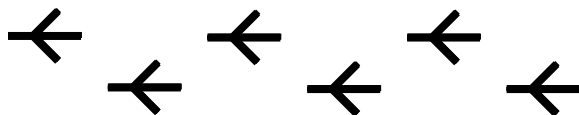
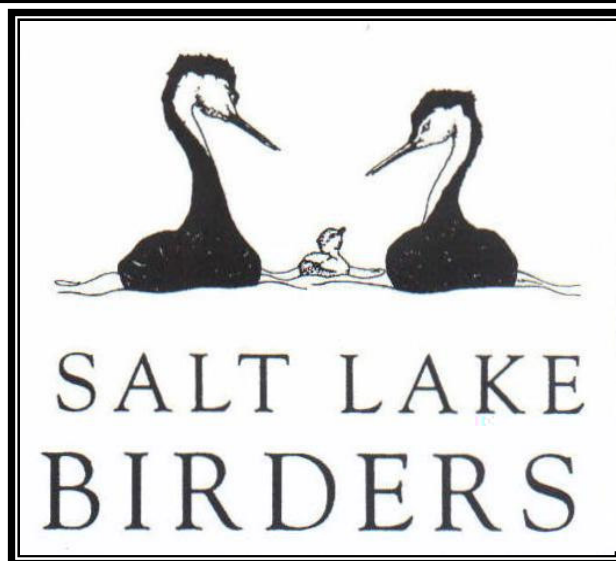


# BIRD



# TRACKS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SALT LAKE BIRDERS



July 2006

Volume 16, No. 7

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## JUNE JEWELS—June Field Trip Report

Saturday, June 17, found the Salt Lake Birders at our annual summer breakfast at the Germania Park, part of the Murray section of the Jordan River Parkway, and birding walk. The morning was cool, although not as chilly as has been in the past. The club leadership had put together a nice, filling breakfast of scrambled eggs, hash browns, delicious ham, those huge muffins, milk, juice and coffee. There was more than enough to go around, but most folks got filled up pretty well.

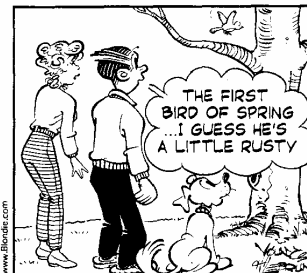
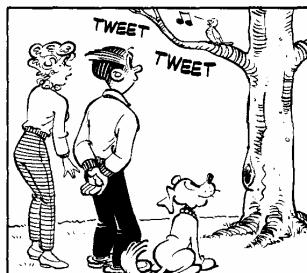
Then, we walked north along the Jordan River Parkway seeing what the morning would bring us. The river was flowing quite rapidly, but there were several groups of female Mallards with their broods. The drakes, as usual, after their job was done were off on stag parties of their own. Redwing Blackbirds were noted by the score; and there were many Black-chinned Hummingbirds to be seen along the trail.

The following birds were seen, generally in the order of sighting:

Robin	Magpie	Starling	California Gull	House Finch
Barn Swallow	Mourning Dove	Kestrel (a nice pair)	Black-chinned Hummingbirds	
Yellow Warblers (many heard but few seen)			Red-winged Blackbird	Mallard
Bullock's Oriole (A lifer for at least one birder)			Song Sparrow	House Sparrow
Rock Pigeon (where is a Peregrine Falcon when we needed one—or more)				American Goldfinch
Rough-winged Swallow	Black-headed Grosbeak		California Quail	Common Yellowthroat
Cliff Swallow	Brown-headed Cowbird	Lesser Goldfinch	Downy Woodpecker (one heard)	

Forster's Tern (flying above the river, but the water was so murky it was doubtful that he could even spot any fish, even close to the surface)

Members and guests who participated were: June Ryburn, Dana Green (visiting from Texas), Steven and Greg Riggs, Letitia Lussier, Roberta Wherritt, Steve and Cindy Sommerfeld, Bob MacDougall, Bob Huntington, Lyn Christiansen, Stephen Carlile, Geoff Hardies, Nancy Sakahara, Bob Peterson, Sharon Coons, and Steve Carr. Again, a big thanks to Bob MacDougall, Geoff Hardies, the Sommerfelds, and Lyn Christiansen for providing and preparing the breakfast.



