



THE HOOT OWL

San Joaquin Audubon Society

JAN. FEB. 1994

VOL 32 #1

Sun. Jan 23. Morning Fieldtrip. 8-11. Calaveras River Bike-Walking Pathway. Meet at West end of Stagg H.S.. Karl Kothe 464-1004, Steve Stocking 465-2729.

Sun. Jan. 30 Fieldtrip. Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Seven miles south of Willows on I-5 this large refuge has a visitor center and tour route. Large numbers of impressive waterbirds should be present. Meet at the Park and Ride at the SE corner of Highways 12 and I-5 at 7:30am. Kasey Foley will lead this so call her for information 473-3904.

Sat. Feb. 5 Fieldtrip. Lodi Lake Natural Area. Wonderful natural area along the Mokelumne River right in Lodi. Both resident birds and migrants will be there. 8:30 am is the time to meet leader Nancy Ballot (476-1926) on Laurel Ave. on the east side of Lodi Lake Park.

Tue. Feb. 8 PROGRAM AND MEETING. 7:30 at Central United Methodist Church. Corner of Pacific and Fulton, Stockton. Cookies & water for tea & coffee. Don & Kathy Crump manage our local, very successful R APTOR Rehabilitation Center. Live birds on display, discussion of natural history and their efforts.

Sat. Feb. 12. Monthly Cosumnes Bird Count. 7:30. Call John Schick at 464-8304.

Sat. Feb. 26. Fieldtrip to San Luis Wildlife Refuge. The right time and the right place to see the abundant waterfowl on this National Refuge. Now that the hunting season is over it is a good place to see shorebirds, waterbirds, other birds and Tule Elk. White Pelicans, Glossy Ibis and many other possibilities. Call leader Terry Ronneberg for information 835-7847. Meeting place is Westly Reststop on I-5. (8am)

Sat. Mar. 12. Monthly Cosumnes Bird Count. 7:30. Call John Schick at 464-8304.

Other Trips and Programs:

Jan 29. Woodbridge Ecological Reserve with the Yolo Basin Foundation. Short hike to see raptors & songbirds. \$3 donation, under 12 free. For additional info. contact the Foundation at 916 756-7248.

Feb. 18-20. Celebrate the largest gathering of Bald Eagles in the lower 48 at the 15th Annual Klamath Basin Bald Eagle Conference in Klamath Falls Ore. Banquet workshops and more for \$35-50. For more information call Ralph Opp at 503-883-5732 days of Charlotte Opp 503-882-8488 evenings.

Mar. 26-29. Make plans to join fellow Auduboners on the beautiful Monterey Peninsula for the 1994 Western Regional Conference at Asilomar. Top-notch speakers, interactive workshops, a variety of field trips and a youth program are planned. The theme is Birds in the Balance with emphasis on migratory species. For information & registration contact Western Regional Office: 916 481-5332.

OAK GROVE DOCENT ACTIVITIES

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH. Join the Oak Grove Docents for a bird-walk at 8am. Following each birdwalk, join the docents for an open house in the Nature Center. Learn more about becoming a member of the Oak Grove Docent Council and join us in discovering some of the treasures of our oak woodlands, while opening the eyes and minds of the young and not so young, to the excitement of the natural world. For more information call Carol Gibbs at 953-8814

BIRD SIGHTINGS

11-7, Wh-Headed Woodpecker, W. Bluebird Br. Creepers at Pinecrest Lake by Jim Rowoth. 11-12 Pr. Conure, Wyandotte St Stockton by J. Rowoth. 11-14 a Golden-Crowned Kinglet, no sparrows!. Stockton Rural Cemetary, J. Rowoth. On 11-21 a Rose-breasted Grosbeak at Smith Nevada S. Stocking. 11-27 Bl-Gray Gnatcatcher, Waldo Holt, Acampo Road. 11-27, Waldo, Kasey Foley & Jim: a Virginia's Warbler on Acampo Rd. 12--4 Gnatcatchers, Gl. Cr Kinglets on Acampo Rd. Jim with Marge Fletcher and Mary Ann Dunn. 12--05 at SRC by J. Rowoth pr RB Sapsucker, Varied Thrush, WB Nuthatch etc, few sparrows. 12-24 Ring Necked Duck and Gr. Winged Teal on Quail Lake by N. Ballot. 1--2 R.B. Sapsucker in central Stockton. S. Stocking. 1-7 Gr. Horned Owl Stockton by L. Stocking. 1-8, 2 Bald Eagles at Salt Springs Res. and m.b. at the pond north of Copperopolis including Cm. Loon, Bufflehead, Ring Necked, Common Goldeneye and other ducks by Arnold and Carol Whipple. 1-9 a Bald Eagle at Pardee, C. Geese, C. Goldeneye and Ring Necked Ducks at pond between Pardee and Valley Spring by Stockings & Lamms. 1-10 Varied Thrush, Stockton yard by E. Smith.

