

THE HOOT OWL



March / April 2022
Issue 2, Volume 60

San Joaquin Audubon Society
San Joaquin Audubon Society

PROGRAMS

There will be no in-person general membership meetings until Covid-19 pandemic conditions allow. In the interim, we will do our best to offer programs via Zoom or other media.

TUESDAY, March 8, 7:00 p.m.

Zoom Presentation

Mike Azevedo and Georgette Howington
"The Bluebird of Happiness"

BLUEBIRDS. The word "bluebirds" suggests springtime, beauty, and joy. Indigenous peoples thought bluebird sightings were symbols of hope, renewal, and love. Henry David Thoreau adored them, many songs refer to bluebirds and we all know "Over the Rainbow". Sadly, once upon a time, bluebird populations suffered greatly because of loss of habitat and pesticide use. People removed sick, dead trees to prevent personal injury and for fire suppression thus, natural cavities became more and more scarce,

Nest boxes are a suitable substitution for natural cavities if placed in appropriate habitat and monitored. In the late 1990's, Don Yoder founded "The California Bluebird Recovery Program" to help bluebirds by installing nest boxes on trails throughout California. Since then, over 16,000 successful fledges have been recorded annually. That's approximately 400,000 baby birds. And not just bluebirds because the bluebird nest box is used by many other species as well: Titmice, Tree swallows, Chickadees, Ash-throated Flycatchers, to name a few. We also promote the conservation of all the cavity nesters.

County Coordinators, Mike Azevedo and Georgette Howington will explain what we can do to help these birds. They will share resources and even offer coaching if you'd like to start a trail or have backyard nest boxes. (How's the population doing now? Slowly coming back but they ARE back in many areas!)

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FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, March 5— Introductory Birding Field Trip

Join leader Pat Paternostro at Hutchins St. Square, 125 S. Hutchins St., in Lodi, 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.

THURSDAY, March 10— American Legion Park

This will be a new field trip for us! We will meet at 8:00 a.m. at the east end of W. Walnut St. (dead-end, street parking). Led by Jim Rowoth, we will check the park's trees, grassy areas, and lake to see what we can come up with. Expect a 2-3 hour visit.

SATURDAY, March 12— Cosumnes River Preserve

Meet leader Jim Rowoth at the Visitor Center parking lot at 6:00 a.m. Bring snack, drink, and bug spray. Trails will probably be dry, but if we get any rain before then, there could be some mud. It depends on the birds, but we should be done by noon.

SATURDAY, March 19— 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 20— 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 Joanne in the fish hatchery parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

MONDAY, March 28— Stockton Rural Cemetery

The gates open at 8:00, so that's when we'll meet in the parking area near the office. We'll be looking for early spring migrants, as well as any lingering winter residents. Leader: Jim Rowoth.

SATURDAY, April 2— 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.

SATURDAY, April 16— Cosumnes River Preserve

Join leader Jim Rowoth for the monthly River Walk bird count. This month, we'll start at the Visitor Center parking lot at 6:30 a.m. Snack, water, and bug spray are all recommended. We should finish by noon.

SATURDAY, April 16— 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.

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PROGRAMS

"The Bluebird of Happiness" (Continued from Page 1)

Mike Azevedo has been the County Coordinator for Santa Clara County with the California Bluebird Recovery Program since 2009. Mike has been a Science Camp naturalist, park ranger and merit badge counselor for nature related merit badges for years. Mike is compiler of the San Jose Audubon Christmas Bird Count and has worked with Santa Clara Audubon Society closely since becoming involved. Mike is working with Sequoia Audubon Society on a project to save the Western Purple Martin, a species of special concern that is battling habitat loss, deadly competition with the introduced European Starling and food source crash due to the rampant use of neonicotinoid pesticides. Together with Georgette Howington, Mike is an editor of the CBRP Facebook Page and is currently working on books and videos encouraging the use of native plants and nest boxes and habitat improvement in general.

Georgette Howington is the State Assistant Program Director and Contra Costa and Alameda County Coordinator for the California Bluebird Recovery Program, and has been a nest box monitor for 24 years. Georgette stages community exhibits, is a speaker and works with Eagle Scout candidates and provides new monitor's personal coaching. As a conservationist in the SF East Bay area, for over thirty years, she's been a contributing member and or supporter of organizations such as California Garden Clubs, Mt. Diablo Audubon Society, Raptors Are The Solution, and various land trusts, among others. Georgette is a horticulturist and certified as a UC Davis Naturalist of the Mt. Diablo Region, as well as a published writer and poet. She lives with her husband Bruce, their cat Bodhi and two demanding Goldfish.

TUESDAY, April 12, 7:00 p.m.

Zoom Presentation

Helen Loffland

"Bumble Bees of the Sierra Nevada"

Helen Loffland has a B.S. in Wildlife Biology from U.C. Davis, and an M.S. in Biology from C.S.U. Sacramento. She has spent the last 25 years studying Willow Flycatchers and other birds in meadows of the Sierra Nevada. She also has experience working with a wide variety of Sierran raptors, carnivores, plants, invertebrates and fish. As a meadows specialist at the Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) her most recent work has focused on riparian bird and bumble bee response to land management activities.

