

Utah and Idaho – August 2021  
Crossbills (and Climate Change)  
By Jeff Hopkins



This is a report from a trip to Utah and Idaho I just completed with Pitta Nature Tours. This was my first trip after Covid hit, and let me tell you, it was great to be traveling with other birders again.

Pitta Nature Tours is a small local company owned by Tim Avery based out of the Salt Lake City area. They were formerly called Mountain West Birding Tours, but changed their name last year. Pitta calls this tour “Mountain West Most Wanted,” and it usually includes Utah, Nevada and Idaho. The tour focuses on getting a few ABA Area species that are uncommon or challenging in the region, specifically Himalayan Snowcock, Cassia Crossbill, Flammulated Owl, Black Swift, Chukar, Gray Vireo, Gray Partridge, Sagebrush Sparrow, Calliope Hummingbird, and Lewis’s Woodpecker.

Unfortunately, just before the tour happened, there were some unusual heavy rains in the area. The biggest impact was that there were landslides in the Ruby Mountains of Nevada that closed the Lamoille Canyon road. This meant there would be no chance of accessing the high mountain ridges for Himalayan Snowcock. The other impact of the rains is that it shut down singing and caused some birds to disappear. We didn’t do well with the sagebrush species, especially sparrows. Tim also found out that after the rains all the male Calliope Hummingbirds stopped showing up at the feeders.

Other climate issues are more long term. The Great Salt Lake is drying up. The water used to come right up to the causeway, but now those are mud flats. There used to be a marina, but it’s nowhere

near the water anymore. And the entire area was overwhelmed by smoke from the fires in the Pacific Northwest (as you can see in the picture of the Antelope Island Causeway). Tim said it was the smokiest he's ever seen it.

With all of these problems to deal with Tim quickly rearranged the itinerary to skip Nevada, since without access to the snowcock there was no reason to go there, and changed the itinerary to include two nights in Utah and two in Idaho. This would maximize the opportunity for Cassia Crossbill and give a second chance at Flammulated Owl in case we missed it in Utah.

One other thing to add. One requirement of the tour was that all patrons had to be vaccinated for Covid 19. This was actually great to know. It allowed everyone to relax, made it so that we didn't need to wear masks while travelling or eating together, and in general just made the logistics easier. I'm glad Tim made that requirement.

Despite all the upsets, the tour was a success and Tim did a great job getting us most of the specialties. I saw 141 species and heard a few more, including one lifer.

A day by day report follows, and after that a species by species summary.





## August 5<sup>th</sup> – Salt Lake City Canyons



The group assembled at Salt Lake City Airport at 3:30 where we were met by Tim, with his trusty Ford Transit van, nicknamed Otus. There were six of us; two from Michigan, two from Tennessee, one from Maryland, and myself from Pennsylvania. After a quick stop at our hotel to check in, drop off bags, and change into birding gear, we headed off to Millcreek Canyon.

Our first stop was a picnic area to try for Cordilleran Flycatcher. They were very quiet, although one or two people heard one. We also had a much more responsive “**Western**” **Warbling Vireo**. Then Mary spotted a young **American Dipper** sitting on a rock in the creek waiting for his parents to bring him some dinner. We then stopped further down canyon at a pond where there were nine (count ‘em, nine) long-staying **Tundra Swans**, a few **Mallards**, some of which were wild, and three **Black-chinned Hummingbirds** coming to a feeder.



We next headed south to Provo Canyon and Bridal Veil Falls. As the sun set, we spent time looking through flocks of the more common **White-throated Swifts** with a few **Violet-green Swallows**, and also saw an **Osprey** and a **Turkey Vulture**. Eventually Tim picked out a couple of the target **Black Swifts**, although they never came down to roost in the falls and give good views. Some of us also saw an **American Robin** who was tending a nest with young.

We headed further up canyon in the dark for some owling. At the first stop as we got out of the vehicle, we heard a distant **Common Poorwill**. Tim was then able get a **Flammulated Owl** to respond to us, but it wouldn't show itself. After a few more stops, we had heard four more owls and had one flash across the road in front of the vehicle, but none of them wanted to play nice. So close to midnight (and with me close to exhaustion), we headed back to the hotel.

### August 6<sup>th</sup> – Salt Lake City Area – Sagebrush Specialties



This morning the goal was to get some of the juniper / sage specialties in the Lake Mountains southwest of Salt Lake City. We headed out at about 6 AM and on the way we saw some of the common suburban birds: **Great-tailed Grackle**, **Mourning Dove**, **Eurasian Starling**, and of course **Rock Pigeon**. We also had a large flock of **White-faced Ibis** feeding in a field. As we got into the countryside, we added a fly-by flock of **California Gulls**, an Osprey perched on a pole, and a **Wild Turkey** that ran across the road in front of the van.

