



# THE HOOT OWL

SAN JOAQUIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

MARCH-APRIL 1997 VOL. 35 #2

Saturday Mar. 1. Cosumnes Preserve Bird Census. Call John Schick for details at 464-8304. 6:30 at Willow Slough trailhead.

Tuesday, March 11. **MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM; Urban Nesting Swainson's Hawks**. Professor Sid England of UC Davis will give us a very enlightening talk on urban nesting Swainson's Hawks here in the Central Valley. He will make special note of the birds that have nested in downtown Stockton, utilizing the valuable information collected by our own Waldo Holt. He will also touch on their conservation and their plight in Argentina. 7:30 at Central Methodist Church on Pacific Ave., across from U.O.P. Parking, refreshments, t-shirts, big list talk.

Saturday, March 22. **PACE PRESERVE FIELD TRIP**. Meet Waldo Holt at 7:30 am near Toot Sweets in parking lot at NE corner of I-5 & March Lane. 2 hr. walk around the preserve on Elmwood Tract. Wear boots, see a bittern, hear rails. HRC.

Saturday, April 6. Cosumnes Preserve Bird Census. Call John Schick for details at 464-8304. 6:30 at Willow Slough Trailhead.

Tuesday, April 8. **MEMBERSHIP MEETING; The Wildlife Splendors of India** 7:30 at Central United Methodist Church on Pacific Ave. Beth Hunning of Audubon's Richardson's Bay Refuge in Tiburon will give a presentation on her recent trip to the amazing Indian Subcontinent. In addition to talking about the superb wildlife of the country, she will talk about its fascinating culture and present day conservation issues. 7:30 at Central United Methodist Church on Pacific Ave. across from U.O.P. Ample parking, refreshments, t-shirts, bird talk etc.

Saturday April 19. **LODI LAKE NATURE AREA FIELD TRIP**. Meet Jim Rowoth at 7:30 at end of Laurel St. Migrations should be in full sping in this recently flooded riparian area. HRC.

Wednesday April 23. **KILN CANYON FIELD TRIP**. Meet Waldo at the entrance to Carnegie Motorcycle Park at 8:00am or near Toot Sweets in Parking Lot on NE corner of I-5 & March Lane at 7:30am. 2 hour walk in the hills of the coast range. We hope to see several species of hummingbirds, R.C.Sparrow, Canyon Wren etc. HRC

Sunday May 4. **OAK GROVE REGIONAL PARK FIELD TRIP**. This is the time of year when this local park is hopping with birds. Meet Kasey Foley at 8:00 at Burns Tower at U.O.P. campus to car pool to the park. HRC.

**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 HRC means that heavy rain cancels the trip.



## BIRDS..FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Some two dozen birders joined forces for a birding tour of eastern San Joaquin County locales on a breezy and cool Feb 23. Our first stop, the fish hatchery, produced the usual winter woodland residents. We had good looks at Downy Woodpecker and Varied Thrush; some birders saw Marsh Wren and Orange-crowned Warbler. From there is caravanned out to the pulloff just past the county line on North Camanche Parkway. The water level was down considerably, so no loons or grebes were visible, but on the nearby lock levee we were able to pick out a pair of Rock Wrens. The highlight of this stop was the adult Bald Eagle perched in a tree far off on the San Joaquin county shore.

Following lunch back at the fish hatchery park we tried the Johnson-Acampo-Cord Rd loop. This involves a tricky ford for light-weight vehicles, but we plowed through. There were no new birds for most of this drive, but just after turning north on Cord Rd, we spotted a pair of stunning Lewis' Woodpeckers. The light was perfect, and we were looking down on them from the hillside.

The hoped for Vesper Sparrows failed to show, and the recently famous Hood Merganser pond was filled with Gadwalls. South we headed for Waverly Rds/ via Southworth and Ospital Rds; Terry Ronneberg reported an early W. Kingbird as we whizzed by--sorry TR, but that is out of the county! Back in San Joaquin, the lead vehicles got glimpses of Mountain and Western Bluebirds. Once on Shelton Rd, just before the intersection with Waverly, we pulled over where there had been recent reports of Hooded Mergansers--and right on cue, there they were!

Waverly Rd itself was somewhat disappointing, although we did get a Prairie Falcon. So we called it a day and everyone went their separate ways. Despite less than ideal weather, good birds were had by all!

