

THE HOOT OWL



May / June 2017
Issue 3, 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.

Annual Chapter Picnic Saturday, May 20

Save the date! On Saturday, May 20, San Joaquin Audubon will hold its Annual Chapter Picnic at the Mokelumne River Day Use Area/Fish Hatchery. We will start off birding at 8:00 a.m., combining our bird walk with the monthly bird census of this delightful park. The pot luck brunch will follow at approx. 10:00 a.m., so bring a dish to share. We'll also have a short Annual Business Meeting. Meet in the fish hatchery parking lot (below the dam).

San Joaquin County Annual Summer Butterfly Count

Saturday, June 17, 2017, we will hold the annual San Joaquin County Summer Butterfly Count. This family-friendly field trip is a cooperative project of the San Joaquin Audubon Society, the University of California Cooperative Extension, and the North American Butterfly Association.

We will begin at 8:00 a.m. at the Nature Center at Oak Grove Regional Park. No experience or expertise is required. All participants should bring a hat, sunscreen, water, and lunch or a snack (and field guides, binoculars, and nets if you have them). Call Dr. Kathy Schick (209) 612-5130 for more information.

In addition to leading the Annual San Joaquin Audubon Society Butterfly Count, Dr. Schick has her PhD in Entomology, her specialty being tiny, stingless parasitoid wasps. She has recently been appointed as a Research Associate at U.C. Berkeley's Essig Museum and the California Academy of Sciences at San Francisco's Golden Gate Park.

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, May 6— *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.

SUNDAY, May 7— *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 dale.smith2@comcast.net.

WEDNESDAY, May 10— *Pelican Trail, San Joaquin River NWR*

Join leader Jim Rowoth for a walk on this 4 mile riparian trail. Possible birds include nesting Swainson's Hawks, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Bullock's Orioles. We might even see an endangered brush rabbit! Meet at Toot Sweet's (NW corner of March Lane and Quail Lakes Dr., in Stockton) at 6:30 a.m. to carpool, or meet at the NWR parking lot at 7:15 a.m. Bring bug spray, sun screen/hat, and water/snack.

SATURDAY, May 13— *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 the visitor center on Franklin Rd. Check website www.cosumnes.org for last minute updates. Double check with Jim for start time.

SATURDAY, May 20— *ANNUAL CHAPTER PICNIC*

Join leaders Liz West and Joanne Katanic for our monthly census of this lovely riparian area on the Mokelumne River below Camanche Dam, to be followed by our annual chapter picnic and a short general membership meeting. All are welcome to attend. (See announcement this page). Meet the leaders in the fish hatchery parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, May 21— *Woodbridge Wilderness Area*

Join leader Susan Schneider 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.

FRI-SUN, June 2-4— *Annual Sierra Valley Campout*

The Sierra Valley/Yuba Pass areas offer great habitat for birds with many lakes, meadows, marshes, streams, rivers and trees.

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FIELD TRIPS

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FRI–SUN, June 2–4— *Annual Sierra Valley Campout (continued from page 1)*

This year we will be camping at the Cottonwood Creek Campground on Hwy 89 north of Truckee, or you can choose to stay at the Globe Hotel in Sierraville (<http://www.sierrahotsprings.org>). For those who only wish to come up for Saturday, we will meet for breakfast at 8:00 a.m. at the Fork & Horn in Sierraville ((503)–994–1070). Please phone or email trip leader Dave Wagner to RSVP. (Dave's phone #: (209) 943–6997; email: dajwagner@aol.com).

SATURDAY, June 3— *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, June 4 – *Electra Road, Amador County*

Join leader Joanne Katanic to explore Electra Road, near Jackson off of Highway 49. This will be an opportunity to see how the area is rejuvenating after last year's fire. In the past, this has been a great spot to view newly arriving and breeding birds, including Western Tanager, Black-headed Grosbeak, Yellow Warbler, Bullock's Oriole, and Yellow-breasted Chat. For carpooling, meet in Lodi at the Park & Ride, Highway 99 and Victor Rd. (Hwy 12) at 7:00 a.m. To meet in Jackson, be at the parking lot for Mel & Fay's diner at 8:00 a.m. (also a Park & Ride). For more info, please call Joanne at (209)–483–2578.