Once up in the hills, we set out trying to find our main target: Grey Vireo. Our first stop produced a few **Juniper Titmice** who played hide-and-seek, a distant flying **Common Nighthawk**, and a steady stream of Cal Gulls, but not much else. We drove further into the hills and made another stop



which was far more productive. We first saw a few **Woodhouse's Scrub- Jays**, rapidly followed by **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Western Kingbird**, **Red-tailed Hawk**, **Blue-grey Gnatcatcher**, **Lazuli Bunting**, and brief looks at a **Gray Flycatcher** which was one of the morning's other targets. Finally, after about an hour of searching, we heard a **Grey Vireo**. He also played hide-and-seek in the junipers, but eventually came close enough to allow good views.



After that, we started down the other side of the hills. One of the others spotted a pair of **Loggerhead Shrikes** sitting on a rock. We saw a couple **Bank Swallows** at one spot and someone saw a **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** that I missed. There was some standing water from the previous week's rain where we hoped for some

passerines coming to drink. No passerines, but a lovely **Peregrine Falcon** who eventually took off and circled the van a few times. From there, we stopped at a huge patch of sagebrush for some sparrows. They were quiet, although Tim thought he had a **Chipping Sparrow**. All I had was **House Finches**. We also had a **Golden Eagle** who chose to fly away from us into the haze.

From there we travelled through some pasture land. That gave us numerous Western Kingbirds with a **Say's Phoebe** mixed in one flock, more Mourning Doves, our first of many **Swainson's Hawks** and another couple Golden Eagles perched on some high-tension towers. Eventually we ended up in the town of Cedar Fort, where we added **Eurasian Collared-doves**, **Western Meadowlark**, **Mountain Bluebirds**, **Lark Sparrows**, and the ubiquitous **House Sparrows**, along with more Western Kingbirds and Swainson's Hawks.



It was now well into the heat of the day, so we headed back to our hotel for some lunch and a siesta before our afternoon session. After a rest, as we waited for Tim (and Otus) at the hotel, I saw my first **Black-billed Magpie** and **Barn Swallow** of the trip along with a few House Finches. One of the other birders found a Lesser Goldfinch nearby, but the group didn't go looking for it.

Late in the afternoon we headed up to Silver Lake near the ski resorts in Big Cottonwood canyon, picking up some **Common Ravens** on the way. We arrived at the lake to find it rather crowded, so we headed toward the residential area. As we started out, we picked up our only **Cassin's Finch** of the trip, several robins, and some sparrows (probably Lincoln's) that stayed out of sight thanks to some chainsaw work being done. There were also a few hummingbird feeders with no visitors.



We moved down the road to the residential area which was full of evergreens. Tim immediately recognized the song of **White-winged Crossbills**, a very good find for the area in the summer. With a little tape-assist, we managed to bring in a total of five of them, mostly males. They flew back and forth from tree to tree feeding on the cones. A couple **Red Crossbills** joined the party occasionally.

We also had quite a few **Pine Siskins**, a very close **Red-naped Sapsucker**, and a less friendly **Northern Flicker**.

Heading further down the trail, we found a nice mixed flock of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **Mountain Chickadees**. We hoped they were mobbing an owl, but if so, we couldn't find it. Further on, we had a few "**Grey-Headed**" **Juncos**, an **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, along with many **Western Wood-pewees** and **Warbling Vireos**, a lone **Hermit Thrush**, a family of **Orange-crowned Warblers**, and a juvenile "**Audubon's**" **Yellow-rumped Warbler**. We also heard a Downy Woodpecker and Steller's Jay. Eventually, we circled back to the lake shore finding a few Mallards, numerous **Violet-green Swallows**, more Red Crossbills, a flyover Golden Eagle, and a responsive **Lincoln's Sparrow**.



We made a quick stop at the hummingbird feeders one more



time, where a Rufous Hummingbird flew in quickly but disappeared behind the feeder, and snuck out the back side before I could see it. Since there were still more crowds coming in to enjoy a late Friday afternoon at the lake, we decided to head back to town. After a nice sit-down dinner, we called it a night.