## ***SALT LAKE BIRDERS***

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### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our purpose is to provide recreation and ongoing education for our members, to gather and contribute statistical data, and to emphasize conservation in all our activities.

### **BOARD MEMBERS**

President	Bob MacDougall zippymahatma@comcast.net	971-6077
Vice President	Geoff Hardies g.hardies@att.net	273-7841
Secretary	Cindy Sommerfeld ssfild@xmission.com	261-4270
Treasurer	Steve Sommerfeld ssfild@xmission.com	261-4270
Field Trips	Bob MacDougall	971-6077
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Hospitality	Pending	
Membership/ Publicity	Lyn Christiansen lmchris@xmission.com	363-6761

### **MEMBERSHIP**

Membership in the Salt Lake Birders is open to everyone. Dues are \$15 per year per household if you would like a hard copy of *Bird Tracks*, or \$10 if you opt to receive the newsletter via e-mail. Please make checks payable to Salt Lake Birders and mail to Lyn Christiansen at the P.O. box listed above.

To request a change of address or privacy, please contact Lyn Christiansen, Membership Director.



### **SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

All articles must be received by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month for the following month's issue, preferably as an e-mail attachment, but by letter, hard copy, also.

## **Upcoming Field Trips**



### **Salt Lake Birders**

**July 8, Saturday**, we participate with Great Salt Lake Audubon at the annual Brighton Bird Count. We meet at the National Forest Visitor Center at Silver Lake at 8:00 a.m. and split up into three groups to discover which birds are where, compared to previous years. At about noon, there will be a potluck lunch, so bring a treat to share. Also, of note, there are no cooking facilities there, so plan on having some cold things to bring. Contact Jeanne Le Ber or Ray Smith at 531-7384.

Along with GSLA, we encourage **carpooling** and **helping with gas costs** — we recommend a \$3 donation per person for trips under 50 miles, and \$5-7 for more than 50 miles roundtrip.

**Guests are always welcome! Listen for us on FRS Channel 11-22!!**

### **Layton Wild Bird Center**

July 22nd      Mueller Park  
July 29th      Wild Flowers & Birds of Buena Vista

Field trips leave from the —  
Wild Bird Center  
1860 N. 1000 West  
Layton, at 10:00 a.m.  
For further information, contact Bill Fenimore, Wild Bird Center, 801-525-8400.

### **Great Salt Lake Audubon**

**Wed., July 5, 7:00 a.m.**—Mountain Dell Recreation Area, Parley's Canyon, Leaders are Jack Clark and Sylvia Gray. Last year we saw 39 species in July. This is some of the best birding in the county, and so close to home. Call Jack—255-79891 or Sylvia—532-3486.

**Sat., July 15, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.**—Mount Nebo Loop, Leader is Bob Huntington. We tried this last year for the first time and it was great. The Loop drive runs up through several beautiful and varied habitats. This is one of the few places in Utah where Purple Martins can be found. Meet at the SE corner of the Sugar House Shopko at 6:00 a.m. Bring plenty of water, and some lunch. Call Sylvia for details, or if you plan to attend—532-3486.

## FEATHERED FACTS

Someone asked about the quiz last month, saying that they hadn't thought of the poem, "The Owl and the Pussycat" for ages, and wondered where it might be found. Here, for those who might be interested —

### The Owl and the Pussycat

by Edward Lear

The Owl and the Pussycat went to sea in a  
beautiful pea-green boat.

They took some honey and plenty of money,  
wrapped up in a five pound note.

The Owl looked up to the stars above and sang  
to a small guitar—

"O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love, What a  
beautiful Pussy you are, You are, you are!  
What a beautiful Pussy you are!"

Pussy said to the Owl, "You elegant fowl!

How charmingly sweet you sing!

O let us be married — too long we have tarried,  
but what shall we do for a ring?"

They sailed away for a year and a day, to the  
land where the Bong-tree grows;

And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood with a ring at  
the end of his nose, His nose, His nose,  
With a ring at the end of his nose.

"Dear Pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling  
your ring?" Said the Piggy, "I will."

So they took it away and were married next  
day by the Turkey who lives on the hill.

They dined on mince and slices of quince,  
which they ate with a runcible spoon;

And, hand in hand, on the edge of the sand, they danced  
by the light of the moon, The moon, the moon,  
They danced by the light of the moon.

