

# THE HOOT OWL



July / August 2011  
Issue 4, Volume 49

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

## PROGRAMS

There will be no general membership meetings during our regular summer hiatus (May through August). The next general membership meeting will be Tuesday, September 13.

### DO YOU REMEMBER?

In 1991 The Land Utilization Alliance presented a "Quality of Life Award" for Wildlife Preservation to Waldo Holt. These awards were given yearly for a few years to Central Valley residents who had excelled in the improvement of environmental quality. Waldo, as Conservation Chair of the San Joaquin Audubon Society, authored a study of Swainson's hawks in the Stockton Area. The survey and Waldo's continuing efforts contributed to the incorporation of mitigation for the loss of Swainson's hawks, a threatened species, and their habitat by development.

Waldo was a tireless fighter for other threatened and endangered species and to limit further loss of prime habitat in this area through irresponsible development. He stated that; "this is the critical time for the Central Valley, with its unique wildlife. We must protect it at all costs or it will be lost forever."

Waldo was saluted for his work with Swainson's hawks, his keen birder's instinct, and his enduring love for the other animals we share the planet with. Waldo also lent his support and words of wisdom in support of natural resource protection that was being considered as part of the County Draft General Plan and later for the Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan.

Steve Stockton, Education Chair

### 4th Annual Waldo Music Fest

Please note that the 4th Annual Waldo Music Fest, a fundraiser for the Waldo Holt San Joaquin Conservancy, has been rescheduled to September 10, from 3:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., at 3536 Rainier Ave., on the banks of the San Joaquin River in Stockton. For more information, visit the website at:

<http://www.waldoconservancy.org>

## FIELD TRIPS

### SATURDAY, July 2—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

Join leader Dave Wagner 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.

### WEDNESDAY, July 6—*Tuolumne County*

Come beat the heat and join Joanne Katanic & Frances Oliver for this mid-week hike along the Confidence/South Fork Rd. in Tuolumne Co. The route is along an old railroad grade and has a variety of vegetative communities which leads to a good variety of birds adapted to the 4300 ft elevation. Bring lunch, water, and wear comfortable walking shoes. Meet at the Starbucks in the Morada Raley's Shopping Center just off Hwy 99 & Exit 259 (Morada Lane) by 6:30 a.m. If you need to make alternate meeting plans please contact Joanne at 369-1882, or [joanne.katanic@yahoo.com](mailto:joanne.katanic@yahoo.com)

### THURSDAY, July 14—*White Slough*

Join leader Jim Rowoth ([rowoth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rowoth@sbcglobal.net)) for an evening stroll under the full moon at this state wildlife area just west of the Lodi Sewage Ponds. Even if the afternoon temperatures are boiling, we can expect the delta breeze to kick in and cool us down. Meet at 6:00 p.m. at the Flag City McDonald's (Hwy 12 and I-5).

### SATURDAY, July 16—*Woodbridge Wilderness Area*

Join leader Jim Rowoth 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.

### SUNDAY, July 17—*Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery*

Join leader Liz West for her monthly census of the riverside park and day use area below Comanche dam. Meet Liz at the fish hatchery parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

### SUNDAY, July 31—*Tracy Sewage Ponds*

Join leader Terre Ronneberg for this visit to one of his favorite haunts. Directions: From I-5 either north or south, take I-205 west to the first Tracy exit, which is MacArthur Blvd. Turn right and head north to the first cross street, which is Arbor Rd. Turn left on Arbor and pull off and park on the north side of the road. Terre will meet the group there at 8:00 a.m. For more info contact Terre at 835-7847 or on his cell at 610-8060.

### SATURDAY, August 6—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

Join leader Liz West 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.

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## New San Joaquin River Birding Trail Map celebrates valley's natural beauty

**Free resource is available from Audubon chapters and locations throughout the San Joaquin Valley**

Emeryville, CA – The San Joaquin River area is home to some of the state's most spectacular birds, and a new map is now available to help you find the best places to spot them. The map – available free of charge at locations throughout the San Joaquin Valley – was produced by Audubon California and a number of partners to celebrate the spectacular natural resources of this area.

The large full-color foldout map details nearly 50 prime birding locations along the San Joaquin River, and includes lifelike bird illustrations by noted artist Keith Hansen. Site descriptions include species lists, hiking trails, driving routes, bicycle access, viewing platforms, disabled access and much more.

“From Sandhill Cranes to Yellow-billed Magpies to Pileated Woodpeckers, the San Joaquin River is home to some of California's most spectacular birds,” said Graham Chisholm, executive director of Audubon California. “Our goal in putting together this map was to not only celebrate these birds, but to also help people enjoy them.”