### NOTES RECEIVED: BIRD FESTIVALS

GREAT LOUISIANA BIRD FEST: Mar 21-23  
St Tammany Parish 1-800-634-9443  
ext 150. Field trips to wildlife refuges.

MIGRATION CELEBRATION: Lake Jackson  
Texas. Apl. 10-13. 1-800-725-1106.

THIRD ANNUAL HERON DAYS: Apl. 12  
Anderson Marsh State Historic Park,  
Clear Lake, Boat Tours, Field Trips.  
707 263-9544 or 800 525-3743.

GODWIT DAYS: ARCATA: Ap18/20  
Information: 707 822-3618 A BIRD  
festival with many field trips, \$25.

CONT.....

KERN RIVER FESTIVAL; Kernville Ca.  
Apl 25-27. 619 376-2629.

GRAYS HARBOR SHOREBIRD FESTIVAL  
Hoquiam Wash. April 25-27. Fieldtrips  
to refuges & lectures, Shorebirds!  
360-3101 or 360-1245.

DETROIT LAKES FESTIVAL OF BIRDS  
May 16-18 Minnesota lakes, a 3 day  
celebration of migration.

### J.J. Audubon's Western Journal

In November of 1849 Audubon and his party reached San Diego after having left New York in January. In southern California the first birds mentioned in his diary are "hundreds of gadwalls and bald-pates on a pond on the way to Los Angeles.

Several days later they reached the "Tulare Valley where....."..."for the first time, I saw the Lewis woodpecker, and Steller's jay in this country. I have seen many California vultures and a new hawk, with a white tail and red shoulders." (ed note...what hawk?) Audubon commented on the indian method of acorn preparation and on the immense herds of antelope and elk seen near the San Joaquin River. They viewed "thousands of geese" and ate elk, geese, and two Sandhillcranes. Later they counted a thousand elk and were hounded by wolves.

### AUDUBON COMES TO STOCKTON; DEC '49

More than ten days after leaving Los Angeles Audubon and his '49er friends reach Stockton. They stayed at French Camp and went into Stockton on a "...dark dismal night, wind blowing and rain falling in torrents." He described our fair city as a "...mushroom town of skeleton houses and tents, with every class of dwelling from log cabin with rush roof, to the simple blanket spread to shelter the hardy miner, is situated like Houston, Texas, on an elevated flat, so level, that the water lying after every shower, makes the mud as deep as I ever saw it on the rich levees of Louisiana in winter. I find the climate much the same as Louisiana, but without the beautifully luxuriant vegetation of that country, and from all accounts it is quite healthy, except that the high mountains here give a pleasant retreat in summer from the diseases incident to that season." They took a short steamer trip to San Francisco and returned to Stockton on December 30th. Little note was made of birds or other wildlife as the point of the trip was not collecting birds, but gold. (provided by Ester Milnes)

## FERAL CATS IN PARKS

If you are interested in observation of birds in our local parks, consider this information provided by U.C. Davis researchers.

Cats are capable predators. They may affect populations not only of their prey (Songbirds, quail, fieldmice etc) but also of native predators that depend on these prey.

2) The "catch, neuter, release and feed" programs will not reduce feral cat populations. Most kittens of feral cats don't survive to adulthood and a few newly abandoned cats maintain high population density.

3) Feeding feral cats, whether neutered or not, will increase local populations of cats. A dependable food source is one of the most important factors in promoting high densities of predators. This artificial food source for cats gives them an additional advantage over native predators such as hawks and owls which have to rely on only the uncertainties of fluctuating natural food resources.

4) Feral cats at a study site near Bodega Bay ranged a mile in a single day. Thus a feeding station may increase the risk of predation for birds nesting anywhere within that distance of the station.

In Wisconsin, Dr. Stanley Temple estimates that each year in that state, cats kill 19 million songbirds and 140,000 game birds. (Signpost, Ca Rangers Assn)  
(An estimated 40 million birds per year in the U.S. are killed by domestic and feral cats. Keep yours inside!)

## NOTICES RECEIVED: Bird Tours Classes, Conventions.

Stone Lakes Natl. Wildlife Refuge.

Mar. 15. Guided Tour 10 to 12 am.

San Luis Natl. Wildlife Refuge: Field  
Weekend. Mar 22-23. 826-3508.

Red Shouldered Hawk Workshop: Kern  
River Preserve. Apl 5-6. call Reed  
Tollefson 619 378-2531/

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,  
to Chile, High Arctic Churchill.

