



The *Stilt*

Volume 36, Issue 9
November 2007

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

BRWC Requests Help Protecting Land

It was 1999. The Y2K scare was the buzz. Bill Clinton was fighting to save his presidency and his political career.

Locally, those of us who spent some of our free time hiking and skiing the Wasatch-Cache National Forest became increasingly alarmed with what we witnessed. Illegal motorized activities were creating unauthorized routes and trails. These impacts affected wildlife, water, soils, vegetation, as well as non-motorized users of the forest.

Many discussions ensued resulting in the formation

of the Bear River Watershed Council (BRWC). Over the years, we learned many things, not the least of which was what it takes to sustain an organization. We also learned to focus our efforts on what we could do to make the biggest difference. Today, BRWC proudly boasts an Executive Director, a seasonal project coordinator, a Board of Directors, and a small but growing membership that has shown strong support.

Though we weren't new to the issue of motorized impacts on public lands, we were frustrated at what little effect traditional

methods had to address them. We knew that there had to be a better way. We also knew that photographs and data don't lie. As a result, Project MUD (Motorized Use Data) was born. With the help of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness from Durango, Colorado, we put together a model for gathering information pertinent to the purpose of documenting physical impacts to the National Forest from illegal motorized recreation.

Summarized on a data gathering sheet, MUD allows trained volunteers to systematically document such impacts. Such docu-

mentation includes unauthorized routes, constructed mud bogs, rutting, illegal campsites, litter, trampled vegetation, etc. Digital photographs and GPS data show forest managers the intensity and exact locations at which the impacts are occurring.

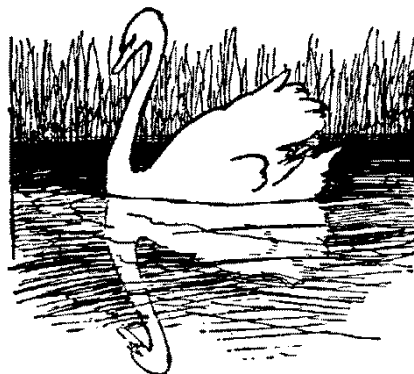
What happens next? Once the information is compiled, it gets posted in the Great Old Broads for Wilderness database as well as on our Web site. An area BRWC deems a concern will be submitted to the U.S. Forest Service enabling

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I learned it from the Birds

Intelligence without ambition is a bird without wings.

-C. Archie Danielson



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Audubon Calendar

November 2007

1 Board of Trustees Meeting: BAS Trustees meet at 7 p.m. at the Cache Valley Learning Center, 75 S. 400 West, Logan. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend.

3 Logan Sewage Lagoons. We will go to one of the best places for waterfowl in the Fall, the Logan Sewage Lagoons. We normally see a nice variety of gulls, ducks, (occasionally a Long-tailed Duck), and herons. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). Dress very warmly and bring binoculars and a spotting scope if you have one. Carpooling will be available. Beginning birders are welcome. For more information call Buck Russell (435) 512-9641.

8 BAS General Meeting: Join us at our same great location, the Cache Valley Learning Center (75 S. 400 West), as Val Grant will be presenting photos from his trip to Peru. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend and refreshments will be provided by Crumb Brothers and Caffe Ibis. Enter through the building's west doors. All are welcome to attend. We hope to see you there.

10 Photography in Cache Valley. Today's field trip will not be a traditional BAS field trip. We will NOT meet at the usual place and time. Instead, we will meet at 10:30 a.m. in a classroom at the Logan City Library. After about an hour of information (questions and answers), we will be heading to a local hotspot like Hyrum Reservoir for practice. If you have any interest in photographing birds and other wildlife, then today's field trip will be beneficial. Film and digital photography will be covered by Brandon Spencer. Buck Russell will discuss digiscoping. Remember to meet at the library and dress appropriately for the weather.