### August 7<sup>th</sup> – Great Salt Lake and Transit to Idaho



This morning started with a little trash talk. Several of the group wanted to see and photograph a Chukar. They kept ribbing Tim about how he “guaranteed” seeing Chukar in the brochure, while Tim kept gently reminding us that the brochure said “we will look for Chukar.” Eventually we made



it to the Visitor Center on Antelope Island (which had nesting Barn Swallows) and as soon as we got to a lookout where the **Chukar** could be found, we found a flock. But as soon as they saw us, the scampered away. While looking for them, we found a couple **Rock Wrens**. While trying to get better pictures of the Chukars, we found **Sage Thrasher**, Lark Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, a very distant **Burrowing Owl**, and a Pronghorn.

After that we drove a loop around the visitor center to the corral. We found another

family of Burrowing Owls, a couple **Horned Larks**, some magpies, and the resident family of **Great Horned Owls** at the corral. We also found one of the resident American Bison herd. Unfortunately, we also found an injured **Wilson's Phalarope**...far from the water. Tim captured it, and we took it to the water's edge where it would have a better chance at survival. While Tim was releasing the Wilson's we found a **Long-billed Curlew** walking in the sand and saw our first **Northern Harrier**.

Next stop was the causeway back to the mainland. This is *the* place for shorebirds. As soon as we pulled up, we had flocks of *thousands* of Wilson's and **Red-necked Phalaropes**, a handful of



**American Avocets**, some "western" **Willetts**, a few **Western Sandpipers**, and a lone **Baird's Sandpiper** in with the westerns. We also had a **Snowy Egret**, our first few **Franklin's Gulls** among the numerous California Gulls, and a few distant **Cinnamon Teal**. There were some close **Eared Grebes** which we could look down on from a bridge, but there were thousands more out on the lake. The brushy edges had some **Red-winged Blackbirds**. At one of the bridges, we also had a couple **Brown-headed Cowbirds**, the only ones we'd see on the trip, and a couple **Spotted Sandpipers**.

We traveled a littler further back toward the mainland and found another large mixed flock. This one had many more avocets, White-faced Ibis, **Black-necked Stilts**, a **Lesser Yellowlegs**, and our first **Long-billed Dowitcher**. Waterfowl were well represented with **Canada Geese**, **Northern Shovelers**, Mallards, and both Cinnamon and **Green-winged Teal**. In addition to hundreds of California and Franklin's Gulls, we added **Ring-billed Gulls** to the trip list. The birds were all kept moving by a Northern Harrier as well as a Coyote who walked through the mud flats and into the lake.

Our next stop on our tour of the Great Salt Lake was to Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. Along the entrance road we had an **Eastern Kingbird**, a very local breeder in Utah, and our first **American**



**White Pelicans.** There were also Barn and Bank Swallows at the Visitor Center. The first part of the auto-tour route was absolutely dry. No water, no birds. But eventually we came to some of the larger bays of the reserve, and the water birds were concentrated there: large flocks of White Pelicans, **Clark's, Western, and Pied-billed Grebes, American Coot,** Mallard, Cinnamon Teal, **Gadwall,** and **Northern Pintail.** There were some **Forster's Terns** and a lone **Caspian Tern.** At one point we stopped to take some photos, and turned up a couple **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** mixed in with a small flock of red-wings, and some **Song Sparrows.** Of course, there were also substantial numbers of large waders, like White-faced Ibis, **Great Blue Heron,** and **Great and Snowy Egrets,** and all three expected species of gulls. We even had a couple **Solitary Sandpipers.** One the way out, we also turned up a female **Ring-necked Pheasant.**



At this point, it was time to move on to Idaho, so we pushed on to our hotel in Twin Falls. As we pulled into the lot, Tim pointed out a **Brewer's Blackbird** on the lawn, our only one of the trip.

After settling in, a short rest, and a quick dinner (Korean Bibimbap) we headed out again, this time to the South Hills. We drove straight through to the Diamondfield Jack Campground. The parking area was full of four-wheelers, so we headed up the hill through the pine forest. There were a few Red-breasted Nuthatches and Mountain Chickadees, some Pine Siskins, and a **Brown Creeper** climbing up one of the trunks. Then someone spotted a bird in a lodgepole pine. It may have been a Cassia Crossbill – and we heard one or two – but it flew off before most of us could see it.

We chased after it further uphill into a clearing, but couldn't relocate it. We did find a few Northern Flickers and **Hairy Woodpeckers,** a Red-tailed Hawk, several Violet-Green Swallows, and a nice male **Western Tanager** at the top of a spruce. The "herp guys" from Tennessee found a Horned Lizard under a rock and we all got good looks at that. But as the sun was setting, we headed back to the parking lot, where we watched a few Common Nighthawks feeding.

