



THE HOOT OWL

SAN JOAQUIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

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SUN. Jan. 24. Staten Island Field Trip. Great locale for observing wintering raptors and waterfowl. Meet leader Waldo Holt (464-4438) at Rockys Restruant, corner of I-5 and 12 at 8am.

SAT. Feb. 6. Field Trip to Foothill Ponds & Reservoirs. To observe wintering waterfowl and raptors including eagles. Meet leader Steve Stocking (465-2729) at 7:30 at Burn's Tower, U.O.P. (bring lunch)

SUN. Feb. 7. Merced Duck Club Field Trip. Observe wintering waterfowl. Meet at 7:15 at John Schick's (464-8304). Call co-leader Terry Ronneberg (835-7847) for further information. (also see page 2).

TUE: Feb 9th. Program: THE PRIBILOF ISLANDS. David Wimpfheimer is a naturalist, writer and photographer who lives in the Point Reyes area and is a consulting biologist for the Point Reyes Bird Observatory. A recent visit to the Pribilof Islands has allowed him to put together a natural history program of the area that is spectacular. 7:30 at Central United Church at Pacific and Fulton in Stockton.



FRI-SUN. Feb. 12-14. 14th Annual Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference.
See information on page 3 or call your editor for information.

SAT. Feb. 20. Salt Springs Reservoir Field Trip. For wintering raptors including Bald Eagles. 7:30 am. Co:leaders John Schick (464-8304) and Terry Ronneberg (835-7847). for further information.

SAT. Feb. 27. White Slough Field Trip. Water and land birds will be viewed at this nearby area. Morning trip. Meet at the I-5 and Highway 12 Park & Ride at 8am. Leader Dave Wagner: 943-6997.

MON or WED Mar 1 or 3 and SAT Mar 6 or 13. Learn to be a Docent at the Oak Grove Park. If you have an interest in nature and the desire to share it with others, participate in this Docent Training. Learn to lead school groups on field trips, give outreach programs and staff the Oak Grove Nature Center. Cost \$15. Information: 953-8814 or 953-8840.

SAT. Mar. 13. Sunrise Ranch Field Trip. A special trip to this new preserve will be announced in our Mar.-April newsletter. Look for it!



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FIELD TRIP TO GRASSLANDS

Join us on a day-long jaunt to the Salinas Club in the middle of the historic 160,000 acre Grassland wetlands of western Merced County. You'll tour wetlands that appear much like they did in the days when the huge cattle company, Miller-Lux, owned much of the land between Stockton and Fresno.

There is iodine bush galore, plus thousands of migratory ducks and geese and better than 30 species of shorebirds.

Recently the Grasslands was named one of 15 special reserves by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Network. Totally one-sixth of all the wintering waterfowl on the Pacific Flyway use the Grasslands. In addition, there are all sorts of raptors, wading birds and an opportunity to see a bald eagle. Want a special blind for photography? That can be arranged. Leaders of the tour are Tim Poole, biologist for the Grasslands Water District and Peter Ottesen, an owner of the Salinas Club. Bring a lunch.

OWLS, JOBS & OLD-GROWTH

The 44 timber sales that were reviewed by the "God Squad" totaled about 220 million board feet. The net economic effect of reducing the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, harvest is 55 million board feet—about 0.1 % of U.S. timber consumption. These sales have little significance both nationally and in the Douglas fir region, and offering them would have little impact on the timber supply picture. Job loss figures are roughly 500, but it is difficult to say just where those losses would occur. *Forest Watch* 12(10):15-17

KERN COUNTY NEW TOWN PROPOSAL

National Audubon has taken aim at a proposal to create a new town which would be built on habitat of critical importance to the endangered California condor. The town would be located on a 114,000 acre ranch which covers the beautiful foothill country from west of Interstate 5 south of Bakersfield, all the way across the bottom of the San Joaquin Valley almost to Maricopa.

California condors foraged and roosted on the ranch until 1987. The ranch also encompassed the only oak-savannah grassland wildlife corridor between the eastern and western sides of the San Joaquin Valley.

On October 5, the Kern County Board of Supervisors approved an amendment to the Kern County General Plan to accept the specific plan for a "new town" on the eastern edge of the ranch, adjacent to I-5. This first phase will include 20,000 housing units and an estimated population of 60,000. Despite protests by Kern Audubon, Sierra Club, and others, the Board of Supervisors ignored the fact that the Planning Department has violated the California Environmental Quality Guidelines in the formulation of the draft environmental impact report.

In a strongly worded letter written by NAS Sanctuaries staffer and former California biologist, Jesse Grantham, Audubon criticized the project for failing to consider the impacts of the project on the condor despite the well-documented historic condor use of the ranch. Audubon believes this could be the first step of Los Angeles basin-style sprawl over the Transverse Mountain Range and into the San Joaquin Valley. An indication of this is that proposals for land use changes are flooding the Kern County Planning Department, from Gorman, Frazier Park, Lebec, and Fort Tejon to Bakersfield and the Tehachapis.