### Recognition to Bill Fenimore, Layton Wild Bird Center

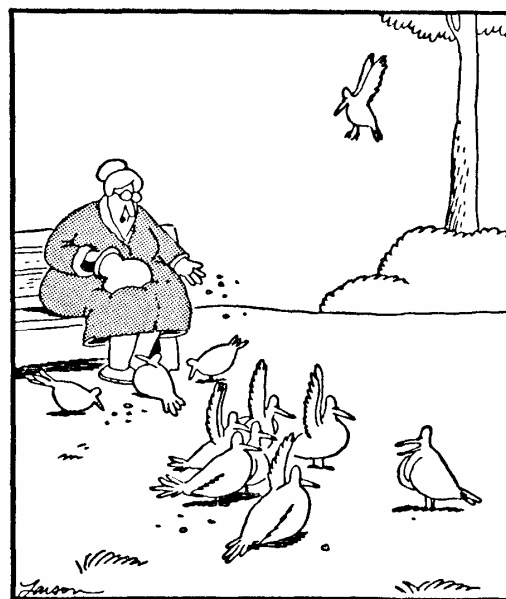
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Director, Jim Karpowitz, presented Bill Fenimore, Layton Wild Bird Center owner with the 2006 Director's partnership Award at the recent DWR Awards banquet. Bill was given the award for his outstanding work as Utah Audubon's Policy Advocate and as a member of the Wildlife Legislative Coalition.

This is the second occasion that Bill has won the prestigious Director's Partnership Award. He was given the award in 2004 by the late, DWR Director Kevin Conway. Both Directors Conway and Karpowitz recognized the contribution Bill makes through his Wild Bird Center in community outreach programs that teach wildlife values and nature conservation through birds.

Director Karpowitz noted that Bill is a steadfast supporter of Audubon, the DWR, as well as a skilled promoter of wildlife and wildlife values. Karpowitz told Fenimore that his, "passion and advocacy for wildlife and wildlife enthusiasts takes in a broad constituency, ranging from non-consumptive users to hunters and anglers." Karpowitz said, "As a dedicated volunteer, you are constantly promoting wildlife on the Wild Bird Center field trips to Farmington Bay and other Utah locations. You act as a great bridge between the hunting and non-hunting communities."

The Director listed the active memberships that Bill is currently involved in, including the DWR Northern Region Wildlife Advisory Council and the Rich County CRM Board. "Fenimore has devoted hundreds of hours to make northern Utah and the entire state a better place for fish and wildlife," Karpowitz said. "Clearly, this work is a real calling for you. The people of Utah owe you a great debt of gratitude, as do we," Karpowitz concluded, thanking Fenimore for all that he has done and continues to do.

For a little macabre humor from page 8, Literature/Movies.



"I've got an idea. ... How many here have ever  
seen Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*?"

## KRIS' COLUMN

### Troll's-eye view of nest-building American Dippers

(Published in Ogden's *Standard-Examiner*, April 5, 2006)

I felt like the troll from the fairy tale "Three Billy Goats Gruff." I was sitting in cool shadows under a bridge that spanned a gurgling mountain creek. But instead of accosting a trio of goats trip-trapping across, I was watching a pair of American Dippers. The dippers were performing a rite of spring — they were building a nest.

Once I settled motionless on a flat rock with a concrete-wall backrest, the birds became comfortable with my presence and went about their chores.

The American Dipper has adapted to road construction in mountain territories by nesting under bridges. The dipper might choose a horizontal concrete surface on which to build a dome of moss and grasses. The finished nest sometimes takes on the shape of a beehive, complete with rounded roof and side entrance.

My dippers were building on an abutment that was tucked well beneath a Morgan County bridge. The curving walls of the nest were beginning to take shape as the two-bird construction crew delivered and incorporated tuft after tuft of moss.

Dissimilar behaviors of the identical gray birds showed their sexes. The female remained at the nest site more and did most of the building. She would choose a tuft of moss, jump inside the curving walls, and drill the tuft into place. Sometimes the male drilled moss into the wall from the outside while the female drilled inside. The two birds were a mirror image of each other. But the male's primary role was to deliver the building supplies.