It was now time for Tim's back-up owl plan. We headed up the road into the hills above the campground to a suitable spot and waited until dark. In the dim light, we were able to see a couple of **Green-tailed Towhees** moving around, although to be fair, I could only identify them by sound. We also heard a sparrow or two calling in the dim light, but couldn't ID those. Once it was dark we heard a distant Common Poorwill. But then it was time for the star of the show.

Tim tried his owl tape and got an immediate response, but it wasn't that close. A little more judicious use of tape, and the bird came in. Tim got a light on him fairly quickly, so we all saw him,

but he didn't sit still. We also heard what we think was a second bird on the opposite side of the road. The first bird moved around a bit, but eventually, we refound him a little further down the road, and he posed for pictures:



Content with our success we called it a night and headed back to town.

August 8<sup>th</sup> – Southern Idaho – South Fields and South Hills





We started out the morning working the fields and sagebrush south of Twin Falls. The morning goal, for at least a couple of us, was Grey Partridge.

We checked several fields multiple times. We turned up many expected field species, including Common Raven, **American Crow**, Black-billed Magpie, **American Kestrels**, Swainson's Hawk (lots), Northern Harriers, Burrowing Owls, Mourning and **Eurasian Collared-doves**, Western Kingbirds, and Loggerhead Shrikes. Some of the others had Vesper Sparrow and Sage Thrasher.

But the most amazing stop was at an organic farm where they use owls for pest (mouse) control. At a tree line next to that farm we had *twelve* **Barn Owls** of various shades – some fairly white and others more orange. They were very active but there were always a few sitting out in the open or flying. While everyone was watching and trying to count the owls, I heard some sparrows in the sage-brush opposite the owl field, and found they were **Brewer's Sparrows**. And when we drove past the tree line for closer looks, we picked out a lone Great Horned Owl hidden with the Barns.

However, we didn't turn up any Grey Partridges. They have been less reliable this year than previous years. Tim suggested it was probably due to the ongoing drought in the west.



From there we headed back up to Diamondfield Jack Campground with one target in mind. As soon as we arrived we hiked into the pines on the ridge and we waited. We heard several Violet-green Swallows making a double note call that we tried to turn into crossbills. We also had the expected evergreen species: Mountain Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Pine Siskin. We also had the male Western Tanager in the same tree as the night before. Then someone spotted a flock of Common Nighthawks on the horizon. We estimated there were as many as 35 of them!

All of a sudden a large flock of crossbills flew over... but they didn't stop! Tim tried the crossbill tape, which he said never works. This time it did. A lone female **Cassia Crossbill** (lifer) came back. As is typical she stayed way

up at the tops of the trees, and she moved around a bit, but she stuck around long enough that we could get scope views. Spectacular. Crossbill tri-fecta completed! After that we added a couple Western Wood Pewees and a Warbling Vireo. At the bottom of the hill, a few more crossbills flew over and landed, including a couple males and a Violet-green swallow perched in a bare tree.

Six satisfied birders (and one relieved tour leader) reassembled at the vehicle to move on to our next stop. We headed up over the mountain to a burned clearing. This was a known stake-out for **Lewis' Woodpecker**. We had three of them, but every time we got close a car would drive by and spook them. Eventually they flew to the far ridge, where we ended up with one of them in a tree with both Northern Flicker and Hairy Woodpecker. Eventually, they were all chased off by a kestrel.

We continued over the top of the ridge adding species from the vehicle. The most unusual was a **Merlin**, that was perched at the top of a spruce. We also had a few **Cedar Waxwings** and robins. Eventually we ended up at the Brockman's Hummingbird Feeders. The feeders were dominated by Black-chinned Hummingbirds, but there were several **Broad-tailed Hummingbirds** who were usually heard before being seen, and smaller numbers of **Rufous** and **Calliope Hummingbirds**. We also heard some **Grey Catbirds**, which excited the westerners, but did nothing for us easterners. Some of the group also had a Lazuli Bunting.

After a wonderful picnic lunch, we worked our way down from the hills through the southern fields making a stop at a farm pond for a **Least Sandpiper** and a few Killdeer, before getting back to our hotel for a siesta during the heat of the day.

Our evening session started with a visit to some ponds in the farm fields south of Hansen. This added quite a few new species to our Idaho lists. Waterfowl included Canada Goose, Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, **American Wigeon**, Mallard, Northern Pintail, **Redhead**, **Lesser Scaup**, and Eared Grebes. Shorebirds included Black-necked Stilt, American Avocets, Killdeer, Long-billed Dowitchers, Baird's, Least, Western, Spotted, and a **Semipalmated Sandpiper**, and both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. The nearby wires had a large flock of Bank Swallows, with a lone **Tree Swallow** and a few Northern Rough-wing, Barn, and Cliff Swallows.

