



Newsletter

April 2019
Issue 88

Alta Environmental Center
PO Box 8007 • Alta, UT 84092
environment@alta.com
801.832.1700



What do skiers and finches have in common? - By Lucila Fernandez, Tracy Aviary



Biologists team up to launch a new study on a unique bird species found in Alta Ski Area

"We have a Black Rosy-finch!"

A room full of biologists team with excitement at the long-awaited proclamation. With our faces glued to the glass inside of the Alta Town Office, 10 researchers had been watching patiently for a particular bird, the Black Rosy-finch, to fly into a feeder just outside of the building. The mission: to fasten a radio frequency identification (RFID) tag as a light bracelet on the leg of this bird. This is the first step to a regional study that will help to fill a knowledge gap about a bird that lives alongside us in the mountain landscapes that we, as skiers, hold so dear.

If you ever happen to see a Black Rosy-finch, you'll spot the pink markings that give this bird its name. But don't be fooled by its delicate look! This hardy bird is well-adapted to harsh climates, breeding in high alpine areas and dropping down (slightly) lower in the winter to feed at bird feeders in ski areas and mountain cabins. Because Black Rosy-finches are primarily found in rugged landscapes they are vulnerable to threats like climate change, and very difficult to study!

We are capturing rosy-finches using mist nets, which we've strategically placed in front of the Alta Town Office bird feeders. [Continued on next page...](#)

Community Highlight: Our Beloved Alta Java—By Ellie Johnson

This ski up coffee shop has become a local's favorite. A place for the community to gather, to get a caffeine fix, or fuel up for power hour on the slopes. Since Susie Howard bought Alta Java the business has come a long way from the quick espresso in a Styrofoam cup. As one of Alta's only female business owners she has managed to run a successful business, provide steady employment for 10 hard working skiers, and make strides towards sustainability.

"We've been able to substantially cut down on garbage with our composting and 'to stay' options" says Susie. In fact, the business went from approximately 50 gallons of trash per day down to 25. All plant-based materials and coffee grounds are donated to a local skier named Galen for his personal composting efforts. Spent coffee grounds conserve nitrogen and decompose quickly while promoting sustained thermophilic conditions. The trash is reduced even further by offering 'to stay options' in the form of ceramic mugs and plates. Likewise, Alta Java uses local chefs and roasters. Several studies have shown that buying from an independent, locally owned business, rather than a nationally owned business, that significantly more of your money is used to make purchases from other local businesses, service providers, and farms. This further strengthens the economic base of the whole community and promotes a greener economy. Susie buys from Salt Lake Roasting Co, Lonepine Bakery, and chef Theresa Chamberlin to name a few Salt Lake locals.

So, come and enjoy fresh baked snacks, specialty coffee drinks, and refreshing cold beverages this spring and summer! Yes, Alta Java will be open for this Summer 2019 on Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays 11-5, July and August. [#altajava](#)





**“Progress is impossible without change,
and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything. “**

— George Bernhard



Birds continued...

After they've flown into the net, experienced handlers safely untangle the bird, take quick measurements, place the band on the bird, and release it. The bird is now free to visit a network of bird feeders around Alta Ski Area (top of Collins lift, Dispatch) and at Snowbird that are fitted with devices that will log each time a tagged bird visits.

The study is being run through a collaboration of a number of agencies, nonprofits, and academic institutions, including: Alta Environmental Center, [Tracy Aviary](#), [Wild Utah Project](#), [Utah Division of Wildlife Resources](#), Utah State University, [Friends of Alta](#), Snowbird Ski Resort, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service. By learning more about the population and distribution of Rosy-finches in Utah, we will be better equipped to conserve healthy populations of rosy-finches into the future

Interested in learning how you can help Alta's nesting birds?

Spread the word! Tracy Aviary is recruiting for volunteers to help us study nesting birds, like Black Rosy-finch. Visit tracyaviaryconservation.org/alta to learn more.

Alta Summer Jobs

The summer is definitely shorter than winter, but it's just as spectacular. If you are looking to spend this summer in Alta, then make sure you apply. There are different job openings with different requirements, check them out at alta.com/employment. Here's a quick rundown:

- AEC—Summer Stewardship Internship (seasonal, full-time)
- AEC—Summer GIS Internship (seasonal, part-time)
- Summer Information Host (seasonal, part-time or full-time)
- Albion Grill (seasonal, part-time or full-time)
- AEC—Outreach & Communications Coordinator (year-round, part-time)

April—May Sustainability Events

If these highlighted sustainability events catch your eye, check out our full sustainability calendar at alta.com/environment.

- **April 20—Alta Earth Day:** Celebrate Alta and all its glory of natural resources, great community, and sustainability in the ski industry. Here's a short rundown or check out the full detail of events at alta.com/the-mountain/events/earth-day.
 - Ski and Snowboard recycling! Bring your old or broken boards to Utah Recycling Alliance at Wildcat Base.
 - Fix-It Bike Clinic (PM only): Also bring your bike for a little fix-it training with the SLC Bicycle Alliance at Wildcat Base.
 - Birding Ski Tour & Nest Box Survey: Must register online, it's going to be incredible. We meet at Collins bottom 9am.
 - Nest Box Survey on Snowshoes: Again, don't forget to register online. Meet at 2pm in front of Skier Services.
 - Snowshoe with a Naturalist: Register online and meet at Albion Grill at 10am.
 - Tour with a Ranger: Meet at the top of Sunnyside lift at 1:30pm. Be prepared to be wowed.
 - Arborist Ski Around: Go to the TreeUtah tent at Wildcat base and get in touch with your Lorax side.
 - APRÈS SKI! Join us at Our Lady of the Snows at 4:30pm for complimentary libations, food and live music. Oh, yeah.
- **April 22—The Official EARTH DAY:** There are earth day celebrations everywhere! This is a great day to get outside and enjoy the great outdoors or join your local community in recognizing your natural resources and more.
- **April 26—Arbor Day Celebration:** Join TreeUtah at Red Butte Garden for some fun and free family activities. Redbuttgarden.org/arbor-day.
- **April 27—Andy's 60th Bird-Day:** Go to Tracy Aviary to celebrate our favorite resident condor's birthday. Tracyaviary.org.