I didn't have to watch downstream to know when he was coming. The male announced his imminent arrival with a ringing, stuttering call that carried over the rushing water. Sometimes the dipper landed on low boulders on the opposing shore and took stock of the scene. Sometimes he landed on driftwood just 8 feet from the motionless troll and the troll took stock of him.

The 7-inch dipper perched on deadwood while dipping on long pinkish legs — that is, he bounced up and down with the motion that gave the species its name. The dipper was chunky and had a stubby tail. His slate gray feathers and brown-tinged head were interrupted by a small bright dot — his eyelid. Dippers' eyelids are feathered in white and the bird may blink frequently, flashing that startling dot. The tuft of green moss in the dipper's beak showed that he was a prospective dad preparing the nursery.

A few dips later, the dipper swooped up from creek's edge to the nest site and delivered the moss. He issued a loud 'gawk!' call — the dipper equivalent to "Honey! I'm home!" — every time he landed on the ledge near the female.

My troll perspective — lower than the birds on the ledge — revealed faintly patterned feathers that field guides don't show. The gray feathers under the tail are thinly edged in white, giving a scalloped effect. I had never seen that pattern before. Impersonating a troll had given me an advantage in observing the dippers.

During the course of my stay, the birds took a break from the nest and foraged in the creek. This species has unquestionably evolved in response to the invitation, "Come right in! The water's fine!" The American Dipper is specially adapted to life along mountain streams. Not only does this songbird forage by submerging its head or diving under the surface to look for larvae, but the dipper can also swim well without benefit of webbed feet or lobed toes.

My pair of dippers dove and swam in the water that bubbled and swirled around the rocks, most certainly for the purpose of entertaining me.

Two hours later, it was time to leave and I learned why the fairy tale troll was so snappish. I pushed away from the cold concrete wall and unseated myself from the hard rock. Every joint was stiff. I had developed flat spots in places where a person is supposed to be round. And my feet were asleep. I stumbled into the bright spring day squinting and blinking, and I'm sure I looked just like a hunched troll as I climbed the rocky embankment next to the bridge.

But my troll's-eye view had allowed me to watch American Dippers nest-building in their shady, watery domain. Sometimes, I reflected, it's good to be a troll.

An American Dipper prepares to deliver moss to a nest site along a Morgan County creek. (This is the exact individual that Kris mentioned in the article.) Photo by Paul Higgins.





## COMEDY CORNER

Last month, Jim and Judy Bailey went for a little birding-camping jaunt up into Wyoming. They enjoy mixing the two activities and do them both often. As they arrived at their campsite, they unloaded all their gear, set up their tent, arranged the camp kitchen, and erected the dining fly over the tables that were provided. Then, with those chores finished, they spent the rest of the afternoon and evening birding.

Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Cordilleran Flycatchers and Western Wood-Pewees were in abundance. Jim got some really good photos of several of the birds.

It was dark as they arrived back at their campsite, and as they crawled into their sleeping bags they looked up at the starry night, and Jim asked, "Judy, what do you see when you look straight up?"

Judy replied, "Oh, I see hundreds and thousands of bright stars in the dark blanket of night."

Jim then asked, "And what does it all tell you?"

She said, "It tells me how infinitesimally small we are, and that there are probably thousands of other worlds like this one with people living on them. What does it tell you, Jim?"

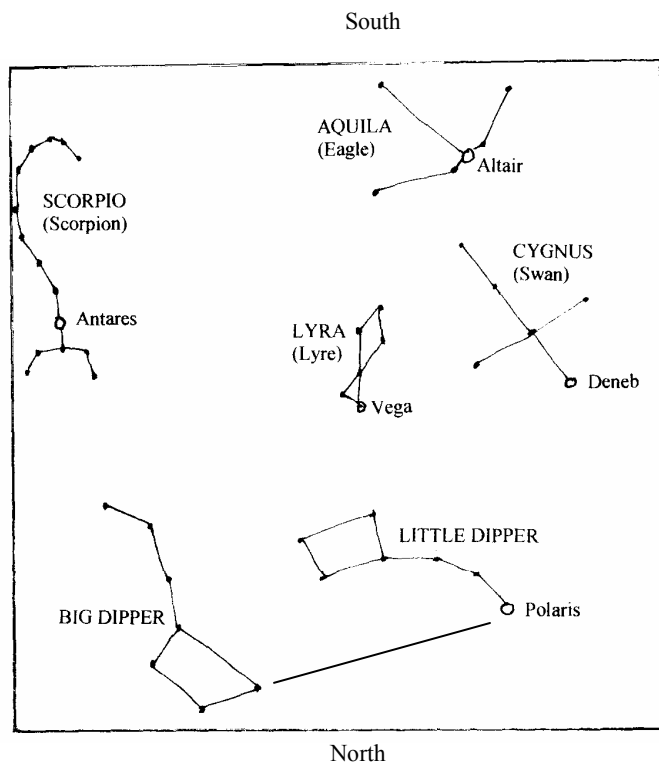
Then, rather annoyed, Jim replied, "Looking up at the stars tells me that someone stole our tent!"

## ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS

There are four nocturnal constellations that are named for birds: Aquila, the Eagle, and Cygnus, the Swan, are both right together and are two of the constellations that Jim and Judy saw when looking directly overhead. The others are Corvus, the Crow, and Columba, the Dove, which are located in other parts of the sky.

Now, (referring to the sky map in the next column) when you go look at the stars toward the end of July at about 10 p.m., lie down with your head to the south, resting on a pillow so that you are tilted up a bit. As you look toward the north, you can see the pointer stars of the Big Dipper pointing directly at the North Star, Polaris. Polaris is not a bright, 1st magnitude star in brightness — it's more like a 4th magnitude, but it is directly north and all the rest of the stars in the sky revolve around it.

Immediately overhead you will see three bright 1st magnitude stars: Deneb is the tail of Cygnus, the Swan, and you can see the stars to the sides of the body, like wings, and the two stars directly ahead forming the neck and head. This constellation is also known as the Northern Cross. To the left (west) is the extremely bright star Vega, in Lyra (a small triangle attached to a small parallelogram). Then, directly overhead is Aquila, the Eagle, with its 1st magnitude star, Altair. Again, you can kind of make out the head, and the outstretched wings and



tail. And, as mentioned previously, Columba, the Dove, and Corvus, the Crow, are somewhere else, not visible at this time.

To complete the Astronomy lesson, while still lying on your back, look way to the southwest and you'll see a reddish-colored 1st magnitude star a little above the horizon. (If you're up in Wyoming, like the Baileys were, it might be below the horizon.) Then look around it to see the stars shaped like the claws of a scorpion, then behind the red star, Antares, to see the curved line of stars forming the body, tail and stinger of the scorpion. The red star, Antares, is called the "heart of the scorpion." It is referred to as a "red giant 1st magnitude star." Compared to the extremely hot "blue dwarf" 1st magnitude star, Vega, in the constellation Lyra, Antares is much cooler, therefore it appears reddish instead of white or bluish. But, the reason it is a star of 1st magnitude in brightness, even though it is fairly cool, is because of its gigantic size.

If one were to put our solar system and sun in the middle of Antares, its circumference would be beyond the orbit of Jupiter! Talk about a red giant!



## PUZZLE PAGE

Here are the names of several major league sports teams. Match each team name with its city.

Baseball – MLB -	Blue Jays	Chicago
	Cardinals	Atlanta
	Orioles	Anaheim
Football – NFL -	Cardinals	Seattle
	Eagles	Pittsburgh
	Falcons	Philadelphia
	Ravens	Toronto
	Seahawks	Baltimore
Basketball – NBA -	Hawks	Atlanta
	Raptors	Atlanta
Hockey – NHL -	Blackhawks	Arizona
	Flyers	Toronto
	Mighty Ducks	Philadelphia
	Penguins	Detroit
	Red Wings	St. Louis
	Thrashers	Baltimore

Answers next month.

## Glossy Ibises?

For several weeks now, there has been some interchange on the Utah internet BirdLines, regarding the possibility of observing Glossy Ibises in the state. For members who do not have access to the BirdTalk/BirdNet internet or e-mail sites, we will summarize the discussions.

Cliff Weisse in Idaho has reported several instances of Glossy Ibises as well as hybrid Glossy/White-faced Ibises in Idaho.