We had to cut our visit short because we had a dinner reservation (Yummy Thai food!), but after dinner we headed to Rock Creek Park on the edge of Twin Falls. Before dark, we did see a **Canyon Wren**, numerous **Yellow Warblers**, and a couple Western Wood Pewees. Our main goal was to find a Western Screech Owl. However, despite the fact it was Sunday night, the campground was hopping. Between that noise and the nearby traffic noise, there was no chance of hearing a tiny owl. So we called it an early night.

#### August 9<sup>th</sup> – Last Chance in Idaho and back to SLC





We had one last chance for Grey Partridge this morning, so it was back to the fields south of Twin Falls. Sadly, we had neither head nor feather of partridges, just the usual farm birds, although I finally caught up to **Vesper Sparrow**, which others had seen earlier. Tim said it was the most distance he'd spent on any tour looking for Grey Partridge. Well, at least we gave it a solid try.

After breakfast, we started working our way back east. Our first stop was at Shoshone Falls Park, both for the sightseeing as well as a couple last targets. Even though the waterfalls were quite diminished due to the drought, the scenery was still spectacular. There were even a few birds around the falls, including some Mallards down on the river and **American Goldfinch** in the park at the top. There was even a large flock of Rock Pigeons roosting on the cliffs of the gorge.

We then moved to another part of the park for the target birds. We played hide-and-seek with a **California Quail** until we discovered another one perched up near to where we parked. Isn't that always the way? While chasing after a couple Rock Wrens and picking through a large flock of House Finches, we caught up with the other target, **Yellow-breasted Chat**.



After a quick stop at the Cassia County sign for a group photo (and nesting Ospreys) and a Maverick Gas Station for MOAB's, a.k.a. the Mother Of All Burritos (and a Great-tailed Grackle for Idaho), we made it back to Utah in the early afternoon.

Tim had one more stop up his sleeve to add a few species, so we headed to Farmington Bay WMA north of SLC Airport. The first stop added **Neotropic Cormorant** and **Greater Yellowlegs** to the trip list, and **Pied-billed Grebe** to my "seen" list, along with pretty much all of the species that we'd seen a few days before at Bear River including a few Eastern Kingbirds. A little further into the refuge we stopped at a reedy area for rails. We had three **Soras** and four **Virginia Rails**, several of each of which came out into the open. A couple **Wood Ducks** added a last minute surprise.

From there, it was a quick trip to the airport to drop me off for my flight home before dropping off the others at their hotels.

### Species Summaries

Canada Goose - *Branta canadensis* – Large flocks along the Antelope Island Causeway and another large flock in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Tundra Swan - *Cygnus columbianus* – A long staying flock of 9 at a farm pond in Millcreek Canyon, UT

Wood Duck - *Aix sponsa* – Two at Farmington WMA near SLC.

Cinnamon Teal - *Spatula cyanoptera* – Seen at several locations around the Great Salt Lake and at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Northern Shoveler - *Spatula clypeata* – Several along the Antelope Island Causeway and another flock in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Gadwall - *Mareca strepera* – Several at Bear River MBR and a few in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

American Wigeon - *Mareca americana* – Just one in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Mallard - *Anas platyrhynchos* – Seen pretty much anywhere there was water.

Northern Pintail - *Anas acuta* – Several at Bear River MBR and a few in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Green-winged Teal - *Anas crecca* – Several along the Antelope Island Causeway and another flock in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Redhead - *Aythya americana* – A flock in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Lesser Scaup - *Aythya affinis* – One with the Redheads in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

California Quail - *Callipepla californica* – Two at Shoshone Falls Park



Chukar - *Alectoris chukar* – A flock below the Antelope Island Visitor Center

Ring-necked Pheasant - *Phasianus colchicus* – A hen at the Bear River MBR

Wild Turkey - *Meleagris gallopavo* – One crossed the road in front of the vehicle in the Lake Mountains, UT.

Pied-billed Grebe - *Podilymbus Podiceps* – A few at the Bear River MBR and Farmington Bay WMA.

Eared Grebe - *Podiceps nigricollis* – Thousands at the Great Salt Lake and a few in the ponds south of Hansen, ID.



Western Grebe - *Aechmophorus occidentalis* - Many at the Bear River MBR and a few at Farmington Bay WMA.