SATURDAY, June 10— *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, June 17— *Woodbridge Wilderness Area*

Join leader Pat Paternostro 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, June 18— *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.

Satellites reveal bird habitat loss in California

Stopover wetlands in the Sacramento Valley have shrunk dramatically

Drought and reduced seasonal flooding of wetlands and farm fields threaten a globally important stopover site for tens of thousands of migratory shorebirds in California's Sacramento Valley, a new Duke University–led study shows.

The researchers' analysis of historical biweekly NASA Landsat satellite images of the valley reveals that flooded habitat near the peak time of spring migration has shrunk by more than twice the size of Washington, D.C. over the last 30 years.

"On average, we're losing an area about four times the size of Central Park each year, during a critical window of time in late March," said Danica Schaffer–Smith, a doctoral student at Duke's Nicholas School of the Environment, who conducted the study with researchers from the nonprofit Point Blue Conservation Science.

More than half of all shorebird species in the Western hemisphere are now in decline, Schaffer–Smith noted. The Sacramento Valley site is an internationally important resting and refueling stop for tens of thousands of these wetland–dependent birds traveling along the Pacific Flyway. Some of these species migrate thousands of miles from Argentina to Alaska and back again each year.

"The fact that these highly mobile species are increasingly struggling to find flooded habitat on their migrations is an indicator that our freshwater wetland systems are in trouble," Schaffer–Smith said. "Freshwater is essential for all life. Many other species rely on these same habitats, too."

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Satellites reveal bird habitat loss in California

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The Sacramento Valley once supported a huge network of wetlands connected to the San Francisco Bay Delta, but more than 90 percent of them have been drained for agriculture. Analysis of recent satellite images by Schaffer-Smith and her team shows that open water covers just three percent of the landscape during peak migration in April, when the birds urgently need flooded habitat to rest and feed.

This winter's heavy rains are unlikely to reverse these habitat losses. "One season of plentiful rainfall can't undo the effects of years of habitat destruction and increased water consumption for a growing number of competing uses," she said. "However, most water in California is captured in reservoirs and diverted through a system of canals and ditches, which also makes it possible for us to intentionally manipulate flooded habitat on the landscape."

During the worst of the recent drought years, conservation organizations joined forces to launch BirdReturns, a payment-for-services program that compensated farmers for flooding their fields to provide additional habitat for birds, Schaffer-Smith said. The new study's findings could help guide the future timing and location of such initiatives.

"Years of drought have heightened scrutiny of water use in California to the point that even rice farmers have begun to explore a switch to drip irrigation to conserve water, but these fields provide important habitat where wetlands have been lost," she said.

Schaffer-Smith and her colleagues published their peer-reviewed paper this month in the journal *Remote Sensing of Environment*. The study is freely available online through May 3, 2017.

"Satellite imagery can help us get the biggest bang for our buck by targeting conservation initiatives in a specific window of time at key locations," she said. "Landsat is the longest running Earth observation satellite system we have, and free access to this data enables researchers to look at the effects of seasonality, climate cycles, and long-term trends in land-use change

Source: Duke University. "Satellites reveal bird habitat loss in California: Stopover wetlands in the Sacramento Valley have shrunk dramatically." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 27 March 2017. <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/03/170327164929.htm>.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

February, 2017 - April 2, 2017

(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

On February 27th, David Yee saw a probable **Iceland Gull** at the Koster Gravel Pit pond. On a March 26th check of the pond, there were 4 first cycle **Glaucous Gulls**.

David Yee photographed an immature "**White-winged**" **Dark-eyed Junco** at Lodi Lake, March 3rd. The next day Ernie Maier found it and David was able to get conclusive photos of it.

Joanne Katanic and Virginia Bonham found an unseasonal **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Oak Grove Park March 17th.

David Yee spotted a **Pacific Golden-Plover** within a flock of 300 Black-bellied Plovers at Lodi Sewage Ponds, March 23rd.

On an April 2nd bird walk out at White Slough, Jim Rowoth found a **Palm Warbler** in some willows bordering the edge of a pond. It was still present the next day.

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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

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