

A New Yorker's feathered friends

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Rosalie Winard fell in love with birds early one morning as she watched a brown pelican dive for fish in Florida's Sarasota Bay. The haunting image stayed with her and led, eventually, to the publication of her book "Wild Birds of the American Wetlands" (Welcome Books, \$39.95).

Winard, of New York, kicks off this year's Great Salt Lake Bird Festival with a presentation at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. She'll talk about her book of avian images, and her experiences photographing birds in Utah.

Winard says she's spent so much time in Utah, her book editors thought she lived here. She made her first visit to the state in 2002, and came back five more times that year.

"Once I started coming, I just fell in love with the (Great Salt) Lake," she said. "I had studied brown pelicans in college, so coming to the middle of the country and finding white pelicans was extraordinary."

Evolution

Winard entered college early, at age 16, and studied ornithology and ethology. She spent 20 hours a week each spring bird-watching on a Florida island. But during the summer between her junior and senior years, she decided she'd rather be an artist than a scientist. She wound up working as a photojournalist and spent 20 years taking pictures of autistic and brain-injured adults.

Sometimes, Winard shot stills for other people's documentary film projects. She decided to use the same kind of film being used for the movie — black and white infrared.

"I'd never shot with it before," she said. "I learned to work with it in a week."

In 1997 she was back in Florida to photograph an event, and decided to go see the brown pelicans. She took along her camera and some black and white

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Rosalie Winard photographed American avocets (above) at Farmington Bay and tundra swam (below) migrating through the Bear River area. The photos are part of the "Treasures of Bear River" display at the Migratory Bird Refuge in Brigham City.



PREVIEW

- **WHAT:** "Treasures of Bear River," by photographer Rosalie Winard
- **WHEN:** 7 p.m. Thursday
- **WHERE:** Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge, 2155 W. Forest St., Brigham City
- **ADMISSION:** Free



SLIDESHOW: See more of Rosalie Winard's photos.

Festival for the birds next week

The Great Salt Lake Bird Festival features workshops about everything from beginning bird-watching to landscaping for birds.

There are also presentations about birds of prey and competitive bird photography.

The workshops are noon to 7 p.m. May 16 and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. May 17 at the Davis County Events Center, 151 S. 1100 West, Farmington. There will also be bird-themed art shows, vendor booths, youth programs and a bird-calling contest. Admission is free.

Keynote speaker Bruce Thompson, director of education at Salt Lake City's Tracy Aviary, speaks at a Dutch-oven dinner at 6 p.m. May 17, at the events center. Tickets are \$25, and reservations are required.

Guided bird-watching field trips are offered Thursday through May 19. A complete schedule is online at www.greatsaltlakebirdfest.com. Field trips range in cost from \$3 to \$85; reservations are required. For information, call 451-3286.

Winard

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infrared film.

"In the right light, infrared glows," she said. "I'd always had a love of birds, but I never had seen what represented how I felt. When I started taking pictures for fun in black and white infrared, suddenly I felt like it captured what the avian world evoked for me."

The missing link

Winard continued photographing birds with this film, creating images with a

dreamy and haunting quality. With encouragement from agents, she decided to create a book of her photos.

After reading some works by Utah writer Terry Tempest Williams, Winard invited Williams to add her words to the project.

"At that point, I wasn't sure what this was. Was it 'Shore Birds of the World' or 'Birds I Love'?" she said. "Terry has a gift to put things together. ... She sat there with my work and said, 'You know what this is? This is 'Birds of the Wetlands.'"

Williams also came up with a label for Winard's images, calling them "avian primitives." "Primitives, as in dinosaurs,

because some of these birds are millions of years old," Winard explained.

"Through Williams, Winard met friends who connected her with a publisher in New York.

"I had to leave New York to get published in New York," she said with a laugh.

After more than a decade of work, the book was published this year, and an essay by Williams accompanies Winard's photographs. An exhibit of the photos is scheduled to open Nov. 1 at the Utah Museum of Natural History.

"Sometimes you're in a place where doors keep opening, and Utah is that kind of place for

me," said Winard.

Vision

The book almost didn't see completion. Winard considered giving it up after Sept. 11, 2001.

"It had never been a full-time thing for me," Winard said. "Between 9-11 happening, and really feeling like there was such a glut of images in the world ... and a month later I broke my wrist, I began thinking, 'What am I doing with my life?' I had to stop, and I realized as good as I was at my commercial work, probably 99 percent of what I did others could do — I wasn't irreplaceable.

"What I was doing with birds was mine; it resonated strongly to the core of who I was. During that time, I realized what I had to dedicate my work and life to."

Winard traveled from coast to coast photographing birds, and spent much of that time on the Great Salt Lake and at the Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge. She says her years of observing birds, starting in college, gave her the experience she needed to get great shots.

"I knew where to go ... and it was an intuitive thing," she said. "It's not about patience, but about presence and place, and being there amongst the birds, not standing back from them."