Clark's Grebe - *Aechmophorus clarkia* - Many at the Bear River MBR and a few at Farmington Bay WMA.

Rock Pigeon - *Columba livia* – Scattered sightings especially in the cities. Also a large flock roosting on the walls of the Snake River Gorge at Shoshone falls Park.

Eurasian Collared-Dove - *Streptopelia decaocto* – Seen by the others in Utah, but fairly common in Idaho.

Mourning Dove - *Zenaida macroura* – Abundant.

Common Nighthawk - *Chordeiles minor* – A few in the Lake Mountains near SLC and many near Diamondfield Jack Campground in the South Hills.

Common Poorwill - *Phalaenoptilus nuttallii* – Heard only. One or two in Provo Canyon, One above Diamondfield Jack Campsite, and one in Rock Creek Park in Twin Falls.

Black Swift - *Cypseloides niger* – A couple mixed in with the flock of the next species at Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon.



White-throated Swift - *Aeronautes saxatalis* – A large flock at Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon

Black-chinned Hummingbird - *Archilochus alexandri* – Three at a feeder in Millcreek Canyon, UT. Abundant at the Brockman's Hummingbird Feeding Station.

Broad-tailed Hummingbird - *Selasphorus platycercus* – Several at the Brockman's Hummingbird Feeding Station.

Rufous Hummingbird - *Selasphorus rufus* – One seen by Tim at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon, and a few at the Brockman's Hummingbird Feeding Station.

Calliope Hummingbird - *Selasphorus calliope* – A couple females at the Brockman's Hummingbird Feeding Station. According to Tim, the males all left after the unusual rains in July.

Virginia Rail - *Rallus limicola* – A few at Farmington Bay WMA

Sora - *Porzana carolina* – A few at Farmington Bay WMA

American Coot - *Fulica americana* – Hundreds at Bear River MBR and one at Farmington Bay WMA

Black-necked Stilt - *Himantopus mexicanus* – Good numbers around the Great Salt Lake and a few at the at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

American Avocet - *Recurvirostra americana* – Thousands around the Great Salt Lake and a few at the at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Killdeer - *Charadrius vociferus* – A few in the fields around Twin Falls and some at Farmington Bay WMA

Long-billed Curlew - *Numenius americanus* – One at the Antelope Island Causeway.

Baird's Sandpiper - *Calidris bairdii* – One at the Antelope Island Causeway and a few at the at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Least Sandpiper - *Calidris minutilla* – A few at various ponds in the fields south of Twin Falls and another couple at Farmington Bay WMA

Semipalmated Sandpiper - *Calidris pusilla* – One at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Western Sandpiper - *Calidris mauri* – A few at the Antelope Island Causeway and at Bear River MBR. Many at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Long-billed Dowitcher - *Limnodromus scolopaceus* – One at the Antelope Island Causeway and many at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Wilson's Phalarope - *Phalaropus tricolor* – Thousands at the Antelope Island Causeway and many at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Red-necked Phalarope -  
*Phalaropus lobatus* –  
Thousands at the Antelope  
Island Causeway and many at  
the ponds south of Hansen,  
ID.

Spotted Sandpiper - *Actitis macularia* – A few each at the Antelope Island Causeway, Bear River MBR, and at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Solitary Sandpiper - *Tringa solitaria* – A couple at Bear River MBR



Greater Yellowlegs - *Tringa melanoleuca* – One at the ponds south of Hansen, ID and many at Farmington Bay WMA



Willet - *Tringa semipalmata* – A few at the Antelope Island Causeway

Lesser Yellowlegs - *Tringa flavipes* – One at the Antelope Island Causeway, and a few each at the ponds south of Hansen, ID, and at Farmington Bay WMA

Franklin's Gull - *Leucophaeus pipixcan* – Good numbers around the Great Salt Lake and one at the ponds south of Hansen, ID



Ring-billed Gull - *Larus delawarensis* – Found around the Great Salt Lake and one at the ponds south of Hansen, ID but in smaller numbers than the other gull species.

California Gull - *Larus californicus* – Thousands around the Great Salt Lake.

Caspian Tern - *Hydroprogne caspia* – Just one at Bear River MBR

Forster's Tern - *Sterna forsteri* – A few at Bear River MBR and at Farmington Bay WMA

Neotropic Cormorant - *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* – A few at Farmington Bay WMA

Double-crested Cormorant - *Phalacrocorax auratus* – A few at Bear River MBR and at Farmington Bay WMA

American White Pelican - *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* – Good numbers Bear River MBR and at Farmington Bay WMA. Two at Shoshone Falls and another along the Upper Snake River.

