

THE HOOT OWL



July / August 2017
Issue 4, Volume 55

San Joaquin Audubon Society
Affiliated with the National Audubon Society-California

PROGRAMS

There will be no general membership meetings during our regular summer hiatus (May through August). The next general membership meeting will be Tuesday, September 12.

Juvenile Songbirds' Song Preference Linked to Genes

Juvenile birds discriminate and selectively learn their own species' songs even when primarily exposed to the songs of other species, but the underlying mechanism has remained unknown. A new study shows that song discrimination arises due to genetic differences between species, rather than early learning or other mechanisms.

A pair of researchers at Uppsala University in Sweden discovered that in two bird species, the Pied Flycatcher (*Ficedula hypoleuca*) and the Collared Flycatcher (*F. albicollis*), fledglings as young as 10 days old learn to discriminate their own species' songs.

Further investigation revealed that this ability arose even before the fledglings hatched. When the researchers swapped eggs from one species to another species' nest, so that the hatchlings were raised completely by parents of the other species, fledglings still demonstrated a preference for the songs of their own species. The team then crossed the two species to create hybrid offspring and found that the resulting fledglings all had a preference for the songs of the Pied Flycatcher. "This shows that something built-in to the genome influences the perception of sounds in a remarkably specific way, since the songs of both species are relatively similar," study coauthor David Wheatcroft told *Forbes*.

"Song differences across species are vital for birds to choose appropriate mates and negotiate complex social interactions," Wheatcroft says. "A genetic basis for song discrimination in early life may help explain how song differences are maintained in a noisy, diverse world."

From article in *Nature Ecology & Evolution*,
June 12, 2017

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, July 1— *Cosumnes River Preserve*

Check website www.cosumnes.org for details on this month's River Walk bird census through the varied habitats of the preserve. Date, leader, and start time TBA.

SATURDAY, July 8— *Introductory Birding*

Join leader Pat Paternostro at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi (on the east side of Lodi Lake Park, off of Turner Rd.) at 8:00 a.m. Birders of all skill levels are welcome, but the focus will be on birding fundamentals. Extra binoculars and field guides will be available.

SATURDAY, July 15— *Woodbridge Wilderness Area*

Join leader TBA for our monthly census of this small riparian park on the banks of the Mokelumne River. Meet at the north end of Meadowlark Lane in Woodbridge at 8:00 a.m. **Note:** Check our webpage, or the SJAS Facebook page, to make sure the trip is on. This area has been closed through June.

SUNDAY, July 16— *Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery*

Join leader Joanne Katanic for our monthly census of this lovely little riparian area below Camanche Dam. Meet Joanne in the fish hatchery parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

WEDNESDAY, July 26— *White Slough Wildlife Area*

Join leader Jim Rowoth (487-3489 or rowoth@sbcglobal.net) for this evening visit to this local site. Evening delta breezes should make for a pleasant stroll among the willows. Meet at the Flag City McDonald's at 6:00 P.M. Bring water and hat.

SATURDAY, July 29— *Vic Fazio Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area*

Are you up for a challenge? Can you identify the "peeps" (small shorebirds)? Want some practice? A chance at a rarity? Yolo Bypass offers a large protected wetland area that reliably attracts shorebirds during their epic migrations, and yes, that includes the end of July. We'll enjoy the other species present as well, but shorebirds will be the focus. Do bring a spotting scope if you have one. Birders at all skill levels are welcome. Meet leader Susan Schneider at 7:00 a.m. at the Flag City McDonald's parking lot (Highway 12 and I-5). We should arrive at the Wildlife Area around 8:00 a.m. at the entrance parking lot, if anyone wants to meet us there. Bring a lunch or snack.

SATURDAY, August 5— *Introductory Birding Field Trip*

Join leader Pat Paternostro at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi (on the east side of Lodi Lake Park, off of Turner Rd.) at 8:00 a.m. Birders of all skill levels are welcome, but the focus will be on birding fundamentals. Extra binoculars and field guides will be available.

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FIELD TRIPS

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SATURDAY, August 12— *Cosumnes River Preserve / River Walk*

Join leader Jim Rowoth (487-3489 or rowoth@sbcglobal.net) for the monthly River Walk bird count through the varied habitats of the CRP. Meet Jim at the visitor center on Franklin Rd. Check website www.cosumnes.org for last minute updates. Double check with Jim for start time.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19 – *Woodbridge Wilderness Area*

Join leader TBA for our monthly census of this small riparian park on the banks of the Mokelumne River. Meet at the north end of Meadowlark Lane in Woodbridge at 8:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, August 20 — *Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery*

Join leaders Liz West and Joanne Katanic for our monthly census of this lovely little riparian area below Comanche Dam. Meet the leaders in the fish hatchery parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, August 26— *Bear Creek Bike Trail*

Join leader Susan Schneider for this easy 2-mile walk featuring riparian and marsh habitat. Expected species include wading birds, migrant songbirds, and (if we're lucky) river otters. Extra binoculars and field guides will be available. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Faklis Park parking lot just west of the Park West mall, off Cosumnes Dr. near Mokelumne Circle, SW of the I-5/Eight Mile Road interchange in Stockton.