Since 2015 Helen has worked towards building IBP's pollinator program with research examining habitat selection, floral resource use, and response to land management by Sierra Nevada bumble bees at study sites in Amador, Eldorado, Nevada, Sierra, Plumas and Siskiyou counties.

She recently wrapped up 5 years of work with bumble bees in post-fire landscapes and is currently focused on bumble bee response to meadow restoration projects in on the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests and on private lands.

Helen will provide an overview of her work on bumble bees throughout the region and present research from a recently published papers on floral resource selection by bumble bees.



Helen Loffland in her natural habitat

To read more about IBP's pollinator program and download papers and reports visit: <https://www.birdpop.org/pages/sierraPollinators.php>

FIELD TRIPS

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SUNDAY, April 17— 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, April 23— North Fork Fishing Access

Join leader Kurt Mize for this visit to the scenic area along the Calaveras River just above New Hogan Reservoir. This is a good spot for Yellow-breasted Chat, Lazuli Bunting, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Canyon Wren, and others. Meet Kurt at the Country Café, 1800 N. Highway 88, in Lockeford at 7:00 a.m. to carpool. Carpooling is recommended, as parking space is limited. You should bring sunscreen, water, and a snack. We should finish by noon.

Waldo Holt Preserve: A New Opportunity for S.J. Audubon

The SJAS board of directors is pleased to inform the S.J. Audubon membership of the founding of the Waldo Holt Preserve. Access to the Preserve will not be open to the general public, but it will be available to S.J. Audubon groups for field trips and other educational purposes.

The Preserve is located at the north border of S.J. County. It is on the west side of Lower Sacramento Rd., just south of Dry Creek and the city of Galt. It consists of approximately 80 acres, a large portion of which is riparian habitat lying to the south side of Dry Creek. There is also a seasonal creek and pond on the property.

The purchase of the property was a collaboration between the S.J. Council of Governments (COG) and the Waldo Holt Conservancy (WHC). Five acres of the property was paid for by WHC, which has since disbanded. These five acres have been licensed to S.J. Audubon for educational uses in which we wish to engage. However, the entire 80-acre Preserve will be available for field trips. COG plans to plant native elderberry bushes on the property, a very bird friendly plant. The Waldo Holt Preserve is now designated as an eBird Hotspot. Two scouting trips there have identified 67 bird species and we are confident that future birding trips will result in significant increases in these numbers.

S.J. Audubon and COG will work together to improve the property as habitat for avian and other wildlife. We welcome ideas for our membership for improvement and educational uses of the property. We expect to establish a WHP committee to plan and help implement these projects. We encourage non-board members to volunteer to serve!

We are especially pleased the preserve is being named in memory of Waldo Holt. Waldo was a longtime Conservation Chair for S.J. Audubon. Waldo loved all birds but was especially active in the preservation of Swainson's Hawks.

The first open field trip to the WHP is being planned for this summer. So, be on the lookout for an announcement and plan to attend.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

December 16, 2021 - February 23, 2022
(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

While scouting for the Stockton CBC, December 17th, David Yee photographed a bright out of season, **Cassin's Vireo** male. It did not appear after the initial sighting.

On January 3rd, Jim Rowoth found a **Marbled Godwit** in a pond along Woodbridge Road.

One of the two female goldeneye's that Kasey Foley saw at the Mokelumne River Day Use Area on January 9th was a **Barrow's Goldeneye**. She was present through January 16th.

Kasey Foley photographed a **yellow-shafted Northern Flicker** in her Stockton backyard on January 20th.

Lewis's Woodpeckers continue in good numbers at the Mokelumne Fish Hatchery as of the bird count on February 20th.

2020 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

The 2021–22 Christmas Bird Count (CBC) is now officially history, after a one-year hiatus due to COVID. On Dec 19, we had great weather for the Stockton count, but fewer counters. For the first time ever, the Stockton species total (139) was surpassed by that of our sister Wallace–Bellota CBC (140). The only “rare” bird for the Stockton count was Lewis’s Woodpecker. We had high numbers of Mute Swan, Wild Turkey, Say’s Phoebe, Great-tailed Grackle—none of the coming as any surprise; three of these are introduced and one is native, and all of which have been increasing in numbers over the past years. Our biggest misses were Cinnamon Teal, Varied Thrush, and Tricolored Blackbird.

Co-compilers Jim Rowoth and Donna Marciano want to thank those of you who participated this year and hope to welcome even more of you to participate in 2022.

The 2021–22 Wallace–Bellota Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data submission has been completed and the bird species total of 140 has finally surpassed the Stockton CBC total of 139! Although individual numbers of birds were down the diversity was consistent with the last several years. Standout birds include Lesser Black-backed Gull, Pacific Loon, Red-breasted Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, Chipping Sparrow, Eurasian Wigeon, and Barrow’s Goldeneye. Misses include Cinnamon Teal, Peregrine Falcon, Vesper Sparrow, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. High numbers of Lewis’s Woodpecker were expected on the count due to their high winter numbers throughout the valley, and they did not disappoint.

Co-compilers Kasey Foley and Pat Paternostro want to thank everyone for participating in this count and contributing to citizen science data collection.

San Joaquin Audubon Society

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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

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