Great Blue Heron - *Ardea herodias* – Fairly common at Bear River MBR and at Farmington Bay WMA

Great Egret - *Ardea alba* – Just a few at Bear River MBR.

Snowy Egret - *Egretta thula* – One along the Antelope Island Causeway, and some at Bear River MBR and at Farmington Bay WMA

White-faced Ibis - *Plegadis chihi* – Common at sites around the Great Salt Lake

Turkey Vulture - *Cathartes aura* – Scattered sightings of soaring birds at many locations

Osprey - *Pandion haliaetus* – One at Bridal Veil Falls, one in the fields near the Lake Mountains, and three at a nest along the Snake River.

Golden Eagle - *Aquila chrysaetos* – A few in the fields near the Lake Mountains, and one at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Northern Harrier - *Circus hudsonia* – A couple around the Great Salt Lake and several in the fields south of Twin Falls.

Swainson's Hawk - *Buteo swainsoni* – A few in the fields near the Lake Mountains and many in the fields south of Twin Falls.

Red-tailed Hawk - *Buteo jamaicensis* – Scattered sightings

Barn Owl - *Tyto alba* – Twelve (!) at an organic farm south of Twin Falls.

Flammulated Owl - *Otus flammeolus* – A few heard in Provo Canyon and a couple above Diamondfield Jack Campground

Great Horned Owl - *Bubo virginianus* – Three at the corral on Antelope Island and one with the Barn Owls at the organic farm.

Burrowing Owl - *Athene cunicularia* – Scattered sightings in sagebrush habitats

Red-naped Sapsucker - *Sphyrapicus nuchalis* – One at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon



Lewis's Woodpecker-*Melanerpes lewis* – Three on the road above Diamondfield Jack Campground

Downy Woodpecker-*Picoides pubescens* – Heard only at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Hairy Woodpecker - *Picoides villosus* – A few at Diamondfield Jack Campground and along the road above it.

Northern Flicker - *Colaptes auratus* – Scattered sightings in the South Hills. Also heard at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon

American Kestrel - *Falco sparverius* - Scattered sightings in the South Hills and the fields south of Twin Falls



Merlin - *Falco columbarius* – One along the road above the Brockman's Hummingbird Feeder Station

Peregrine Falcon - *Falco peregrinus* – One in the Lake Mountains. Another seen by some of the others at Bridal Veil Falls.

Olive-sided Flycatcher - *Contopus cooperi* – Just one at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Western Wood-Pewee - *Contopus sordidulus* – Scattered sightings in wooded habitats, but more often heard than seen.



Gray Flycatcher -  
*Empidonax wrightii* – One  
in the Lake Mountains

Cordilleran Flycatcher -  
*Empidonax occidentalis* –  
Seen or heard by others in  
Millcreek Canyon

Say's Phoebe - *Sayornis  
saya* – One in the fields  
below the Lake Mountains

Ash-throated Flycatcher -  
*Myiarchus cinerascens* -  
One in the Lake Mountains

Western Kingbird - *Tyrannus verticalis* – Common in fields and sagebrush.

Eastern Kingbird - *Tyrannus tyrannus* – One at Bear River MBR and a couple at Farmington Bay WMA

Gray Vireo - *Vireo vicinior* – One in the Lake Mountains

Warbling Vireo - *Vireo gilvus* – Scattered sightings (although more often heard) in wooded habitats

Loggerhead Shrike - *Lanius ludovicianus* – A few in the Lake Mountains and the fields south of Twin Falls.

Steller's Jay - *Cyanocitta stelleri* – Heard only at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay - *Aphelocoma woodhouseii* - A few in the Lake Mountains

Black-billed Magpie - *Pica hudsonica* – Fairly common in open areas.

American Crow - *Corvus brachyrhynchos* – A few seen by Tim along the Interstate near Salt Lake and scattered birds in the fields south of Twin Falls.

Common Raven - *Corvus corax* – Seen every day in most habitats

Mountain Chickadee - *Poecile gambeli* – Several in Big Cottonwood Canyon and a few in the South Hills.

Juniper Titmouse - *Baeolophus ridgwayi* - A few in the Lake Mountains

Horned Lark - *Eremophila alpestris* – One in the fields below the Lake Mountains and a couple along the Antelope Island Causeway.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow - *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* – A few along the Antelope Island Causeway and one in a mixed flock at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.