The following is from Mark Stackhouse: Thanks for the heads up, Cliff - I've noticed increased reports from our neighboring states as well - AZ, CO and NM. For Utah birders not familiar with how to differentiate these two look-alike species (and get that state-first record past the records committee), here's an excerpt from the *Birds of North America* account on Glossy Ibis that covers well the distinguishing features: "In breeding season, [Glossy Ibis] adult facial skin from base of bill to eye changes from dull gray to blue-black, with a distinctive edging of pale-blue skin above and below but not continuing around eye. This edging skin remains at least marginally visible throughout the year.

"White-faced Ibis of western North America are very similar and not readily separated unless observed at close

range. White-faced Ibis has white feathering bordering facial skin and extending around back of eye during breeding season, when bill, entire leg, and facial skin red. Most important feature year-round is red iris on adult White-faced Ibis (versus brown on Glossy Ibis), but this is difficult to discern in the field, and immature White-faced, until at least first winter, has gray-brown iris. Facial skin on White-faced Ibis becomes dull grayish-pink during non-breeding season. Pale blue-gray skin bordering facial skin on Glossy Ibis may be confused with white feathering of White-faced, but note blue-gray lines of Glossy do not extend behind eye. In winter, note that White-faced lacks blue-gray line between eye and bill present on Glossy. Immatures of these 2 species not readily distinguishable until eye color of White-faced becomes red; age at which iris color becomes red likely variable, however. Glossy Ibises have gray-green legs, which may take on a pinkish tinge around inter-tarsal joint"

Please note that the glossiness of the plumage in breeding season is NOT a distinguishing feature - both White-faced and Glossy have similar plumage. You need to see the facial skin, eye-color and leg color. At this time of year you should search for birds that have a whitish facial border that does not extend behind the eye. Positively identifying a Glossy Ibis will require careful, detailed observation at close range under good lighting conditions. Of course, photos, even poor ones, will almost always help.

One further word of caution from Cliff in Idaho: We're seeing as many hybrids as Glossies. If there is any hint of purple/red/pink to the face be very suspicious even if the facial pattern is perfect for Glossy. Likewise the pale edges of the facial skin should be pale blue, or powder blue, not lavender. I've been able to see a reddish tinge to the iris on all of the hybrids but it takes a close look in good light. With the sun high I had a very hard time seeing it on a couple of them even at 60x. With low sun behind you it's readily visible. The Glossies look exactly as they're drawn in *Sibley*, and I found it easiest to locate them by scanning flocks looking for gray legs (if the legs are visible above the vegetation) among the red of White-faced Ibis. The knees can/will be red but the legs are gray and really stand out.



## In Support of Keeping Lists

Kris Purdy offered the following personal checklist on the BirdTalk internet line. Because she published this on the internet to the public, we are reprinting it here without her permission:

In regard to David Wheeler's ruminations concerning the taxonomy of Glossy vs. White-faced Ibis, I'm one of those people who keeps lists irrespective of official sanction. In looking for a Glossy Ibis entry, I had to work through a couple of my lists to find the entry that offered me comfort:

Here goes:

### List of Pink Birds I Have Seen:

- 1– Pink Floyd
- 2– Lewis's Woodpecker
- 3– Roseate Spoonbill
- 4– Trumpeter Swan with one spray-painted wing

### List of Taxonomic Names that Tickle My Fancy:

- 1– *Melanitta perspicillata* (Surf Scoter) The name just rolls off your tongue. (or falls off the tongue. Ed.)
- 2– *Dendragapus obscurus* (Blue Grouse) Sounds like a little-known medieval warlord.
- 3– *Lanius excubitor* (Northern Shrike) A knight of King Arthur's Round Table?

### List of Memorable Birds I Saw White Trotting the Globe:

- 1– The striking Hoopoe that swooped in, landed on the ground, and then utterly blended in at Camp Doha, Kuwait.
- 2– The pair of Great Tits that came to my feeder outside my office window at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.
- 3– The Pacific Golden-Plover that foraged in my front yard in Honolulu, Hawaii.

### List of Significant Bird Memories from my Childhood:

- 1– A fiery male Blackburnian Warbler in the dark green spruce tree outside my bedroom window.
- 2– The American Woodcock that sat under the feeder on a snowy Easter morning.
- 3– The Red-phased Eastern Screech-Owl always in the woodpecker hole on the way to filling our water bottles at a spring.
- 4– The Great Black-backed Gull that pooped on my sister's head on an island off the coast of Salem, MS.

