

THE HOOT OWL



March / April 2020
Issue 2, Volume 58

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

PROGRAMS

The meeting location is at Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue (across from UOP) in Stockton, and begins at 7:30 p.m. Plenty of parking and refreshments. Everyone is welcome.

TUESDAY, March 10

Craig Vierra, Ph.D.

“Black Widow Spider Silk and its Useful Properties”

In this presentation, Craig will explain the molecular constituents of spider silk, the anatomy of different silk-producing glands, the significance of web architectures, and the reason why spider silk has outstanding material properties that have attracted many scientists across the globe to pursue the development of methods for artificial silk production for commercial and military applications.

Craig Vierra received his B.S. in Biochemistry from University of California, Davis, and his Ph.D. in 1994 from University of California, Riverside, also in Biochemistry. He has been teaching in the Biological Sciences Department at Pacific since 1994, and was the Co-Chair of the Department from 2005-2018. Vierra’s research focuses on the molecular mechanics of black widow spider silk and how these properties relate to the fibers’ high tensile strength, elasticity, and toughness.

TUESDAY, April 14

Doug and Amy Weiser

“Pollinator Friendly Gardening in the Central Valley”

This program is about how to create an environment attractive to beneficial insects and birds right in your own backyard. Doug and Amy own a small home in Stockton and have designed the entire landscaping around plants that attract pollinators as well as fruit and vegetable plants. They will discuss some of the strategies they have used to attract birds, bees, and butterflies, and share some of their favorite pollinator attracting plants.

Amy teaches Biology at Lincoln High School, and Doug is an associate professor of Biological Sciences at University of the Pacific. They have also helped plan pollinator gardens on the campus of University of the Pacific and John McCandless STEM Charter School.

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, March 7— *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.

SUNDAY, March 8— *Cruising the Delta*

Join leader David Fries on his 42’ sail boat for a cruise through the Delta. Plan for 5–7 hours on the water, leaving at 8:00 a.m. from the Stockton Sailing Club, 4980 Buckley Cove Way. Due to boat size and safety reasons, **the trip is limited to the first 8 people to register**. Send your reservation to dfries.audubon@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, March 14— *Cosumnes River Preserve*

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 7:00 a.m. at the visitor center on Franklin Rd. Check website www.cosumnes.org for last minute updates. Double check with Jim for start time.

SATURDAY, March 21— *Woodbridge Wilderness*

Join leaders Kathy and Virginia Bonham 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, March 22— *Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery*

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

SATURDAY, March 28— *Ripon Oak Grove Park & Sewage Ponds*

Join leader Jim Rowoth for a stroll through this 55-acre remnant of riparian oak woodland on the north bank of the Stanislaus River, at the southern edge of San Joaquin County. If there is time/interest, Jim will also visit the adjacent wastewater treatment ponds. Meet Jim at Toot Sweet’s at 7:00 a.m., or 7:30 a.m. in the Oak Grove parking lot. Expect a 3–4 hour visit.

SATURDAY, April 4— *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.

SUNDAY, April 5— *Black Hole Duck Club*

We are pleased that Dino Cortopassi has again invited the San Joaquin Audubon Society to tour the Black Hole Duck Club.

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FIELD TRIPS

(Continued from page 1)

SUNDAY, April 5— *Black Hole Duck Club* *(continued from page 1)*

The tour will start at 8:00 a.m. and end at 1:00 p.m. The Black Hole contains exceptional created habitat that you don't want to miss! The WPF Events Center, at the Black Hole, is north off Woodbridge Rd, approximately ½ mile from the west dead-end. Plans for car-pooling will be made before the date of the Field Trip. **The tour is limited to the first 20 persons to sign-up.** *Priority will be given to those who have not toured Black Hole in the past.* Please sign-up by email at dfries.audubon@gmail.com by **Tuesday, February 31st**. Please note that the WPF is graciously providing lunch for us at the end of the tour. As with all SJ Audubon Field trips, there is no charge for participation.

SATURDAY, April 11— *Cosumnes River Preserve*

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 6:15 a.m. at the visitor center on Franklin Rd. Check website www.cosumnes.org for last minute updates. Double check with Jim for start time.

SUNDAY, April 12— *Cruising the Delta*

Join leader David Fries on his 42' sail boat for a cruise through the Delta. Plan for 5-7 hours on the water, leaving at 8:00 a.m. from the Stockton Sailing Club, 4980 Buckley Cove Way. Due to boat size and safety reasons, **the trip is limited to the first 8 people to register.** Send your reservation to dfries.audubon@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, April 18— *Woodbridge Wilderness*

Join leaders Kathy and Virginia Bonham 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, April 19— *Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery*

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

SUNDAY, April 26— *Earth Day*

Join Kasey Foley and other SJAS volunteers as we celebrate the 29th Earth Day Festival from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Victory Park (behind the Haggin Museum). **Earth Day** is a call to action for the global community to address climate change, foster a sustainable, healthy environment and protect our planet for future generations. Please come by the San Joaquin Audubon Society booth and say "Hi" and maybe buy a T-shirt! It's always a fun time with fun people!