Montana Natl. Park Tour Led by Jack  
Wilburn. 7-12/7-20 916 455-  
4734 (cost etc)



**THREE**

## THE SAN JOAQUIN BIG YEAR OF 1997

To my surprise, almost 30 people have officially told me they are going all out to see as many bird species as possible during 1997.

As we approach the end of only the 2nd month of the year, I have unofficially heard that most participants are already over 100! This is serious stuff! Jim Rowoth already has his "Hit the 150" T-shirt on reserve, and is on target to joining the San Joaquin Field Ornithologists (200 species) probably by midyear! The big question is, will anyone be able to catch him by year's end for the championship?

It's definitely not too late to join in on the fun. There's a phone-tree going that informs people of all the great finds, and there are plans for impromptu gatherings. While you don't have to tell me that you're participating to be involved, by not informing me you leave yourself out of the local birding loop and any special communications that are sent out.

The following have told me that they are involved in the "shootout": Larry Abbott, Sylvia Ahn, Nancy Ballot, Ross Busher, Marc Fenner, Kasey Foley, Kathy Hieb, Waldo Holt, Joanne Katanik, Neil Kerr, Bonnie Meyer, Ester Milnes, Suga Moriwaki, Frances Oliver Rich Petersen Cheri Pillsbury, James Rexroth Juanita Ronneberg, Terry Ronneberg, Jim Rowoth, John Schick, Kathy Schick, Linda Stocking, Steve Stocking, Russ Stoddart, Gene Udwin, George Welch, Lockey Welch, Dave Wagner and Margaret Williams. (David Yee)

## **MORE NOTICES;**

Costa Rica Summer Field School

Diversity, Ecology & Behavior of  
Neotropical Birds. & other courses.

Endangered Species Conference May  
15-16 Sacramento \$195 fee. UC  
Extension: 800 752-0881

Annual Convention: North American  
Bluebird Society, May 15-18 in  
Newport Beach

Natural Communities of Northern  
California: Three Courses. U.C Extension  
April 15, Apl 29 & May 13. Call for  
info 800 752-0881.

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

**FURTHER MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT; NANCY BALLOT**

Do you recall one politicians confession of incomplete, inaccurate and unreliable statements? Perhaps this is infectious. It seems that our Congressman Mr. Pombo has caught a bad case.

In a recent mailing concerning the cause of the floods here in the Central Valley, he states, "The fact of the matter is that our levee's (?) have not been maintained because they have been deemed habitat for bugs and rodents like the Elderberry Beadle.(?)"

After the ravages of floods, the games of the special interests begin, lead by the Congressman himself. Isn't he the very same person, along with Congressman Doolittle, who lead the charge to build the Auburn Dam on the American River to "save" Sacramento from devastating floods? This sounds like the game of "Tax and Spend"! One question: why was Sacramento still dry when the flood waters peaked? The dam had not been built. What was the secret? Perhaps the Yolo Bypass did what it was designed to do which is to hold excess water during periods of high river flow.

Now Mr. Pombo proposes to build more dams and levees. His charge, that the flooding was caused by the extremist environmentlists who did not allow necessary levee repairs because of bugs and rodents like the Elderberry "Beatles", a species protected by the Endangered Species Act. Congressman Pombo, you know, we know that you are the extremist who is dedicated to the destruction of the ESA. Will your children and grandchildren revere you environmentally destructive actions or will they mourn the loss of biological diversity? Will their experience of wildlife be stuffed specimens in museums or pictures on CD ROM's taken prior to the year 2000? Will they cheer the destruction of the Endangered Species Act?

If you read your letter from Congressman Pombo, and found it to contain incomplete, inaccurate and unreliable statements, please tell him of your concerns.

Stockton

Audubon Society

President: Nancy Ballot 476-1926  
President Elect: Jim Rowoth 462-7512  
Secretary: Margaret Williams  
Treasurer: Dennis Smith  
Board Members:  
Dave Wagner  
Kasey Foley  
Esther Milnes  
Russ Stoddart  
Steve Stocking  
Conservation Chair: Waldo Holt  
Membership: Kasey Foley  
Editor: Steve Stocking  
Hospitality: Nancy Greenwood  
Programs: David Yee  
**THE HOOT OWL**  
Published 6 times a year by the **STOCKTON AUDUBON SOCIETY**. 236 West Knoles Way Stockton California 95204

>>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)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Stockton, CA.  
Permit No.450