BIRD COUNT UPDATE

Despite heavy fog that barely lifted throughout the day, the Stockton Christmas Bird Count held on Dec 19 produced an impressive total of 147 species. This is still one of the top 5 totals ever for this count. Any time that a non-coastal count nears the 150 mark, we're talking amazing. Thanks to the over 55 folks who braved the cold fog and continued to make this count one of the premier counts in the country!

Highlights included a Virginia's Warbler, a Rusty Blackbird, a Western Gull, and three Blue-winged Teal, which were all new for the count. Other notables were 2 Peregrine Falcons, a Horned Grebe, Lesser Golden Plover, Townsend's Warbler, three Blue-grey Gnatcatchers, 2 Hooded Mergansers and a Swainson's Hawk.

The big highlight of the Wallace-Bellota foothill count on Jan 2. was the new record of 130 species. Our count team watched a Red-shouldered hawk dive on a Great Blue Heron and a Sharp Shinned Hawk flush a flock of Meadowlarks. Sun on Mt. Bluebirds, trees topped by Phainopeplas, and pathetic attempts at counting flocks of backbirds, lark sparrow and starlings also return to mind as the fog clears.

Our thanks to David Yee, Jim Rowoth and Waldo Holt for organizing these successful counts.

CALIFORNIA DUCK DAYS; 1994

This event will be held on February 17-22 in and around Davis. Field trips will be led to outstanding winter birding areas within two hours drive of Davis. Areas to be included are public and private wetlands and uplands including various refuges and sanctuaries. Entertainment, speakers, special events, and workshops will be concentrated on the Presidents' Day weekend.

For more information, please write, or call, California Duck Days '94, PO Box 5000, Davis, Ca. 95617 or 1-800-425-5001.



SEWER PONDS AND WATERFOWL

California's wetlands have disappeared at such an alarming rate and are in such poor condition, that some species of migratory birds literally turn into sewer ducks. They concentrate on ponds used to treat sewage effluent.

The situation is not just esthetically deplorable. It is a death trap. As the birds concentrate, they become susceptible to avian cholera and botulism. Thousands die each year at Los Banos, Newman, Dos Palos, Modesto and Stockton.

At the Modesto Sewage Plant, there is an annual die-off of between 3,000 and 6,000 birds. This happens each year. On the Modesto ponds, 27 different species of birds--waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors and others died during a two month period in 1992. In 1991, the ponds harbored a large percentage of the entire population of endangered Aleutian Canada geese. Fifty of the sensitive species died from cholera. All told in 1991 more than 2,800 birds died from roosting on the Modesto ponds, unknown hundreds on the Faith-Mapes Ranch, 1,688 on the Los Banos Seage ponds, 257 on the Los Banos Wildlife Area, 60 on the Merced National Wildlife Refuge, and 70 on private clubs in the south Grasslands. This was all related to avian cholera from birds infected on treatment ponds.

Steps which could be taken to stop this horrible loss include: hazing all migratory birds from the ponds, establishing alternative habitat equivalent to each surface acre of the ponds and initiating comprehensive research to better understand sewage pond ecology and its effect on birds. The basic problem is that 90 percent of historic wetlands have been lost and only about 500,000 acres of marsh habitat remains in the valley. And some people still say we are "going too far in our protection of wet lands".

(from: Grassland Month Newsletter 5-93)



WHITE SLOUGH WILDLIFE AREA

This popular area for local birders is usually entered from the road to the Lodi Sewage Treatment Plant near the corner of Highway 12 and I-5. (Near Rockys). This area is referred to as Ponds 9-13. Other ponds can be reached from Walnut Grove Road (Pond 5), (Pond 6) on Woodbridge Road, and Ponds 7-8 from Guard Road. We thought you might like to know when these areas are open to hunting. Period of Firearms and Archery Use is from Sept 1 through Jan 31. Shotguns and archery equipment only are allowed. All days during that period are open to hunting. Waterfowl, pheasants and doves may be taken. No boats or flotation devices are allowed. Horses are not allowed and Pond 9 is closed to all hunting. (From 1993 Hunting Regulations.)