This giant development project has sparked controversy, scandal, and cost one Kern County official his job because of apparent conflict of interest. National Audubon is now assessing the legal remedies which exist to protect the habitat of the California condor and eight other threatened and endangered species from risks posed by the San Emidio new town proposal.

(from Audubon Leader, Nov. 1992)

BURROWING OWL IN TROUBLE

Surveys of Burrowing Owl populations have been conducted recently in Northern California because their numbers have been seen to be decreasing in many areas. San Joaquin Audubon has assisted the Institute for Bird Populations in local surveys.

Of the 28 known owl breeding locations in the County in 1981, 23 had disappeared by 1991. This is an 82% decrease.





STOCKTON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The 23rd running of the Stockton CBC held on Dec. 19 will go down as one of the brighter spots in San Joaquin Audubon lore. With gorgeous weather, more than 60 well armed participants, and a great year for certain invasionary species, we not only cracked the legendary 150 species barrier once again (we had 150 species in 1990), but knocked on the unheard of door of 160...with an astonishing 157!!! This is far any away the highest species total ever achieved by an inland count in N. California and rivals the better totals for some of the best So. Cal. inland counts. In fact, this may very well have been the best inland count at our latitude ever!!! Thanks to all who participated and gave their all. The bottom line, of course, is that we continued to add to the broad data base already established after 22 years of continuous and amazingly quantitative observations on this CBC. Highlights included five firsts for the count: Glaucous Gull, Peregrine Falcon, Clark's Grebe, Osprey, and an amazing Wilson's Phalarope. Other intriguing individuals were a returning Rock Wren, Glaucous-winged and Thayer's gulls, Horned Grebe, Wh-faced Ibis, Swamp Sparrow, two Eur. Wigeon, and no less than 10 Swainson's Hawks. It was also an impressive year for finches as both siskin and Purple Finch were in record breaking numbers. The Yees hosted the gathering following the count where we both ate & checked each others observations. (reported by David Yee and Jim Rowoth)

WALLACE BELLOTA CBC

We had another great count in the foothills following the holidays. 127 species were observed by members of 12 groups. One more group of counters this year enabled us to cover the large area more intensively. The number of species tied the old record. This year there were record numbers of grebes seen including 960 Clark's, 1260 Wester, 190 Eared and 40 Horned. Other birds with impressive numbers included the Prairie Falcons (10), and Red-br Sapsuckers (13). One Wh-th Swift and a Thayer's Gull were also present. We will

not mention those other species which we should have found (our Snipe hunt was not successful). Many new birders got a chance to try out their identification and counting skill. It was a good day in the field and the opportunity to compare notes at the Martins following the count was greatly appreciated. (Organized, compiled & reported by Waldo Holt.)

A FEW OTHER OBSERVATIONS

Arnold Whipple, Steve & Linda Stocking and a few Sierra Club birders visited the Merced and San Luis Refuges where they observed 3 American Bitterns, Common Moorhen, many Sandhill Cranes, a large flock of L.B Curlew, both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs (together) and two coyotes. This was all on 11-21-92. Linda and Steve Stocking observed a Lapland Longspur on the Sonoma Coast near Bridgehaven on 11-28-92. Steve observed a Rough-legged Hawk on Bouldin Is. on 11-29. There have been large numbers of Snow Geese, Wh-fronted Geese, Tundra Swans and Great Egrets observed this winter on Highway 12 in the Delta. Woodbridge Rd. and Eight Mile Road have also been good for observing water fowl. In December and early January large numbers of Great egrets have been observed hunting on both State Routes 12 and 99 within a few feet of the pavement. What does it all mean?

14th ANNUAL KLAMATH BASIN BALD EAGLE CONFERENCE

The Klamath Basin of northern California and south-central Oregon is home to over 170 species of breeding birds and world famous for spectacular flocks of migratory waterfowl. It hosts the largest concentration of Bald Eagles in the lower 48 states. The Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference coincides with the presence of wintering waterfowl and Eagles so that Conference participants can enjoy these magnificent birds. Workshops include wildlife rehabilitation, wildlife photography, project wild, tours, bird identification and others. For registration information contact your editor (465-2729). Do this soon!

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THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT IS IN TROUBLE

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is up for reauthorization in the new Congress. This Act is a protective mandate that forbids federal, state or private actions that jeopardize an endangered or threatened species or destroys its critical habitat. This act is the single most powerful weapon we have for the protection of these species.

Formidable interests have targeted the ESA for radical change or destruction. Congressman Tauzin (D-La) has introduced H.R. 6134, a bill that would virtually nullify the Act. It would reduce habitat protection and abandon the goal of recovering species to the point that they are no longer endangered.

For maximum impact, act before Inauguration Day, January 22. Urge your Representative to oppose H.R. 6134. (U.S. House of Representatives, Washington DC 20515). Urge your Senator to take the initiative and introduce a strong ESA reauthorization bill in the Senate. (U.S. Senate, Washington DC 20510)

"Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little." (Edmund Blake)

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