The maps are currently available free of charge through local Audubon chapters. You can also find them at Caswell Memorial State Park, Millerton Lake State Recreation Area, George Hatfield State Recreation Area, San Luis and San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuges, Mendota and Los Banos Wildlife Areas, and the San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust's River Center in Fresno. Local chambers of commerce in Fresno, Modesto, and Stockton should also have supplies.

Funding for the map was provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, California Wildlife Conservation Board, and the California Department of Water Resources, California State Parks Foundation, Central Valley Bird Club, Central Valley Joint Venture, Grassland Fund, Stanislaus Audubon Society, PRBO Conservation Science and The Nature Conservancy.

### Field Trips

*(Continued from Page 1)*

#### **SATURDAY, August 20— Woodbridge Wilderness Area**

Join leader Jim Rowoth for our monthly census of this small "wilderness" 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.

#### **SATURDAY, August 27—Local Shorebirds**

Join leader David Yee for a local shorebirding field trip. We will start out at the Lodi Sewage Ponds and go from there. Meet at the park and ride at I-5 and Hwy 12 at 8:00 a.m. For more information, please contact David at [birdmanyee@gmail.com](mailto:birdmanyee@gmail.com) or 209-329-5490.

#### **SUNDAY, August 28— Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery**

Join leader Liz West for her monthly census of the riverside park and day use area below Comanche dam. Meet Liz at the fish hatchery parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

#### **SUNDAY, August 28— Buckley Cove**

Join leaders Virginia and Kathy Bonham for a visit to this small but productive pocket of habitat on the banks of the Stockton deep water channel. Meet at the Buckley Cove sign at the west end of March Lane at 8:00 a.m. for an easy walk over a level surface. We should observe fall migrants, the return of the marsh birds, plus the regulars. For more information, contact Virginia at [bonhamtwin@att.net](mailto:bonhamtwin@att.net).

## Agreements with California farmers seal protection of rare Tricolored Blackbird colonies

Emeryville, Calif. – Through negotiated agreements in early May with farmers in Central California and Riverside County, Audubon California has secured the safety of several large colonies of rare Tricolored Blackbirds. In all, the agreements resulted in the protection of the breeding production of at least 50,000 birds, which constitutes more than 10 percent of the species' global population.

“More than 95 percent of the world’s Tricolored Blackbirds live in California, so we have a special responsibility to protect them,” said Graham Chisholm, executive director of Audubon California. “This shows what private landowners can do to help a declining species and make a big conservation impact. Their willingness to help has been inspiring.”

In the early 20th Century, Tricolored Blackbird flocks numbered in the millions, but since then the population has declined to fewer than 400,000 today. The reasons for this decline are many, but the loss of wetlands and grasslands in southern California and the Central Valley is the main issue.

With the loss of native habitat, the species has become dependent on agricultural lands, with most of the largest colonies nesting in grain fields. Because Tricolored Blackbirds nest in just a few huge colonies, a farmer harvesting a field unknowingly might wipe out a huge portion of the entire species' young in just a few minutes. Audubon California negotiates with farmers to delay the harvesting of these fields, compensating the farmers for the loss of value of their crops that might result from the delay.

This spring, Audubon California sealed three such agreements. We also paid another farm near a colony for grain to feed one of the protected colonies, so that the birds wouldn't reduce the value of neighboring crops. Lastly, Audubon California also negotiated an agreement with a Kern County duck club to water its marsh habitat during the spring, which helped to support a 5,000-bird breeding colony.

While Audubon California has facilitated the agreements, most of the funding has been through the California Department of Fish and Game. In one instance, however, Audubon California used revenue from a special fundraising campaign to save a particularly valuable colony in Riverside County. Revenue from Audubon California's online 5 dollars/5 birds Campaign went to pay a farmer in Riverside County to delay cutting a 30-acre field holding 4,000 birds. This colony represents more than 70 percent of Tricolored Blackbirds in Southern California, where the population has been plummeting in recent years.

“I want to thank everyone who took action to help us work with farmers to save Tricolored Blackbird nests,” said Chisholm. “It's a simple step that made a big difference.”

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

*May, 2011 - June 14, 2011*

*(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)*

Submitted by Liz West

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, David Yee found a breeding-plumaged **Willlet** at the Lodi Sewage ponds. He also saw a **Solitary Sandpiper** in a flooded vineyard at Heritage Oak Winery, along the Mokelumne River.

Terry Ronneberg saw a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at the Tracy Sewage Ponds on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

Before the start of the May 14<sup>th</sup> annual picnic, Susan Schneider and Lorna Elness saw a **Yellow-breasted Chat** at the Mokelumne River day use area. Some of the attendees heard it later in a different location.

During a May 16<sup>th</sup> visit to the Tracy Sewage Ponds, Terry Ronneberg and Walt McInnis had an adult **Western Gull** on one of the levees. Terry saw it again May 18<sup>th</sup>.

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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

*(Renewals should be mailed directly to National Audubon per renewal notice.)*

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