



# THE HOOT OWL

## SAN JOAQUIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1996 VOL. 35 #1

Saturday . Cosumnes Preserve Bird Census. Call John Schick for details at 464-8304. 7:00 at Willow Slough trailhead.

Saturday, January 25. WOODBIDGE ROAD FIELD TRIP. Join Kasey Foley & Rich Petersen (473-3904) on this trip to this winter "hotspot". We may also visit other nearby "birding" locales. Meet at 8 am at I-5/Hiway 12 "park 'n ride" Start, or expand, your "Big Year" list. (RC/HFC)

Saturday, February 1. LODI LAKE FIELD TRIP. This is a great spot for wintering riparian birds. We hope both the Black & White Warbler and Hairy Woodpecker will make appearances. Meet leader Waldo Holt at the Laurel St. entrance to the Park at 10 am, (RC/HFC)

Saturday, February 8. Cosumnes Preserve Bird Census. Call John Schick for details at 464-8304. 7:00 at Willow Slough Trailhead.

Tuesday, February 11. **MEMBERSHIP MEETING; CRANES OF THE WORLD AND BIRD CONSERVATION:** Dr. Mini Nagendram. Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon-California. 7:30 at Central United Methodist Church on Pacific Ave. across from U.O.P. Ample parking, refreshments, calendars, bird talk etc.

Fri-Sun, Feb. 14-16. Duck Days in Davis... See announcement inside.....

Sunday, Feb. 23. EASTERN SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY FIELD TRIP. We'll prowl some of the roads on the eastern fringes of our county trying to add to our county "Big Year" list. Call leader Jim Rowoth (462-7512) for details.

**NOTICE:** ALWAYS CALL YOUR LEADER, AT LEAST SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE THE OUTING, THERE MAY BE CHANGES IN DATES, TIMES OR DESTINATIONS. H.F.C. means that heavy fog cancels and R.C. means that rain cancels the trip.

### SIX WAYS YOU CAN HELP CONSERVE BIRDS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- 1 . Join the National Audubon Society and take part in your local chapter. There are many opportunities to participate in citizen-science programs which help bird conservation, such as the Christmas Bird Counts.
- 2 . Join Project Feederwatch. Counting Birds is the key to helping scientists monitor their status. (Cornell Lab. of Ornithology Program Services, 159 Sapsucker Woods Rd. Ithaca N.Y. 14850-1999.)
- 3 . Create a bird-friendly environment in your backyard by landscaping with native plants that flower and fruit; hang bird feeders and nest boxes, and provide water in simple bird baths; place hawk decals or reflective streamers on windows to prevent bird collisions; keep your cat indoors.
- 4 . Take note of wildlife habitat in urban areas, help protect woods and wetlands.
- 5 . Support your state and local government wildlife programs and public officials who are committed to conservation.
- 6 . Get the word out about bird conservation. Sponsor a classroom for Audubon Adventures. Recycle your Audubon Magazine to offices or to schools.



## BIRDS...BIRDS..., BIRDS

On December 29 Nancy Greenwood observed a Coopers Hawk attacking birds at her backyard feeder. It chased small birds into bushes then ran around on the ground, finally jumped into the bush to flush them out. (West.Stockton) Lynne Loy also observed a Coopers in her west Stockton yard in November..

On a field trip to Hogan and Salt Springs 11-24 Bufflehead, Ring-necked ducks, Rock Wren, Gr Backed Heron, Hooded Merganser, Burrowing Owl, Bald Eagles, Lewis Woodpeckers as well as Ferruginous Hawk and others, Stockings. 12-21 Kasey & Rich ob. Spotted Sandpiper at Lodi Treatment ponds.

Wild Turkey, Osprey and Kingfisher etc ob at Commanche Fish Hatchery on S.C. Hiway Cleanup trip 12-9 by Stocking, Loy, Hench etc January 5, 8 of us journeyed to the Los Banos and Merced Wildlife Refuges where we marveled at thousands of Snow Geese, We also had fine views of the Tule Elk herd. Other birds included R.S.Hawk, Long-eared Owls, shrike, ring-necked and gadwall etc ducks and long-billed dowitchers. The sandhill cranes were also a sight to impress.

1-4 Kasey & Rich ob. RedBr. Sapsucker at Clements and 6 common moorhens at pond east of Clements on Wallace Bellota Count.

1-5 Jim Rowoth & Margaret Williams ob Mt.Bluebirds, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks on Waverly Road. 1-6 Kasey & Rich ob, Slate-colored Junco & Varied Thrush at Stockton Rural Cemetary.

