

# THE HOOT OWL

January / February 2012  
Issue 1, Volume 50

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

## PROGRAMS

**Please note there is no program in January.**

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

**TUESDAY, February 14**

**Bob Stahmer**

*"Birds and Blooms and ..."*

A quick and haphazard nature photo tour from some of the wildly diverse habitats in our state. Seen through the lenses of Bob's cameras, these are a smattering of subjects he finds captivating. From wildflowers to weeds, birds, insects, reptiles, mammals and fungi... all are fair game.

Bob Stahmer is a member of San Joaquin Audubon Society, the California Native Plant Society and the Mycological Society of San Francisco. He is newsletter editor of the Stockton subchapter of the California Native Plant Society.

## BIRDING 101

Jim Rowoth will again offer his beginning birding workshop, Birding 101, at Delta College this winter. The class consists of five morning sessions on alternate Saturdays starting on February 25, each of which is followed by a field trip to a local birding hotspot. We will examine the various birds found locally and some not so locally in this workshop. We will look at what makes a bird a bird and the great variety of different types found in nature, as well as their endlessly fascinating vocalizations, habits and lifestyles. We will also discuss the growing sport of bird-watching and bird-watching equipment. Participants will work on improving their abilities to find and to identify birds in both in class settings and in the field. Registration details can be found at <http://www.adultedreg.com/delta/index.cfm>; follow the link "For the Birds".

## FIELD TRIPS

**SATURDAY, January 7—*Introductory Birding Field Trip***

Join Leader Dale Smith 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, so don't be shy! Extra binoculars and field guides will be available.

**SATURDAY, January 14—*Cosumnes River Preserve***

Join leader Jim Rowoth (956-2648 or [rowoth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rowoth@sbcglobal.net)) for the monthly River Walk bird count at this always-productive preserve in southern Sacramento County. Meet Jim at the visitor center on Franklin Rd. at 7:00 a.m.

**SUNDAY, January 15—*Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery***

Join leader Liz West for her monthly census of this beautiful little riparian area below Comanche dam. Meet Liz at the fish hatchery parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

**SATURDAY, January 21—*Woodbridge Wilderness Area***

Join leader Jim Rowoth (956-2648 or [rowoth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rowoth@sbcglobal.net)) for our monthly census of this beautiful little undeveloped park on the banks of the Mokelumne River. Meet Jim at the north end of Meadowlark Ln., off of Woodbridge Rd., in the town of Woodbridge at 8:00 a.m.

**MONDAY, January 23—*Calaveras County Ponds and Lakes***

Join leader Steve Stocking ([snlsox@earthlink.net](mailto:snlsox@earthlink.net)) for this morning visit to Calaveras County hot spots. Meet Steve at the Starbucks in Valley Springs at 8:30 a.m. Good Thai food for lunch in Valley Springs if you are so inclined!

**SATURDAY, January 28—*Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area***

Join leader Dave Wagner on this winter birding trip to the waterfowl preserve at Gray Lodge Refuge west of Live Oak, CA. Meet Dave at 7:30 a.m. at Toots Sweets at March Lane and Quail Lakes Dr. for car pooling. Or meet us at Gray Lodge at 10 a.m. Questions call Dave at 943-6997.

**SATURDAY, February 4—*Introductory Birding Field Trip***

See entry for Saturday, January 7. Join leader Lorna Elness at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi at 8:00 a.m.

**SATURDAY, February 18—*Woodbridge Wilderness Area***

See entry for Saturday, January 21. Join leader Susan Schneider at the north end of Meadowlark Ln., in Woodbridge at 8:00 a.m.

**SATURDAY, February 25—*Panoche Valley***

Join leader Terry Ronneberg (835-7847) for a trip to this Important Bird Area. Meet Terry at 8:00 a.m. at the Park 'N' Ride at the entrance to the Tracy Outlet Mall at MacArthur and Pescadero in Tracy. Please call Terry if you have any questions.

## BIRD OBSERVATIONS FROM 1850: AROUND CAPE HORN: THE JOURNAL OF GEORGE HENRY SANDERSON

It is difficult to determine, based on the descriptions and the names of the birds in 1850, what they would be called today. I will give it a try and you let me know what you think.

On Thursday, February 28, 1850, the following was reported. "Last night a man-of-war's hawk lighted on the quarter deck where we were sitting. We caught him and examined him. His body was about the size of a partridge; he measured seven and a half feet from tip to tip, and four feet from the end of his bill to the end of his tail; his bill was very long and hooked; his feet were not webbed; he had a black back and white breast and smelled like a buzzard." (Magnificent Frigatebird?)

"About two hours later, a 'bobby' lit on our foretop-gallant yard, and was soon sound asleep." "His body was almost the size of a hen's, had a white head, quite a long sharp bill, wings of six feet, was web-footed." (Booby, but which one?)

"This afternoon, seeing some strange birds, I baited my hook with pork and soon caught one. It looked something like an albatross, but only about half the size, It was as large as a good sized goose." This was off the Mexican coast. (Shearwater?)