December 2007

1 Hoggan Homing Pigeon Racing Loft. Bridgerland Audubon will have a field trip to visit the Hoggan Loft, one of the premiere racing pigeon lofts in the country. The loft has birds in the American Racing Pigeon Union Hall of Fame and the owner, Brad Hoggan, is one of the top homing pigeon breeders in the United States. Meet at 10:00 at the parking lot between Caffe Ibis and the Logan Fire Station (50 E. 150 North). After visiting the loft we will do some birding around Cache Valley and will end the field trip about noon. Carpooling will be available; beginning birders are welcome. For more information call Buck Russell (435) 512-9641.



If you'd like to come along on a field trip but do not have binoculars, call Buck Russell (435) 755-6534. He'll try to find a pair for you to use.



White-winged Scoter

by Sue Drown

Local Bird Spotlight

Come November, when the days turn cold and birds grow scarce, Cache County birders don't despair. They know just where to go and what to do. The destination? Hyrum Reservoir. The prize? A visiting White-winged Scoter, on its way to the ocean from breeding grounds in Canada's Northwest Territories.

A quick look at your field guide will confirm that Scoters have that Eider-like, wedged, sloping, sea-duck head shape, with a lean, all-dark body profile. Sometimes Scoters show an upturned tail like a Ruddy, but the beak and body shape are entirely

different. The White-winged is the largest of the Scoters, with a long neck and tail and a sloping forehead. Like on the Trumpeter Swan, the line where face ends and bill begins is a mystery. The adult male's bill is heavy and black, with a bright scarlet-and-yellow tip that looks as if the bill of a more light-hearted duck was mistakenly inserted into the thick, swarthy base. The white "comma" around the eye has a sinister clown-like upturn on the rear corner. A duck Darth Vader could love.

But none of that counts for much. What I remember is scanning across the silver glare of Hyrum Lake at a dark shape on the far side, straining my eye for way too long in the scope. For all who visit Hyrum understand this:

wherever you set up your scope, the birds will be at the opposite end of the lake. But finally (and just before the State Park Ranger nabbed me for the \$5 access fee), my first Cache County White-winged rewarded me with a brief wing-stretch. And there was the bold white patch on the black wing, the only real field mark you need. You can often see a corner of the white wing patch on the folded wing of a resting bird, and that corner is diagnostic—you have your White-winged!

(With credit to [Birds of North America Online](#) and to Pete Dunne's [Essential Field Guide Companion](#).)

Scoter illustration reproduced with permission from Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada.

Sue Drown is the BAS Treasurer

Molt ecology of White-winged Scoters (*Melanitta fusca*) in the St. Lawrence estuary, Québec, Canada

BY CHRISTINE LEPAGE, Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada, 1141 Route de l'Église, P.O. Box 10100, Sainte-Foy, Québec, G1V 4H5. E-mail: christine.lepage@ec.gc.ca

Little is known of the breeding distribution and post breeding ecology of White-winged Scoters (*Melanitta fusca*) in eastern North America (Brown and Fredrickson 1997). The recent discovery of White-winged Scoter molting sites in the St. Lawrence estuary, Québec, Canada, (CWS unpublished data; >4,000 birds) provides a unique opportunity to learn more about the eastern population of White-winged Scoters. The principal objectives of this study were to determine whether molting White-winged Scoters could

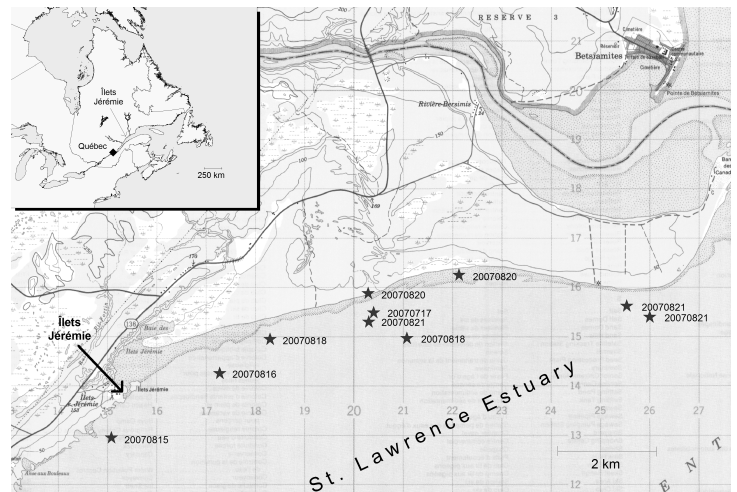


Figure 1. Localization of the 10 catches, 15-21 August, St. Lawrence estuary, Québec