## WOOD DUCK NESTING BOX PROGRAM

Pete Chadwick, Cosumnes Preserve Volunteer will be leading workdays this spring to maintain 150 wood duck nesting boxes. The boxes need to be checked periodically and cleaned before the next nesting season.

If you would like to help out by volunteering no prior experience is necessary. Call Pete at 727-3124.

## TRICOLORED BLACKBIRDS

John Kemper When we think about birds in the Central Valley, it is likely that images of ducks and geese come to mind. But we shouldn't overlook another species which has its own claim to fame in the bird world. Tricoloreds along with yellow-billed magpie are species eagerly sought by eastern birders when they come west.

The tricolored blackbird just misses being an endemic, because its range overlaps slightly into Oregon and Baja California. Here, in the center of the tricolored's world, their flocks once were truly enormous.

In 1932, one observer estimated that the roosting population of tricoloreds in a colony east of Sacramento contained nearly 500,000 birds. But by 1993, in an article published in American Birds, Ted Beedy estimated that the population of the entire state was only about half the size of that one colony--250,000 adults. Even so, this represented a significant rebound from a low of 50,000 adults in the 1980's.

When Tricoloreds, along with other blackbirds, moved through a farmers field of oats or barley eating seed the typical response of farmers was to spread poison grain near the nesting marshes. "...the surface of the shallow water beneath the willows became an almost solid floor of floating bodies.." Another response was to shoot them for market. It was estimated that, in the mid-1930's 300,000 blackbirds were marketed from the Sacramento Valley.

But probably the major reason for the loss of tricoloreds is because of their nesting requirements. They nest in huge compact colonies, in freshwater marshes W.L. Dawson, in the 1920's reported that he was able to touch 26 nests when he was standing in one place in a nesting colony. Such large colonies have gone from most valley area, but their populations seem to be rising somewhat in recent years because of the wet springs, according to Beedy.



two

February 14-16, 1997  
Veteran Memorial Center



### You're invited to join the celebration!

Call or fax (916) 758-1286, or 800-425-5001 for a registration form. Registration is \$12 per adult for a one-day pass, or just \$18 for a full weekend pass. Children 16 and under are admitted free, and the Exhibit Hall is free to the public. Registration is also available during the festival at the Veterans Center.

### TIME TO GET STARTED ON THE '97 BIG YEAR

For the fun of it, how many birds did you think you can see in San Joaquin County in one year? 150? 200? Well, here's your chance. I, along with the San Joaquin Audubon Society, would like to invite all interested bird-nuts to participate in a big year shoot-out. For what purpose? First for the fun. Secondly for the education, and thirdly, for competition.

Everyone is invited to participate, no matter what their birding abilities. Everyone will have a legitimate chance to compete and win. We will go over strategies and ways to help you achieve your bird counting goals. However, this will be a REAL competition with rules, etc. You will not be competitive if you are not willing to get out at least monthly and have a goal of at least 150 species. If you are interested, give me a call and I will send you more information including strategies which should go far to help you reach your goal. But remember, we start January 1, 1997!

Sincerely, David Yee: 365-1526

p.s. Our field trips are designed to help too!

### CRANING FOR SANDHILLS:

Enjoy magnificent flocks of sandhill cranes coming to roost at the California Department of Fish and Game's Woodbridge Ecological Reserve near Galt. A series of 2.5 hr, naturalist led public viewings to two properties (including one that is normally closed) are scheduled the first and third Thursdays and Sundays, through Mar. 6, all late afternoons. Registration is required by calling (916) 358-2353. A \$5. donation per person is requested. Trips do fill quickly, so call early. Other birds typically seen are stilts, raptors, waders, shrike, swans, and songbirds.

### GUIDED WALKS: COSUMNES PRESERVE

9am Willow Slough Nature Trail. Sun 1/26, 2-1, 2-23. Lost Slough Wetlands Boardwalk and Nature Trail. Sat 1/18, & 2-15 from 9 to noon. For more information and confirmation call 916 684-2816.

### STONE LAKES NATL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Winter Wildlife: Sat. Feb 8, 10 to 12:30am. Open Touring Day. Sun Feb 9 10am to 2pm, explore at your pace. Elk Grove Blvd west of I-5 Information 916/979-2085 ex135

### SAN JOAQUIN AUDUBON T-SHIRTS

Medium, large and extra-large 100% preshrunk cotton shirts are what you have been waiting for! The unique design of a Swainson's Hawk on its nest is by noted wildlife artist Keith Hansen. The shirts are \$11 each or 3 for \$30. Call 473-3904 or come to any General Meeting or board meeting. Get yours now to be ready for next summer.