(from News & Notes of the San Joaquin County Historical Society & Museum. 9-2011)

## IN OTHER AVIAN NEWS

### Let's Give Willow Flycatchers a Fair Chance

by Lisa Cutting

The population of Willow Flycatchers at Mono Lake is declining after a complete breeding failure in 2008. The primary source of the low breeding success is the abundance of Brown-headed Cowbirds (hiss!) that parasitize the Willow Flycatcher nests on Rush Creek. Cowbirds have increased in the Mono Basin as a result of backyard bird feeding. A program has been started to have people feed from thistle "socks" which Cowbirds can't access. (Mono Lake Newsletter. Winter-Spring 2010 pg 6-7)

## YOUTUBE BIRD BOOGIE

You may have seen the dancing Sulfur-crested Cockatoo on "YouTube". It was actually listening to and following the beat of a "Backstreet Boys" tune as it bobbed its head and lifted its feet. This behavior challenges the notion that only humans have the neural wiring for dancing in time to music. (Science Vol 324. May 8<sup>th</sup> 2009)

Provided by Steve Stocking, Education Chair

### *San Joaquin Audubon lost several members this past year that we would like to remember:*

- **Nancy Greenwood:** Stockton Audubon Society Officer, longtime Audubon Society member and supporter, long time Hospitality Chair, and CBC Team Leader.
- **Cheri Pillsbury:** San Joaquin Audubon Society board member, CBC Team Leader, sjbirds yahoo listserve Moderator, and advocate for disabled birders.
- **Ed Wager:** Stockton Audubon Society Past President, Wallace-Bellota CBC Compiler and Team Leader, Chapter Field Trip Chair, Audubon Science Camp Scholarship supporter, and field trip leader.
- **John Schick:** CBC Team Leader, led monthly Cosumnes River Preserve bird counts for more than 20 years, long time San Joaquin Audubon Society member, Board member, and officer, GM presenter, and field trip leader.

## Great Grey Owl Habitat Enhancement (USDA FOREST SERVICE SOPA)

To implement this project in Stanislaus National Forest, artificial nest structures are being created in suitable areas at various locations on Calaveras, Mariposa and Tuolumne Counties. This is being done to increase the habitat value of certain areas for this "sensitive", rare and "locally important" species.

Have you seen other nest platforms which have been erected atop poles in Calaveras county for nesting Bald Eagles and Osprey? They can be seen on Highway 12 near Wallace and near Angels Camp on Highway 49.

Provided by Steve Stocking, Education Chair

## California Condor named 2011 Bird of the Year

One of the world's rarest and most imperiled birds today has been named the 2011 Audubon California Bird of the Year. The California Condor received the designation after it received nearly 35 percent of votes cast during an online poll this fall. Although the bird can be found in several southwestern states and in Mexico, it is a distinct part of California's natural heritage – so much so that it is depicted on the California version of the U.S. quarter.

The California Condor is among the most majestic birds to ever take flight. One of the largest flying birds in the world, its wingspan can reach more than nine feet.

The California Condor has been in sharp decline for more than 100 years. It was first listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in 1967, and in the mid-1980s reached a low of 22 individual birds. Since then, an aggressive captive breeding and release program by a group of government agencies and nonprofit organizations has built the population up to 394 total birds, 205 of which are in the wild.

Audubon's involvement in the preservation of this important species began back in the 1930s and continues with Audubon California's work today. In 2007, Audubon California led the effort to reduce the risk of contamination from spent lead ammunition in the condor's historical range. More recently, the organization has been working with regulators and wind generators to ensure that measures are taken to protect California Condors from risks posed by wind turbines.

Nearly 10,000 votes were cast in this year's Bird of the Year poll. The California Condor received 34.6 percent of the votes, narrowly beating out the lesser-known Black Oystercatcher, which received 33.6 percent. A distant third was the Western Snowy Plover with 8.7 percent and the Sandhill Crane with 8.1 percent.

### BIRD SIGHTINGS

*October 17, 2011 - December 20, 2011*  
*(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)*

Submitted by Liz West

On a November 7th visit to the Lodi Sewage Ponds, Ed Harper found a **Brown Pelican** and a **Least Tern**.

Matt Brady found a **Brown Pelican** in the canal next to the Recology dump on Gaffery Rd., November 14<sup>th</sup>, it then joined the gulls at the gravel pit pond along Koster Rd.

On a November 18<sup>th</sup> Central Valley Bird Symposium field trip, Jon Dunn found a **Red-breasted Merganser** at the Shin Kee Wetlands. On December 1<sup>st</sup>, David Yee had a female plumaged **Red-breasted Merganser** in the Turning Basin for the Port of Stockton. It was last reported in the Turning Basin on December 15<sup>th</sup>.

Cory Gregory saw a pair of **Barrow's Goldeneyes** in the canal between Staten and Bouldin Islands on November 28<sup>th</sup>. On December 2<sup>nd</sup> Cory was only able to find the female.

Terry Ronneberg found a **Cassin's Kingbird** in the northwest corner of the Tracy Sewage ponds December 7<sup>th</sup>. It is possibly a first December record for San Joaquin County. It was last reported December 9<sup>th</sup> on the old Holly Sugar Mill property.

Matt Brady found a **Pacific Loon** in the gravel pit pond along Koster Rd, November 19<sup>th</sup>. On December 10<sup>th</sup> John Sterling reported the continuing **Pacific Loon** in the gravel pit pond along Koster Rd. At the Recology dump on Gaffery Rd. there were 4 or 5 **Western Gulls** and around 8 **Glaucous-winged Gulls** December 10<sup>th</sup>.

On the Stockton Christmas bird count on December 18<sup>th</sup>; Frances Oliver and Joanne Katanic found a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** at the Micke Grove golf course. Also during the count, David Yee found a **Swamp Sparrow** on Venice Island. Liz West and Jerre and Sue Murphy saw a pair of **Hooded Mergansers** at Tracy Lake during the Stockton count.

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*New website:* [www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org](http://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
Santa Barbara	805-964-8240
Los Angeles	323-874-1318
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Joint membership in National Audubon and San Joaquin chapter includes a subscription to both *Audubon* magazine and *The Hoot Owl*. Make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to:

San Joaquin Audubon C1ZC220Z  
Attn: Membership  
P.O. Box 7755  
Stockton, CA 95267

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