SUNDAY, August 27— *Plasse's Resort*

Join leader Joanne Katanic for a trip to this beautiful area in the Sierra's. The resort is on the west end of Silver Lake and is a good site for post breeding warblers. Pine Grosbeaks have also been known to steal the show here! Bring a lunch. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at Hwy.12 & Hwy. 99 Park 'n Ride (Victor Road, Lodi).

Some North American Birds Can't Keep Up With Shifting Spring Blooms

As climate change makes the seasons less predictable, one in five studied species are struggling to time their migrations with the greenery.

April showers bring May flowers . . . unless they're already in bloom, that is. This proverb might soon need an update because the onset of spring has shifted in North America, as the leaf-growing start dates of trees and plants have changed by as much as a day each year over the past decade. In the West, spring is arriving later; in the East, it's arriving sooner.

That shift is bad news for migratory birds, many of which follow a strict schedule to get to their breeding grounds in spring. Once they land, they expect to feast on a bounty of insects, which are themselves gorging on the fresh foliage. If the birds miss the peak plant emergence, chances are the best food has already been snatched up—or, if they arrive early, they'll struggle while they wait for it to become available. This isn't just problematic for adults: The birth and survival of their chicks depends on nature's seasonal buffet, too.

A new study published in *Scientific Reports* confirms the growing disconnect between birds' internal clocks and the changing seasons. Researchers from across the country studied 48 migratory songbirds, and found that nine (Great Crested Flycatchers, Eastern Wood-Pewees, and Northern Parulas, to name a few) are struggling to keep pace with the onset of blooms. Across all the species they looked at, the gap between avian arrivals and the growth of spring leaves in prime breeding locations has increased by an average of half a day each year.

Scientists have tracked spring bird arrivals for decades, but this research offers a broader perspective across species. "What we were trying to do was for the first time scale this up to get a bigger picture," says Stephen Mayor, lead author of the study and an ecologist at the University of Florida. "We haven't been able to do that kind of thing in the past because we just haven't had good data."

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Birds Can't Keep Up With Shifting Spring Blooms

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The new analysis paired more than a decade's worth of data from the citizen-science website eBird with information from a NASA satellite that tracks the yearly arrival of spring greenery. "A single scientist can't study the globe, can't study a continent, so tackling these questions requires a new approach," says Morgan Tingley, an ornithologist at the University of Connecticut and co-author of the paper. Layering the two data sources showed that certain birds *are* rescheduling their migratory journeys as spring green-up starts on alternate dates. The question, however, is if they're adjusting quickly enough, Tingley says. Mayor echoes that concern. "One week per decade can really add up pretty quickly and leave birds out of sync with their environments," he says.

Tingley is particularly worried about the Yellow-billed Cuckoo, which is already in danger of losing its riverside habitat. He also points out that three of the most popular spring migrants—Rose-breasted Grosbeaks, Scarlet Tanagers, and Indigo Buntings—are facing jarring changes to their calendars.

To further complicate matters, the seasonal shifts are divergent on opposite sides of the continent. "As soon as we put these things up on a map, we recognized that something very different was happening in eastern North America than in western North America," Mayor says. In parts of the West, spring is arriving later, and out-of-sync birds are arriving before it's in full swing. Where Eastern birds might miss the big feasts, Western birds may have to tough it out before they have the chance to rebuild their fat deposits after a long migration. "There's lots of regional variation, but it's a pretty stark difference," he says.

Yet timing is only half of the climate change puzzle. Some of the northern breeding habitats that birds are flying to are becoming less suitable in terms of temperature or yearly rainfall—a double whammy for struggling populations. "They're going to have to figure out both where and when they've got to arrive," says Brooke Bateman, the director of Audubon's Climate Watch program, who wasn't involved in the *Scientific Reports* study. "That's kind of a lot to deal with at one time."

Because long-distance migrants have to plan their journeys from afar, they may rely solely on environmental cues. "It's not like these birds have an app on their phone that can tell them the weather in New York," Tingley says. "We're changing weather patterns and changing what's going on without giving birds an ability to respond."

This article was originally published on Audubon.org on May 16, 2017.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

April 3, 2017 - June 15, 2017

(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

On April 3rd, John Sterling heard a **Solitary Sandpiper** in flight over White Slough.

Ralph Baker refound the **Palm Warbler** at White Slough on April 9th. It was located again on the 10th.

The San Joaquin Audubon field trip saw a **Canyon Wren** at Kiln Canyon on April 12th. It was still present April 26th.

Pat and Dave Croft saw a male **Calliope Hummingbird** at their feeder in Lodi April 20th. On April 26th, Dan Kopp found a displaying male **Calliope Hummingbird** in Kiln Canyon.

On May 6th, David Yee observed a **Solitary Sandpiper** at Heritage Oaks Winery in the flooded fields near the river.

From outside the Stockton Sewage Ponds David Yee saw an adult breeding plumaged **Franklin's Gull**, May 10th.

David Yee found a **Bell's Vireo** at Heritage Oaks Winery, May 17th. It was not found again.

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National Membership

By joining the National Audubon Society you are also a member of the San Joaquin Chapter. This includes subscriptions to the award-winning *Audubon Magazine* and to the chapter newsletter, *The Hoot Owl*. Both publications are bimonthly. For *national membership*, send check payable to the **National Audubon Society** to the address below.

- National Audubon Membership Rate: \$20

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