

THE HOOT OWL

March / April 2012
Issue 2, Volume 50

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. There is plenty of parking and refreshments. Everyone is welcome.

TUESDAY, March 13

Julie Serences

"What's the Buzz About? – Solitary Bees in our Landscapes"

Did you know that there are about 1500 different species of bees other than the European honey bee in California? Come hear a presentation about the "other" bees and their place in our landscapes. You'll learn about the fascinating life cycle of solitary bees, why they are important to the ecology of our landscapes, and how we can attract them to our gardens and public spaces. We'll focus on common backyard bees. You will come away with a basic understanding of this important pollinator group and how to help them thrive.

Julie Serences is an educator with over twenty-five years of experience. She is Xerxes Partner in Pollinator Conservation, a board member of the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and a member of the North American Association for Environmental Education.

TUESDAY, April 10

Dr. Kathy Schick

"Butterflies of the Central Valley"

Please join us for a photographic journey on local butterflies of the Central Valley (and maybe the Sierra). This entertaining presentation will include the life cycle of butterflies, their food sources, and favorite hangouts. It will also prepare you for the annual Xerxes Society Butterfly Count in June sponsored by the San Joaquin Audubon Society.

Kathy is an adjunct professor of biology at Delta College and an Associate Specialist at the Museum of Entomology at UC Berkeley, and coordinates the annual Xerxes Society Butterfly Counts for San Joaquin County.

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, March 3—*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, March 17—*Woodbridge Wilderness Area*

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

SUNDAY, March 18—*Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery*

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

SATURDAY, April 7—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

See entry for Saturday, March 3. Join leader Jim Rowoth at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi at 8:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, April 15—*Calaveras County Foothill Wildflowers*

Join leader Steve Stocking (snlsox@earthlink.net) for this California Native Plant Society sponsored field trip to look for some of the common and not so common early foothill wildflowers. Meet Steve at 9:00 a.m. at the day use area parking lot along the Calaveras River below Comanche dam. We should finish by early afternoon. Suitable for beginners.

WEDNESDAY, April 18—*Kiln Canyon Hummingbirds*

Join leader John Blades for our annual mid-week visit to this hummingbird hot spot in the foothills west of Tracy. Meet in the parking lot at Toot Sweets near the northwest corner of March Lane and Quail Lakes Drive at 7:00 a.m. to carpool, or at the entrance to Carnegie SVRA (18600 Corral Hollow Rd., southwest of Tracy) at 8:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, April 21—*Woodbridge Wilderness Area*

Join leader Liz West for our monthly census of this hidden jewel of a park on the banks of the Mokelumne River. Meet Liz at the north end of Meadowlark Lane in Woodbridge at 8:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, April 22—*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.

(Continued on Page 2)

FIELD TRIPS

(Continued from Page 1)



SATURDAY, April 28—*Del Puerto Canyon*

Join leader Kurt Mize (915-6264) for this visit to scenic Del Puerto Canyon. We will be on the lookout for spring migrants and local specialties. Bring lunch and drinks as we will be picnicking at Frank Raines Park. Meet in the parking lot at Toot Sweets (corner of March Lane and Quail Lakes Dr. in Stockton) at 7:30 a.m. to carpool, or at the start of Del Puerto Canyon Rd. (just west of I-5 at the Diablo Grande Parkway/Patterson exit) at 8:15 a.m.

SUNDAY, April 29—*Stockton Rural Cemetery*

Come along with Jim Rowoth for a morning visit to the beautiful and historic Stockton Rural Cemetery. Meet him at the office inside the gates at 8:00 a.m. We'll be on the look out for neotropical migrants and resident species alike.

Birding in the Information Age

Birders of a certain age will remember that there once was a time when we relied upon word of mouth and/or calling in to various rare bird alert hot lines to find out what was being seen in our area or other areas of the state. For years now, though, most of us have been receiving our news about bird sightings, rare and otherwise, from a variety of internet resources.

These have a number of advantages. With the proliferation of "smart" phones and other portable devices, many sightings can be posted almost instantaneously. Word can be gotten out quickly to a wide audience, so that many more people are able to observe rarities before they move on.

Descriptions and photos can be immediately evaluated by experts from all over the state and around the world. The sometimes spirited discussion that is engendered by difficult-to-identify birds is both entertaining and educational. The widespread dissemination of arcane information that was once the purview of an elite few has resulted in a much-better-educated birding public. This benefits both birds and birders.

