

THE HOOT OWL



January / February 2011
Issue 1, Volume 49

San Joaquin Audubon Society
Affiliated with the National Audubon Society-California

PROGRAMS

The meeting location is at Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue (across from UOP) in Stockton, and begins at 7:30 p.m. Plenty of parking and refreshments. Everyone is welcome.

There will be no general membership meeting in January, 2011.

TUESDAY, February 8

Jim Rowoth

"Birding in Central America"

Please join the San Joaquin Audubon Society for a program presented by Jim Rowoth where we look at both "ends" of Central America. The program will cover several well-known birding hotspots in and around the former Canal Zone and Panama City. It will also cover Panama east of the canal, particularly the Darien province, which borders Colombia with lots of photos. Jim will also show some photos of the spectacular Mayan ruins and birds from his "quick trip" to Tikal in Guatemala.

Tuesday, February 8, 2011

Jim Rowoth grew up in the tropics (Missouri--if you've spent a summer there, you'll know what he means), lived in the Midwest including 4 yrs in Washington, DC until he moved to Stockton in 1982. Jim has always been aware of the birds around him even as a kid, but never really started actively observing birds until he joined the San Joaquin Audubon Society in 1987. Jim took naturally to birding and loves the whole experience of it--not just color and shape, but observing how they interrelate with each other and their environment and the audio aspect as well. He is a great traveler and loves to explore new places and get exposure to new natural communities and their birds. Jim's first international birding trip was in 1989 when he traveled to Ecuador for a month--two weeks in Galapagos and one week in the rain forest. Since that time, he's been to Spain and France, several different parts of Mexico, Costa Rica, and just this past January to Panama and in October on a very brief trip to Guatemala. Because Jim is not a fan of photography, he generally relies on others to take pictures for him as in the Panama presentation, but since the Guatemala trip was not with his "birding buds" he felt compelled to give photography another chance.

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, January 1—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

Join leader Jim Rowoth (956-2648 or rowoth@sbcglobal.net) 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.

SUNDAY, January 2—*Wallace-Bellota Christmas Bird Count*

This is your opportunity to start your New Year out right! Join us in our search for birds large and small, found in fields, on fence lines, or along the river. We can use your help even if you have NEVER done this before. The more eyes the better! This is a fulfilling experience for birders of all levels. Plus we need the help! Contact kaseyfoley@sbcglobal.net to sign up.

SATURDAY, January 8—*Cosumnes River Preserve*

Leader John Schick conducts bird census walks through this excellent habitat on a monthly basis. The walk covers about four miles and, at a leisurely pace, should take approximately five hours, so be sure to bring a lunch and liquids. Meet John at the visitor center at 7:00 a.m. To get there, take I-5 north to Twin Cities Rd., go east to Franklin Blvd., then south on Franklin to the visitor center. Please call John in advance at 464-8304 to confirm date and time.

SATURDAY, January 29—*Galt Winter Bird Festival*

Join us for the 4th annual Galt Winter Bird Festival. A youth art show, birding tours, presentations, guest speakers, vendors, and free family fun. See article on page 2.

SUNDAY, January 30—*Stockton Rural Cemetery*

This beautiful and historic cemetery is a good place to look for over-wintering migrants, irruptives, and winter residents alike. Join leader Jim Rowoth at the entrance at the N end of Cemetery Lane at 8:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, February 5—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

See entry for Saturday, January 1. Join leader Kurt Mize at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi at 8:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, February 12—*Stockton Sewage Ponds Wetlands*

Join leader Jim Rowoth (956-2648 or rowoth@sbcglobal.net) for this visit to the Stockton wastewater treatment facility wetlands area. Stockton was one of the first cities in the country to use this economical and environmentally friendly method for tertiary treatment of municipal wastewater. Meet in the parking lot at Toot Sweet's (northwest corner of March Ln. and Quail Lakes Dr.) at 8:00 to carpool.

WINDMILLS & BIRDS OF PREY

Birds of prey continue to be killed by windmills at the "Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area." Many of the numerous mitigation measures recommended by the Scientific Review Committee as part of the "Avian Wildlife Protection Program" there have either never been implemented or implemented in a piecemeal manner. Neither total avian fatality rates nor fatality rates of "focal raptors" (Golden Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, and Burrowing Owl) in the area have decreased when compared with the periods 1998 to 2002 and 2005 to 2009. Some fatality rates have actually increased between the comparison periods. For the period 2005 to 2007, an estimated 65 Golden Eagles were killed annually in the area! Given that little has been done to implement substantial mitigation measures, such high fatality rates for Golden Eagles, as for other species, will likely continue.

To reduce birds deaths the existing windmills need to be replaced with fewer, larger wind turbines, and map-based technologies that incorporate information on mortality studies and species specific flight behavior and land use patterns must be implemented. Even this can't protect all species as each has its own behavior. Then too, what works to protect birds may not protect bats which are also killed by the turbines. It's either that or abandon the site.