Sandhill Cranes  
*Grus canadensis*

### NEW FIELD GUIDE!

The well known authors of the Stokes Nature Guides have come out with an excellent new field guide, The Stokes Field Guide to Birds. It is very well organized with all the information about a single species on the same page. It has the best and most useful photos of birds yet found in a bird field guide.

Check out the Western Edition of this useful book, or ask your editor about how to obtain a copy.

### NOTES RECEIVED: BIRD FESTIVALS

#### MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

January 17-20, Morro Bay, Ca.

Suedene Nelson: (800) 231-0592

#### SALTON SEA INTERNATIONAL BIRD FEST.

February 14-17. Salton Sea, Imperial Valley. 619 344-3160

DUCK DAYS DAVIS; FEB 14-16

Register/Schedule: 758-1286

MIGRATION CELEBRATION: Lake

Jackson Texas. Apl. 10-13.

1-800-725-1106

GODWITT DAYS; ARCATA 4-18/20

Information: 707 822-3619 or

1-800-9464

(for more info contact 4652729)

### NOTICES RECEIVED: Bird Tours

#### Classes, Conventions.

Birds of the Pribilofs: St. Paul Island

Tour. (May 27 through August 28)

Golden Trout Natural History

Backpack camp, Week sessions in

June and July.

Birding Tours of Canada. "Eagle-Eye

Tours". May to British Columbia,

also Chile, High Arctic Churchill

U.C. Extension: Winter Birds, A

Weekend at Salton Sea.

Copper Canyon Lodge, Mexico

Winter Bird Trips

Costa Rica Summer Field School

Diversity, Ecology & Behavior of

Neotropical Birds. & other courses

Annual Convention: North American

Bluebird Society, May 15-18 in

Newport Beach

Gadabout Tours: Montana with Jack

Wiborn, Cape May with Todd Easterla

U.C. University Research Expeditions

Program: Study Brown Pelicans, Foxes

of the Channel islands, Rain Forest etc

For more information on any of these

call your Editor at 465-2729

## A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Featured in the Record one Saturday morning were several members of San Joaquin Audubon participating in the 97th Christmas Bird Count. We have been doing a Stockton Count since 1968 when it was started by Doris Shanks. The Wallace-Bellota Count was started the following year. During the three weekends of this event, surveys are completed in all 50 states, Canada, Central and South America and several Pacific islands. Data from these surveys provide biological information on bird population trends for these regions. Historically, the first event occurred in 1900 when conservationists proposed an alternative to the annual "side hunt" occurring each Christmas. The highlight of the side hunt was a prize awarded to the team that killed the most birds and other wildlife. You can imagine what destruction would occur if these hunts still occurred. Participating in that first bird count were groups from Pacific Grove California as well as others from 12 states and 2 Canadian provinces. Although the Christmas Bird Count, unlike the "side hunt", is not destructive to wildlife, birds are being killed in large numbers from pesticides as reported in "Silent Scourge", Audubon, January 1997. There is mounting evidence that many of the EPA approved herbicides and pesticides used on lawns and gardens are killing birds. This occurs despite the pleas to EPA from representatives of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service based upon evidence of an estimated 67 million birds killed each year from pesticide use. DDT was banned, not because of the near extinction of bald eagles and peregrine falcons, but because NIH, in 1971 reported finding DDT in 100% of tested human samples. Does the EPA view humans as biologically dissimilar to other living organisms? Now, not later, is the best time to review detrimental pesticide effects. Read the "Silent Scourge" and let your voice be heard!

Thanks to everyone who participated in the two county Christmas Bird Counts and to Jim Rowoth, Kasey Foley, Waldo Holt, and David Yee for their organizing efforts.



### Stockton Audubon Society

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>>Joint membership in the National Audubon Society includes a subscription to both Audubon magazine and The Hoot Owl. Make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to Dennis Smith 1253 S. Tuxedo Stockton, Ca. 95204. Send renewals directly to the National Audubon Society.

---\$35 individual---\$38 family---\$20 student---\$21 senior. \$23 senior family  
---\$50 sustaining---\$250 contributing---\$1,500 life---\$5newsletter (non-member)

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**STOCKTON AUDUBON SOCIETY**  
236 West Knoles Way  
Stockton, CA. 95204

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