawing permit is required to participate in this hunt, and the hunters can only take two birds during the entire season. They are a fine eating bird and add much uniqueness to the Utah bird community.



Photo by Paul Higgins

The Big Sit Summary

Article by Keeli Marvel, photos by Steve Van Winkle

On October 11th the Utah County Birders participated in the national Big Sit birding event. We counted all the bird species we could see while standing inside a 17 ft diameter circle that was covered by shifts of birders from dawn to dusk. This year we held the count circle at the end of the Skipper Bay/Lake Side trail at the mouth of the Provo River Delta so that we could try and catch birds in the delta and out on the lake.

The count finished with 63 species, just shy of our all time record of 65 species. The circle was birded continuously by birders between 7:30am until the front blew in around 6:30pm. We had twenty total birders covering the circle and many interested visitors who wandered by to see what we were up to.

Some of the species highlights included both Great and Snowy Egrets, several species of ducks, grebes, a Long-billed Dowitcher, Greater Yellowlegs, and my favorite find - a flyover Peregrine Falcon.

The weather was much better than forecasted and we had a lovely day of birding with partly cloudy skies and moderate temps. Thank you to all who dropped by and helped out with the count!





American White Pelican



Clarks Grebe





ART GALLERY

Jim Strong – Greater Roadrunner, St George area



Backyard Birds

No submissions