

THE HOOT OWL



July / August 2021
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San Joaquin Audubon Society
San Joaquin Audubon Society

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 8, if COVID-19 pandemic conditions allow.

Letter from the President

Hello San Joaquin Audubon members! As the incoming President of this organization, I first want to extend a thank you to all of our dedicated officers, members and volunteers.

Without the dedication and hard work of this group of people, San Joaquin Audubon would not be the organization that it is today.

I would like to thank our past president, Pat Paternostro for all of his dedication and accomplishments during his term, along with his ability to lead the Chapter during the Covid-19 pandemic. As any past president knows, your job is not quite done yet, Pat. I might have you on speed dial, please answer!

In the past year, many people have turned to birdwatching seeking enjoyment and relaxation to balance the impact of Covid-19 in their lives.

As we are welcoming many new people, it is the job of the Chapter to help grow the organization, educate our new and existing members of the environmental concerns of our area to protect the wildlife in San Joaquin County.

I see this chapter with a lot of opportunities to do more of the good work we have done so far. While we have a great group of dedicated members and volunteers, we need more members to become actively involved to help this Chapter reach its full potential.

Over the next two years, I look forward to meeting many more of you and learning what talents, experiences and expertise you have to lend to the chapter. No commitment is too small!

This is an exciting time for us and I am excited to be part of it.

Donna Marciano - President SJAS



Introductory Birding field trip at Lodi Lake

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, July 17— 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, July 18— Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery

Join leaders 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.

SATURDAY, August 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.

SATURDAY, August 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, August 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.

The Case for Wetlands in the Central Valley

Vital groundwater protections are needed for wetlands under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act. They are the backbone of the Pacific Flyway, supporting 60% of California's migratory birds.



San Luis NWR, photo by Garry Hayes

Wetlands in the Central Valley of California are the backbone of the Pacific Flyway. These wetlands, along with flooded agricultural fields, support 60 percent of California's migratory birds as they journey to wintering and breeding grounds.

The Central Valley used to be a vast mosaic of seasonal wetlands, permanent wetlands, upland, and riverside forests that supported a diversity of wildlife.

But today, the situation is dire. Over 90 percent of wetlands in the Central Valley have been destroyed. The number of birds in North America have dropped by one-third over the past fifty years, likely due in large part to loss of suitable habitat.

This makes the remaining wetlands in the Central Valley even more important because of what has already been lost in bird populations, ecosystem function, and recreational opportunities. Waterfowl and shorebirds migrating through the Central Valley today are surviving off of isolated, postage stamps of wetlands across a landscape of agriculture and urban development.

As California addresses its decades-long pattern of groundwater overuse, special protections are needed for wetlands that depend on groundwater. Because of the damming of California's rivers for development, agriculture, and flood control; wetlands in the Central Valley are disconnected from natural water sources and maintained through applied water. Surface water delivered through a series of aqueducts and canals or groundwater pumped from local wells is applied to shallow ponds to create flooded wetland habitat.

Central Valley wetlands are *managed wetlands* and are, therefore, tied in closely with state and local water management systems and management decisions. We must ensure that they have the water they need to create this habitat.

Groundwater pumping has been almost entirely unregulated throughout California's history, leading to a race to the bottom that pitted neighbor against neighbor to dig the deepest well and pump the most water for short-term gain.

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The Case for Wetlands in the Central Valley

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In 2014, in the midst of a historic drought, the California Legislature passed the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to finally bring California on par with other western states, requiring sustainable groundwater management by 2040. Local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSA) are now required to develop Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GPS) to chart a course to 20-year sustainability in overdrafted basins.

The first set of GPS were submitted to the State in January 2020 for critically overdrafted basins, primarily in the San Joaquin Valley and Salinas Valley. Audubon reviewed eight of these plans with large managed wetland complexes and found they largely fell short in their consideration of managed wetlands. Several plans didn't accurately identify managed wetland areas and seven of eight plans did not include managed wetlands as a distinct water use sector in their water budgets, as required by SGMA regulations.

We must allocate sufficient groundwater to managed wetlands or this will spell disaster for migratory birds. State oversight is needed by the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board to ensure that California's last, precious wetlands are protected in the process of long-overdue water management fixes. As Groundwater Sustainability Agencies implement groundwater allocations to curb over-pumping, managed wetlands that rely on groundwater need consideration as a public trust resource and the State should ensure they have adequate water supplies.

Central Valley wetlands provide habitat to millions of migratory birds and public lands for all Californians. We must dedicate sufficient water to sustain this vital resource.

Reference:

Arthur, Samantha. (Feb. 5, 2021). The Case for Wetlands in the Central Valley. Audubon California. <https://ca.audubon.org/news/case-wetlands-central-valley>



Great Blue Heron, photo by Suga Moriwaki



Young Green Heron, photo by Srini Raman

BIRD SIGHTINGS

April 17, 2021 - June 22, 2021
(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

Kasey Foley photographed a probable **Short-billed Dowitcher** at Ripon Sewage Ponds on April 17th.

On an April 24th field trip with David Yee to Lodi Lake, Rosamarie Richardson reported three **Black Swifts** on eBird.

David Yee and Janet Thielen found a **Baird's Sandpiper** at the Ripon Sewage Ponds on May 5th.

David Yee picked out an apparent **Glossy Ibis** among about 75 White-faced Ibis on Woodbridge Rd., May 29th. The flock flew off with it before anyone else saw it or photographed it.

Dylan Law reported a **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** on eBird at Caswell State Park on June 5th and 6th.

San Joaquin Audubon Society

Donna Marciano	President
Pat Paternostro	Past President/Listserve Moderator
Alan England	Secretary/Membership
Liz West	Treasurer
Srini Raman	Field Trips
Amy Weiser	Director at Large
Jim Rowoth	Director at Large
Rebecca Severin	Director at Large
Ernie Maier	Director at Large

Kasey Foley	Website, Programs
Kurt Mize	Newsletter Editor
Dave Fries	Conservation Chair
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Website: www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Listserve: <http://groups.io/g/SJBirds>

Other California Birding E-mail Listserve

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

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

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

https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/CSAS_Birds/info

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 quarterly *Audubon Magazine* and to the bimonthly chapter newsletter, *The Hoot Owl*. 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
 Stockton, CA 95267**

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—electronic copy \$15

San Joaquin Audubon Society

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