### List of Birds My Mother Says I Saw as a Child and I Don't Remember (DR) or Barely Remember (BR):

- 1– The Snowy Owl atop the First Agricultural Bank building for the winter, living on the ample supply of pigeons (DR).
- 2– A Northern Hawk-Owl that stayed for the winter three towns over when I was five (DR).
- 3– A wandering flock of Glossy Ibis that caused great excitement among the birders in my county (BR).

There! There it is! I barely remember accompanying my mother to chase a small flock of Glossy Ibis that showed up in my county in New England. So, the Glossy Ibis does, indeed, appear on one of my lists. Now I can sleep nights and don't have to worry about running to Cache Valley to sift through endless flocks of ibis for the Glossy. Phew !!  
—Kris

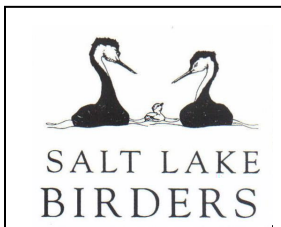
(Kris, what about your Utah list and Cache County list? Surely you'll get peptic indigestion until you have logged the Glossy Ibis into your Utah database [whatever it looks like or whichever computer database program you use.])

Now that Kris has shown it can be done, we can all benefit by making whatever kind of list we want — birds by color, national origin, religious persuasion, length of tail versus neck, diameter of excreta, how many times a specific bird visits each of our bird feeders, etc. And — we can do it all without the sanction of the American Birding Association.

### **(GSL Audubon Field Trips carried over from page 2.)**

**Friday, July 28, 7:00 a.m.**, Mirror Lake trip, Leader is Pomera Fronce. Let's beat the heat at Mirror Lake. Montane specialties we'll be looking for are American 3-toed Woodpecker, Gray Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Pine Grosbeak. The walking distance of 3 miles will be on a moderate trail. Bring lunch for a picnic by the lake. We'll be home by mid-afternoon. Meet at Sugar House Shopko SE parking lot at 7:00 a.m.. Call Pomera for details or if you plan to attend—272-2755.

There are many other GSL Audubon trips, as well; contact Deedee O'Brien, 272-8060, for more information.



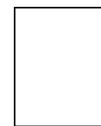
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### **BIRD BYTES-**

Live your life so you won't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip. –Anon.

Always behave like a duck – keep calm and unruffled on the surface, but paddle like crazy underneath! –Anon.

### **ANSWERS TO JUNE'S**

Match the musical number with its composer or performer:

#### **Music**

"El Condor Pasa" – sung by several groups  
"Cuckoo in the Woods" – by Camille Saint-Saëns  
"The Cuckoo" – sung by Peter, Paul and Mary  
"The Hawk and the Eagle" – sung by John Denver  
"Mockingbird Hill" – sung by Skeeter Davis  
"Partridge in a Pear Tree" – seasonal folk song  
"Snowbird" – sung by Anne Murray  
"The Swan" – by Camille Saint-Saëns  
"The Swan of Tuonela" – by Jean Sibelius  
"Three Ravens" – sung by Peter, Paul and Mary  
"Turkey in the Straw" – old American folk song  
"Tiny Sparrow" – sung by Peter, Paul and Mary  
"The Wild Dove" – by Antonín Dvořák  
"Wild Goose" – sung by Frankie Laine  
"Yellow Bird" – Jamaican folk song  
"Kookaburra, kookaburra" – Australian folk song

### **PUZZLE PAGE**

Match the literature with its author and the movie actor or director:

#### **Literature**

"The Raven", by Edgar Allen Poe  
"Ode to a Nightingale", by John Keats  
"To a Skylark", by Percy Bysshe Shelley  
"The Owl and the Pussycat", by Edward Lear  
*The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini  
*The First Eagle*, by Tony Hillerman  
*The Wild Duck*, by Henrik Ibsen  
*To Kill a Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee; movie starring Gregory Peck  
*One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, by Ken Kesey; movie starring Jack Nicholson  
*The Birds*, by Daphne Du Maurier; movie directed by Alfred Hitchcock  
*I Heard the Owl Call my Name*, by Margaret Craven; movie starring Dean Jagger  
*Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, by Richard Bach; movie starring Lee Holdridge