

2008 ABA Convention

23–29 June 2008

Snowbird, Utah

What better place for an ABA Convention than a resort called Snowbird! True to its name, all attendees saw both “snow” and “birds” at the fabulous Cliff Lodge, our base for all convention activities. Breathtaking views, great onsite birding, tantalizing cuisine, varied and entertaining evening programs, informative workshops and special presentations, a multitude of exhibitors and artists displaying their wares, and the wonders of the birds of northern Utah provided all the ingredients for another successful convention.

Utah in June is a sight to behold, as are its birds. With field trips ranging from the shores of the Great Salt Lake with its staggering numbers of Wilson’s Phalaropes and Eared Grebes, to the high Uintas with the convention target bird, Black Rosy-Finch, as well as Pine Grosbeaks and American Three-toed Woodpeckers, birders were excited by the prospect of adding to their life lists and delighted by the chance to get reacquainted with old avian friends. Trips to Deseret Ranch netted the highest daily totals, producing both highland and lowland habitats with birds like Greater Sage-Grouse and Canyon Wren. We also had two trips that featured some high-flying by the participants. Visitors to Sundance Resort rode a chairlift to birding sites above, while a Sunday post-convention trip took the aerial tram at Snowbird to 11,000 feet followed by a hike down that included snowfield glissading! The total species count for the week was 197, with many surprises like Brant, White Ibis, Red-necked Phalarope, and Hooded Oriole.

Five awards were presented during the week. The Ludlow Griscom Award for outstanding contributions in regional ornithology was given to northern Utah's own Bill Fenimore. The Robert Ridgway Award for publications in field ornithology was awarded to Bill Thompson III, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. The Roger Tory Peterson Award for promoting the cause of birding was presented to the person who is perhaps America's best known living birder, Kenn Kaufman. And the Chandler Robbins Education and Conservation Award was presented Chicago's mayor, Richard Daly, in absentia. The Convention Conservation Award went to The Great Salt Lake Nature Center at Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area, and was accepted by Justina Parsons-Bernstein, center director and education specialist.

The Exhibitor Trade Show was, once again, the preeminent place to see all of the exciting new birding equipment, books, and tour possibilities in one location. With 33 companies on hand, including event sponsors Leica, Nikon, Swarovski, Zeiss, Bushnell, Kowa, Pentax, Houghton Mifflin, and Wingscapes, there was something for everyone. In all, the birds and the weather fully cooperated to make this year's convention a resounding success.

— **Chip Clouse**

Assistant Manager, ABA Conventions and Tours



Birding the sage and pinyon/juniper on the Utah County Hotspots trip © Steve Carbol



The Digiscoping Workshop line-up © Steve Carbol