Native Plant Gardening in the Central Valley

Doug Weiser and Amy Weiser

Landscaping with native California plants is growing in popularity throughout the state as a sustainable alternative to lawns and traditional landscaping. Many native plants require little or no supplemental irrigation or fertilizer, and are generally low maintenance. Native landscapes also provide much better habitat for native insects and birds than traditional landscaping. Native plants have a reputation for being challenging and short lived, but this is mostly due to how hard it can be to just leave native plants alone. If you treat a native oak or manzanita like a hybrid rose or lawn grass, it will quickly die. The soil nutrient content in the Central Valley already exceeds the needs of many native chaparral plants and adding fertilizer will just help weed growth. Drought tolerant native plants should only be watered enough to keep them alive. These plants are adapted to go partially dormant in the summer, but too much water will push these plants to grow quickly and leave them highly vulnerable to soil-borne diseases. The best way to maintain your native landscaping is to provide a nice thick layer of mulch, keep weeds under control and mostly leave them alone.

What are some of the best native plants? There is very little you can do on your property that will create more wildlife habitat than planting a native oak. Oaks can get very large, so you must plan properly. In wild areas oaks are a dominant species, but even in urban areas they can support an entire ecosystem in your front yard. Numerous species of butterflies, moths and other insects are dependent on oaks. These insects in addition to acorns can sustain a diverse array of birds. *Quercus lobata* (the valley oak) is the dominant tree in those few wild areas of the Central Valley. Many large heritage oaks can be found throughout Stockton, but relatively few people are replanting them. Native California Live Oaks (*Quercus agrifolia* or *Quercus wislizenii*) are smaller than Valley Oaks and evergreen. *(Continued on Page 3)*

Native Plant Gardening *(Continued from Page 2)*

Manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos*) are abundant in chaparral and oak woodland habitats and provide invaluable wildlife habitat. Manzanita bloom in winter when few other plants are blooming and are a favorite of hummingbirds, native bees and butterflies. They are an ideal landscape plant but are unfortunately underutilized. They grow relatively slowly, are long lived, and are highly adaptable. Some native plants have a reputation for drying out and looking a bit scorched in late summer, but manzanitas remain attractively green year-round. Some of the best suited for the Central Valley are tree forms such as 'Austin Griffiths', medium sized specimens such as 'Ian Bush', medium sized shrubs such as 'Sentinel' and 'McMinn' and shorter ground covers such as 'Harmony'.

The number of spring blooming native plants is almost limitless, from Penstemons, to Salvias, to Ceanothus, to Phacelias, to California Redbud and many more. Finding suitable natives that bloom in the summer is more challenging, but one of the best is California Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). It is native along the coast range from the Bay Area to Southern California and parts of the Central Valley. It is highly drought tolerant, grows quickly and is evergreen. When California buckwheat blooms in early to mid-summer it attracts a greater diversity of insects than you probably even knew existed in your area, especially small bees, native wasps and small butterfly species.

Where do you find native plants and more information about them? The UC Davis arboretum (<https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/>) is a great resource for information on native plants and water-wise gardening. They also host several plant sales in the spring. Las Pilitas Native Plant Nursery has an informative website (<https://www.laspilitas.com/>) and is a fantastic source of plants. Annie's Annuals (<https://www.anniesannuals.com/>) also ships plants statewide. Some local nurseries have a good selection of native plants including Alden Lane Nursery in Livermore, Big Oak Nursery in Elk Grove and In Season in Stockton. Larner seeds (<https://www.larnerseeds.com/>) is a great source for native seeds.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

December 6, 2019 - February 10, 2020
(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

A **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** came to seed at a Brookside, Stockton backyard from December 10th through 16th. It was frequently in the company of a red Fox Sparrow and a Slate-colored Junco.

Mark and Lorna Elness found a **Band-tailed Pigeon** on the Stockton CBC Dec 15th on Thornton Rd.

On December 17th, Katie Stoner saw a **Long-tailed Duck** on the Mokelumne River adjacent to Staten Island. It was last seen December 23rd.

Ben Stalheim found a female **Barrow's Goldeneye** on the Mokelumne River adjacent to Staten Island, December 19th. It was in a large flock of Common Goldeneye and Lesser Scaup. On January 14th he found a male **Barrow's Goldeneye** in the same location, seen through January 28th.

David Yee saw a fly over **Neotropic Cormorant**, in the company of Double-crested Cormorants, December 24th in Brookside Stockton.

Matthew Dodder found a pair of **Barrow's Goldeneye** on Christmas Eve at Mokelumne Day Use Area. Up to three or four have been present through January 21st.

Noah Arthur spotted an **Iceland Gull** at the Koster Rd. gravel pit pond along with a couple of **Western Gulls** on December 24th.

On the Wallace-Bellota CBC, December 28th, David Yee digi-scoped a pale juvenile **Yellow-billed Loon** on Camanche Reservoir in San Joaquin waters headed for Calaveras County.

Matthew Dodder found a **Lapland Longspur** on Waverly Rd. south of Flood Road on December 26th. It was present through December 31st.

Srinivasan Raman photographed a **Cassin's Kingbird** during the Caswell-Westley CBC, January 5th, on Division Road.

On January 14th, Ben Stalheim found a **Marbled Godwit** on Staten Island.

David Yee found an **American Redstart**, January 17th, at Mokelumne Day Use Area. It was feeding low around the first parking lot near the river. It was present through January 20th.

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Listserve: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sjbirds/>

Other California Birding E-mail Listserves

<https://groups.io/g/calbirds>

<https://groups.io/centralvalleybirds>

<https://groups.io/g/StanislausBirds>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central-sierra-birds/>

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sierra-nevadabirds/>

Membership

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

San Joaquin Audubon Society

Attn: Membership (National)

P.O. Box 7755
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Local-Only Membership

This includes a subscription to the bimonthly chapter newsletter, *The Hoot Owl*. For *local membership*, send check payable to **San Joaquin Audubon Society** to the address below.

• Chapter Newsletter—mailed paper copy \$15

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