Modified from a communication by Douglas A Bell & K. Shawn Smallwood of the Wildlife Department of the East Bay Regional Park District to Science Vol. 330, 12 November 2010

Submitted by Steve Stocking, Education Chair



Galt Winter Bird Festival

Mark your calendars for the 4th annual Galt Winter Bird Festival, to be held Saturday, January 29, 2011, at McCaffrey Middle School, 997 Park Terrace Dr., in Galt.

Many migratory and resident birds call Galt their winter home. This year's festival features a youth art show, guided tours, presentations, guest speakers, and free family fun! The Winter Bird Festival steering committee and volunteers hope that you will find this festival to be an exciting and educational opportunity to celebrate the winter birds and habitats we all call home. For more information or to register, call 209-366-7115.

San Joaquin Audubon will have a table at the festival. If you can help man the table for 2 or 3 hours, please give Dave Wagner a call at 209-943-6997.

BALD EAGLE DE-LISTING

Forty years ago the Bald Eagle seemed headed for extinction. About that time someone left the head of a mature Bald Eagle in a paper bag on our front steps with a note that it was found near Comanche Lake and had been shot. By 1963 only 417 pairs were still raising young in the lower 48 states. But the species began to bounce back when Congress banned DDT in 1972 and passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973. By 2006, there were nearly 10,000 successful breeding pairs in the lower 48 states. Now they can be seen in winter at most bodies of water in the Sierra foothills and in summer on some of our mountain lakes. This resurgence has been called one of the greatest wildlife success stories in the history of the United States.

But now that they have been removed from the Endangered Species List, some worry about enforcement of rules to protect the birds, the extent to which the populations will be monitored, and the ability of government to prevent development from encroaching on the bird's remaining habitat. The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act does give the eagles some protection but there are concerns that it is not as strong as the ESA and can allow more disturbance of habitat.

Biologists generally agree that these birds will survive if enough suitable habitat can be protected. But there is much pressure to develop some of their prime habitat, such as around Chesapeake Bay. Can state and local government control development and stop suburban sprawl into prime habitat? We will see what happens when the economy recovers.

Modified from Science Vol 316, page 1689-1690.

Submitted by Steve Stocking, Education Chair

YOSEMITE SONGBIRDS

"Yosemite's much-celebrated birdlife is changing. A UC Berkeley study has found that many Sierra species have shifted their ranges upslope during the past century, likely in response to changes in temperature and precipitation patterns. More recently researchers from The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) and the National Park Service discovered that the once common Willow Flycatcher, a diminutive gray-green songbird that brightens the soundscape of Sierra meadows with its' cheerful "Fitz-bew" song, no longer breeds in the park.

Yet these changes likely pale in comparison to changes that are expected to result from accelerating climate change in the coming decades. Assessing the effects of annual weather variation on birds, predicting the effects of future climate change, and identifying management actions that might help cushion species are critical steps for safeguarding Yosemite's bird populations. Thanks to an enduring partnership between Yosemite National Park Service and IBP, we now have the tools to do all three.

Since 1990 they have operated bird-banding stations at meadows in Yosemite as part of the continent-wide Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) Program, coordinated by IBP. Capturing, banding and releasing birds each summer enables them to produce annual indices of adult population size and reproductive success, estimate survival rates, and most importantly, assess changes in Yosemite's bird populations over time. Yosemite Conservancy has been integral in providing funding for the last few years of this study.

Preliminary results from Yosemite's MAPS stations indicate that substantial changes in populations of common bird species at Yosemite are already happening--we see significant increases in some species, such as American Robin and Mountain Chickadee, and troubling decreases in several others, including the Dusky Flycatcher and Yellow Warbler. This winter they will conduct a comprehensive analysis of 20 years of Yosemite MAPS data, using cutting-edge techniques to reveal relationships between annual weather variation and the population dynamics of Yosemite's birds. This analysis will enable researchers to make predictions about longer-term changes in bird populations that are likely to result from climate change.'

by Sarah Stock, National Park Service Wildlife Biologist in "Yosemite Conservancy". Autumn-Winter 2010

Provided by Steve Stocking, Education Chair

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Mid-October, 2010 - December, 2010
(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

On the October 16th Mokelumne fish hatchery count, Joanne Katanic, Lynette Buckman and I saw a continuing **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** in a vine near the buildings. This is very close to where Chris Conard, Kimya Lambert, and Dan Tankersley had seen one in January. A couple of **Lewis's Woodpeckers** have returned to the Mokelumne River fish hatchery. Last winter was the first time that any were consistently seen all winter. They were still present as of the Central Valley Bird Symposium, November 20th.

On October 29th, Dan Williams reported a probable **Common Tern** at the Lodi sewage ponds. Unfortunately he wasn't able to follow it as the flock of terns moved on.

During a field trip for the Lodi Crane Festival, November 6th, Tim Manolis found a late or over wintering **Wilson's Phalarope**. It was last seen the first week of December.

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New website: www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Calif. Bird Alerts

No. California	415-681-7422
Monterey	831-626-6605
Morro Bay	805-528-7182
So. California	818-952-5502
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