MOUNTAIN PLOVER CENSUS

The Mountain Plover is in trouble, have you seen any lately? It may have to be listed under the Endangered Species Act. But first a statewide census is to be done January 29th. For further information contact Bob Barnes at the Audubon Regional Office in Sacramento at (916) 481-5332.

REDIRECTING GROWTH:workshop

The Mother Lode Chapter of the Sierra Club & the California Biodiversity Program present a workshop on growth issues in the Sierra Nevada foothills and the Central Valley. This will be held Saturday January 22 from 9:30 to 5 pm at the Regional Transit Auditorium . 29th and N Streets in Sacto. Bring a bag lunch.

Join the group for presentations and discussions on the problems we all face from sprawling growth, alternative ways to design our communities, and ways to address general plan revisions.

More Info? Call 916 5571108 or 7566455

MAN FINED \$10,000 FOR POACHING DUCKS.

Six months and \$10,000 was the sentence for a man caught selling ducks to the organizer of the Woodland Elks Lodge annual dinner. Apparently he had been doing the same since 1984. The organizer of the dinner was also fined for buying the 1,000 ducks. It is unlawful to sell virtually all migratory game birds including the mallards, pintails and teal which the Elks have been eating.

DELTA TOXIC HOT SPOTS

Quite a few areas near Stockton fail to meet various water quality criteria. These areas are compared to clean water reference sites on the basis of various testing protocols. (Human health protection standards for fish consumption, impairment of growth or reproduction of aquatic organisms in tests, or significant drops in aquatic species populations associated with toxic pollution.) For now, known toxic "hot spots" in this area include the San Joaquin River Turning Basin, French Camp Slough and Paradise Point, Ladds Marina, Village West Marina and the Waterfront Yacht Club.

MARSH CLEANSSES RUNOFF

A recent study was designed to test a Fremont marsh's ability to clean up urban runoff before it reaches the San Francisco Bay. The study, conducted by the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory under the direction of Dr. Susan Anderson, confirmed that toxicity was reduced in samples collected several days after storms, and not by dilution alone.

They are now changing the design of their 55 acre experimental marsh to increase the number of meanders and islands. They also hope to increase the marsh's holding capacity by 40%. All this to increase turbulence which may lead to better cleaning action. So what? So that new marshes constructed to mitigate for loss of other wetlands will be designed to maximize their cleansing functions.

ACAMPO VINEYARDIST WORKS TO IMPROVE MOKELUMNE HABITAT

Many oak trees were taken out and streams "channelized" to develop the vineyards in the Lodi farming area. But Brad Lange, who farms 1,700 acres near Woodbridge, is planting areas to native vegetation between his vines and the river.

His aim is to provide habitat for quail and for beneficial insects which will help to control vineyard pests. Some researchers have found that the native blackberry harbors wasps which eat leafhopper eggs.

This all started five years ago as a family project to encourage volunteer oak trees in their vineyards. Lange also hopes to be able to cut back on the use of pesticides.

This is a very positive effort to co-exist with nature. Let's support such efforts where we see them.

(adapted from Ag Alert & Water Cons. News)



ENDANGERED SPECIES REAUTHORIZATION BILL INTRODUCED

Bills to reauthorize the Endangered Species Act have been introduced in both the House and Senate. Both of these bills include important language to strengthen and improve implementation of the Endangered Species Act. They would:

- (1) Set deadlines for completion of recovery plans and give priority to integrated multi-species plans.
- (2) Require federal agencies to inventory their lands for candidate species and formulate measures to conserve them.
- (3) Authorize development of habitat conservation plans for candidate species and establish a revolving fund for grants or interest free advances to states, counties, or municipal governments to assist in the development of such plans.
- (4) Provide financial incentives and technical assistance to private landowners to take steps to implement recovery actions for listed species and conservation measures for candidate species.
- (5) Require a report on various programs which encourage or discourage the conservation of species.
- (6) Substantially increase the funding ceilings for the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service to implement the federal endangered species program.

Adequate staff and funds are needed to make this extremely important law work. please write to your senators and representative urging them to strongly support S. 921 and H.R. 2043 for a stronger and more workable Endangered Species Act.

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