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be captured at their molting sites in the St. Lawrence estuary using techniques developed on the Labrador coast and if so, to obtain blood and feather samples for future genetic and isotopic analysis.

Capture and banding.- The capture and banding operations were conducted through 10 catches over 6 days (15-21 August), along a stretch of 15 km east of Îlets Jérémie, Québec, Canada (Figure 1). We succeeded in capturing and banding 185 White-winged Scoters, 135 Surf Scoters and 10 Black Scoters, for a total of 330 molting scoters (see Table 1). We took blood samples from 47 White-winged Scoters, and collected feather samples from 104. Finally, we gathered useful information to develop a more efficient capture technique adapted to the St. Lawrence estuary conditions.

No. banded	WWSC	SUSC	BLSC	Total
Males	120	70	5	195
Females	65	65	5	135
Total	185	135	10	330

Table 1. Number of birds banded for each species of scoters, St. Lawrence estuary, Québec, 15-21 August 2007

Molt Chronology.- Molt chronology was highly variable within and between species. For White-winged Scoters, even though there were males and females in all classes of 9th primary length, 72% of males and 74% of females were in middle to late molt stages (classes 61-140 mm). The pattern of molt stages for both sexes was very close for this species (see Figure 2). However, there were more males than females in the later stages of the wing molt.

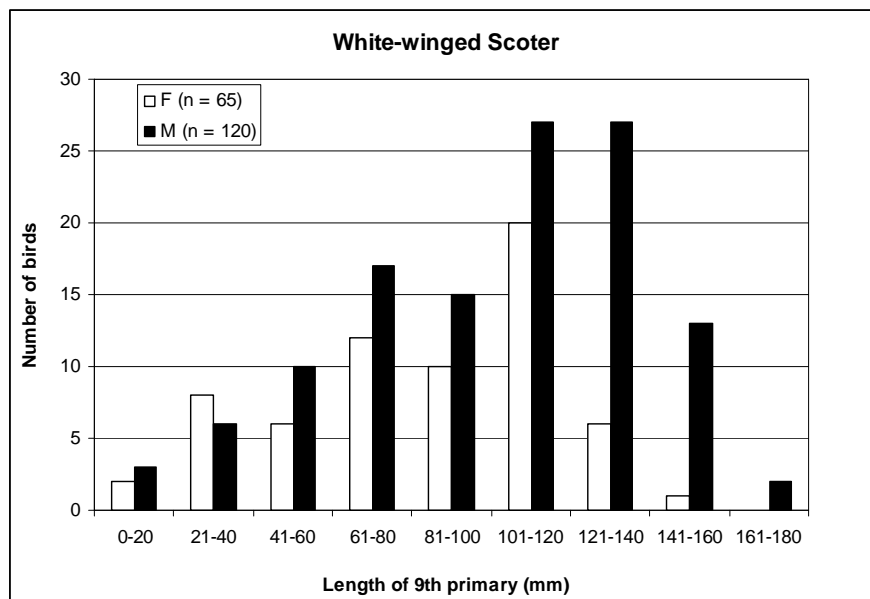


Figure 2. Length of 9th primary for White-winged Scoters

Future.- The successful capture of White-winged Scoters in the St. Lawrence estuary opens the way for future more detailed research. For example the implantation of satellite transmitters to determine the fall migration pattern of the molting birds, the location of their wintering grounds and also of their breeding areas. Recoveries from banded birds will help identify migration routes and wintering sites.