Tree Swallow - *Tachycineta bicolor* – One picked out of the mixed flock at the ponds south of Hansen, ID

Violet-green Swallow - *Tachycineta thalassina* – In Big Cottonwood Canyon and at Diamondfield Jack Campground

Bank Swallow - *Riparia riparia* – Scattered sightings at lower elevations, sometimes in numbers.

Barn Swallow - *Hirundo rustica* – Common

Cliff Swallow - *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* – Seen by the others along the Antelope Island Causeway and in the mixed flock at the ponds south of Hansen, ID.

Red-breasted Nuthatch - *Sitta canadensis* – Regular in evergreen habitats

Brown Creeper - *Certhia americana* – One or two at Diamondfield Jack Campground

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher - *Polioptila caerulea* – A couple in the Lake Mountains

Rock Wren - *Salpinctes obsoletus* – A pair on Antelope Island and a few more and a couple more at Shoshone Falls Park

Canyon Wren - *Catherpes mexicanus* – One in Rock Creek Park in Twin Falls and another at Shoshone Falls Park

American Dipper - *Cinclus mexicanus* – One juvenile in Millcreek Canyon

European Starling - *Sturnus vulgaris* – Regular sightings



Gray Catbird - *Dumetella carolinensis* – Heard at Brockman’s Hummingbird Feeder Station

Sage Thrasher - *Oreoscoptes montanus* – A few on Antelope Island and a couple seen by others in the fields south of Twin Falls

Mountain Bluebird - *Sialia currucoides* – A few in the fields below the Lake Mountains

Hermit Thrush - *Catharus guttatus* – One at Silver Lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon

American Robin - *Turdus migratorius* – Scattered sightings

Cedar Waxwing - *Bombycilla cedrorum* – A few in the South Hills

House Sparrow - *Passer domesticus* – Scattered sightings

House Finch - *Haemorhous mexicanus* – Regular in brushy areas.

Cassin's Finch - *Haemorhous cassinii* – Just one at Silver lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon

Red Crossbill - *Loxia curvirostra* - Several at Silver lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon

**Cassia Crossbill - *Loxia sinesciurus* – *Lifer!* Several seen and one big flyover flock at Diamondfield Jack Campground.**

White-winged Crossbill - *Loxia leucoptera* - Several at Silver lake in Big Cottonwood Canyon – unusual at this time of year.

Pine Siskin - *Spinus pinus* – Regular in evergreen habitats

Lesser Goldfinch -  
*Spinus psaltria* – One  
seen by another birder  
near our hotel in SLC

American Goldfinch -  
*Spinus tristis* –  
Scattered sightings by  
others. I finally caught  
up to one in Shoshone  
Falls Park

Chipping Sparrow -  
*Spizella passerine* – One  
seen by Tim below the  
Lake Mountains



Lark Sparrow - *Chondestes grammacus* – Scattered sightings in field habitats

Brewer's Sparrow - *Spizella breweri* – A couple in the fields south of Twin Falls

Dark-eyed Junco (Grey-headed) - *Junco hyemalis* – A few at Silver Lake and Diamondfield Jack Campground



Vesper Sparrow - *Pooecetes gramineus* – Scattered sightings in field habitats

Song Sparrow - *Melospiza melodia* – Scattered sightings in field habitats

Lincoln's Sparrow – *Melospiza lincolnii* – A few at Silver Lake

Green-tailed Towhee - *Pipilo chlorurus* – Two on the road above Diamondfield Jack Campground

Yellow-breasted Chat - *Icteria virens* – One at Shoshone Falls Park

Yellow-headed Blackbird - *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* – A couple at Bear River MBR

Western Meadowlark - *Sturnella neglecta* – Regular in fields and sagebrush

Red-winged Blackbird - *Agelaius phoeniceus* – Small flocks around the Great Salt Lake

Brown-headed Cowbird - *Molothrus ater* – Two along the Antelope Island Causeway

Brewer's Blackbird - *Euphagus cyanocephalus* – One at our hotel in Twin Falls

Great-tailed Grackle - *Quiscalus mexicanus* – Just a few, usually around habitation



Orange-crowned Warbler - *Oreothlypis celata* – A family group at Silver Lake.



Yellow Warbler - *Setophaga petechia* – Several in Rock Creek Park in Twin Falls. A few seen by others elsewhere.

Yellow-rumped Warbler (Audubon's) - *Setophaga coronata* – A couple at Silver Lake and another couple at Diamondfield Jack Campground

Western Tanager - *Piranga ludoviciana* – One seen both days at Diamondfield Jack Campground

Lazuli Bunting - *Passerina amoena* – Scattered sightings, but never seen well.