Literature Cited:

Brown, P. W. and L. H. Fredrickson. 1997. White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*). In The birds of North America, No. 274 (A. Poole and F. Gill, eds.). The Birds of North America, Inc. Philadelphia, PA.



Pulling in netted scoters.
Photo: Francis St-Pierre, UQAM



Captured scoters waiting to be unmeshed.
Photo: Christine Lepage, CWS



Unmeshing the scoters: need lots of patience and dexterity!
Photo: Francis St-Pierre, UQAM



Identifying species, sexing, banding, measuring and weighing scoters.
Photo: Christine Lepage, CWS



Black Scoter male; White-winged Scoter male; and Surf Scoter male.
Photo: Michel Robert, CWS



Releasing banded scoters.
Photo: Christian Marcotte, CWS



Continued from page 1

them to take more appropriate action. Thanks to the help of Project MUD, BRWC has organized and funded several restoration projects in the Wasatch-Cache National Forest over the past few years. Some local sites include Hyde Park, Millville, and High Creek canyons.

Our mantra: Witness the Impacts, Document Them, and Make a Difference! It's working. But the task is huge and we can't do it without support. If you'd like to see our work continue, please consider becoming a volunteer or making a financial contribution. Visit our Web site at www.brwcouncil.org, or e-mail us at brwc@brwcouncil.org. Contributions can be sent to: BRWC P.O. Box 404 Richmond, Utah 84333-0404

by Tim Wagner

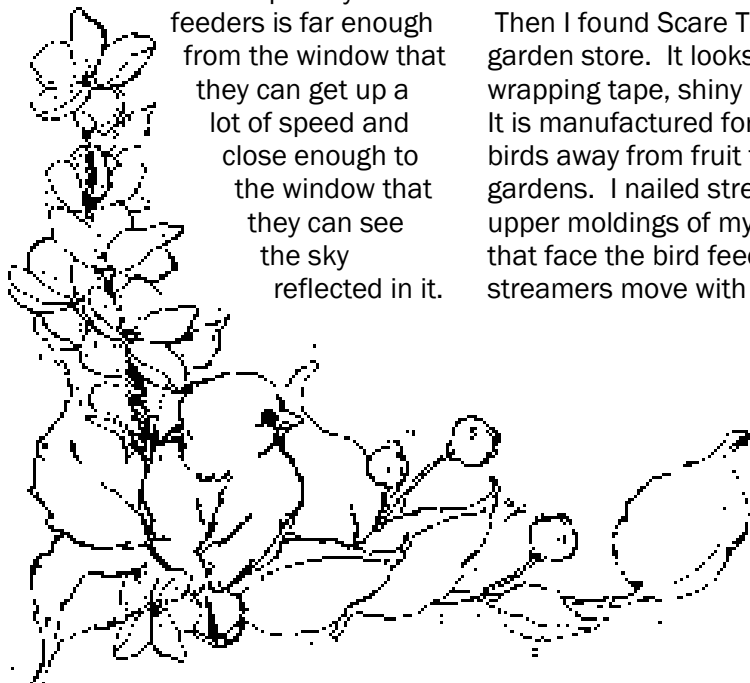
Birds vs. the Window

Nothing is more discouraging to me than losing a songbird to a windowpane. Some species seem to be particularly eager to think "sky, safety" when they should be hearing alarm bells: "hard surface, pull up!" Black-headed Grosbeaks seem to be particularly dense about windows, and they hit really hard. The worst spot in

which to place your feeders is far enough from the window that they can get up a lot of speed and close enough to the window that they can see the sky reflected in it.

I have cut hawk profiles out of black paper and taped them up. It did not help much. Then I noticed that pulling drapes or shades when I was not at home made the window surface look less like the sky. That helped some.

Then I found Scare Tape at the garden store. It looks like package wrapping tape, shiny and sparkly. It is manufactured for keeping birds away from fruit trees and gardens. I nailed streamers on the upper moldings of my windows that face the bird feeders. The streamers move with the slightest



The Green Consumer

breeze. Now the birds do not fly towards the windows when they spook from the feeders. The window mortality rate fell to almost zero, and my original streamers have lasted for eight years.

I got that first roll, enough to grace about eight windows, from Anderson's Garden Store downtown. I notice it is now available in the garden section of Smith's Marketplace under the brand name Gardeneer Holographic Scare Tape. Try it!

by Alice Lindahl

Please pass on your green consumer tips to me at alicelindahl@earthlink.net and I will put them in the *Stilt*.

Welcome to BAS

New Members

Marie Veibell
 Douglas A. Johnson
 Thomas Hull
 Jacqueline Lowry
 Al Rutel

Renewing Members

Michael C. Amacher
 Robert Atwood
 Dale Azevedo
 Leroy B. Beasley
 David J. Behmer
 C. D. Cheney
 Phyllis Conover
 Mervin P. Coover
 Ruth Eller

Jane Erickson
 Gary & Susan Etherington
 Lu Georgi
 Barbara S. Hale
 Rebecca Huffman
 Daisy & Trevor Hughes
 Reinhard A. Jockel
 Jim Cane & Linda Kervin
 Norman & Marcia LaBarge
 Ann W. Peralta

William E. Saul
 Brandon Spencer
 Emily Speth
 Don Standing
 Kazuko Toelken
 Nancy Williams
 M Coburn Williams
 Lucy Watkins

Bridgerland Audubon contacts

Trustees

2005-2008 Jim Cane, 713-4668; Jennifer Hoffmann, 713-4935; Dick Hurren, 734-2653; Richard Mueller, 752-5637
 2006-2009 Ron Goede, 752-9650; David Liddell, 797-1261; Bret Selman, 257-5260
 2007-2010 Dave Drown, 752-3797; Jack Greene, 563-6816; Reinhard Jockel; Stephen Peterson, 755-5041

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Membership in the Bridgerland Audubon Society includes a subscription to *The Stilt*, as well as *Audubon* magazine. The editor of *The Stilt* invites submissions, due on the 15th of each month. Send to birdnerdut@gmail.com.

National Audubon Society Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to contribute to Audubon and receive the Bridgerland Audubon newsletter, *The Stilt*, and the *National AUDUBON* magazine, as a:

_____ **New** member of the National Audubon Society and Bridgerland Audubon.

My check for \$20 is enclosed (this is a special first-year rate).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____



Please make all checks payable to National Audubon Society and send with this card to:

National Audubon Society
 Membership Data Center
 PO Box 51001
 Boulder, CO 80322-1001
 W-52 Local Chapter Code: 7XCHA

National Audubon occasionally makes its membership list available to selected organizations. To have your name omitted from this, please check this box.

Note to new National Audubon members: To get on *The Stilt* newsletter mailing list without the usual 8-week delay, contact Susan Durham, 752-5637, sdurham@cc.usu.edu.

Prefer the local newsletter only? Send \$20 (make checks payable to Bridgerland Audubon Society) and this form to: Bridgerland Audubon Society, PO Box 3501, Logan, UT 84323-3501 for a subscription to *The Stilt*.



The Stilt

Newsletter of the Bridgerland Audubon Society

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BIRD REFUGE SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

Would you like to do something to help wildlife? And learn more about birds and habitats?

The Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge could use your help. Volunteers are needed to staff the information desk and bookstore, assist with education and interpretive programs and plan special events. If you're a writer or photographer, your skills are needed for the refuge newsletter.

At the information desk, volunteers answer questions and provide information to visitors, as well as answer the phone and show the refuge video. In the bookstore, you stock shelves, assist customers and ring up sales. As an education volunteer, you'd be trained to help with programs provided for students. Help is always needed to plan and execute special Saturday family programs and open houses.

If any of these jobs sound interesting to you, and you have some time to donate for wildlife, please contact Betsy Beneke, Volunteer Coordinator, at (435) 734-6436. More detailed job descriptions can be found on the refuge web site: <http://bearriver.fws.gov>.