On the back page, I have listed some of the birding list-serves that are of greatest interest to birders in our area. These require you to join the group, using your e-mail address and a password. Once a member, you will receive an e-mail whenever someone posts a message to the group. You can also post your own messages. If you are not a member already, I highly encourage you to join the list-serve for San Joaquin Audubon: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sjbirds/>, and to take a look at some of the others that might interest you.

If you are interested in birds all over the state and don't have the inclination to join a number of discussion groups, you can see a real-time digest of some 100 California list-serves by going to: <http://digest.sialia.com/?region=2>.

Finally, eBird (<http://ebird.org>) is an outstanding resource for submitting observations, maintaining checklists, and exploring data and observations submitted by others. Check it out!

HELPING MIGRATORY BIRDS

California's migratory birds are a vital part of the state's natural identity. Each year, millions of birds stop over on the Pacific Flyway, making California one of the most important areas for migratory birds on the west coast of the Americas.

Audubon California is partnering with PRBO Conservation Science and The Nature Conservancy to make California a better home for migratory birds. This [Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership](#) seeks to protect, restore, and enhance lands that support bird populations in California. This partnership is working to:

- Enhance the value of agricultural lands as migratory bird habitat
- Encourage better public and private land management
- Secure reliable water for wetlands
- Apply the best science to our efforts
- Promote policy solutions that will help bolster migratory bird populations and protect and restore their habitat.

Even though California continues to be a haven for migratory birds, the state has seen a steep decline in habitat over the past 150 years. Less than 10% of the state's original wetland habitat remains today.

The Partnership is currently working in three areas.

San Joaquin Valley. The recent San Joaquin River settlement offers an unprecedented opportunity to help migratory birds in this 32,000-square-mile habitat area. We're working with farmers to protect and restore bird habitat while maintaining the area's agricultural productivity.

Sacramento Valley. This 27,000-square-mile area supports millions of shorebirds and waterfowl each year. The flooding of more than 300,000 acres of rice lands offers many benefits for these birds, and we're working with rice and other growers to maximize the conservation value of these lands.

Klamath Basin and Modoc Plateau. As we seek policy changes to pave the way for massive river restoration in the Klamath Basin, we are conserving birds by working with private landowners to employ compatible agricultural practices and through conservation easements.

For further information about Audubon California's efforts to help migratory birds, contact us at: auduboncalifornia@audubon.org.

BOOK REVIEW: SIERRA NEVADA BIRDS

Author: David Lukas

Reviewed by: Steve Stocking, Education Chair

This small paperback, subtitled “A Compact Field Guide Companion” was published last year by the author and can be obtained from him at P.O. Box 231 Big Oak Flat, Ca. 95305 for \$25.20.

To quote the author, “This book gives fully-detailed accounts for the 207 bird species that are most characteristic of the Sierra Nevada. These birds are common residents or common migrants, and can be found in reasonable numbers every year. Shorter accounts are given for an additional 115 species that are very rare visitors to the Sierra Nevada, or else breed or migrate in very limited areas.” The author has spent much of the last fifteen years in the Sierra. He has also consulted various expert birders who have done work in the area, the historic literature and the more recent on-line sources.

Lukas puts the western boundary of the Sierra at the point where Central Valley grasslands give way to the foothill oak zone, with the eastern boundary following Highway 395. He covers the entire Sierra Nevada range from Lake Almanor in the north to Tehachapi in the south. This is a very large area and the author realistically notes that “...it is important to remember that birds are individuals and there are still many patterns and behaviors that have not been discovered – described (?). It is surprising to realize how few birds have been studied in the Sierra Nevada, and in many cases almost no information exists on even the most basic aspects of bird’s lives in the Sierra Nevada”. And knowing this, he encourages discussions, contributions, and the posting of information by those who watch birds in the Sierra Nevada. He also encourages suggestions and feedback on his book and if you find errors send the information to him at david@lukasguides.com.

For each species he includes the life history, nesting, habitat, vocalization, migration, and various aspects of behavior. He also discusses what is known of the species distribution on both east and west slopes of the range. He does not include any illustrations of the birds, but this is not a field guide. It is a “companion” to the field guides and you already have at least one field guide!

I have really enjoyed using this book and suggest that you might as well. I have already sent him a few personal observations. One is that although he suggests Sandhill Cranes cross the Sierra mostly north of Donner Pass, I have observed them migrating south over San Andreas each fall as well. I have also let him know that White-tailed Kites have been breeding here for several years and that we have a resident Northern Mockingbird. He states that these are “rare and unusual” in the Sierra, breeding below the “Foothill Oak Zone”. We live at least 20 miles east of the edge of that zone. We have also had a Eurasian Collared Dove show up recently. Although David mentions that they are rarely encountered on the west slope, he does note that they are expanding their range rapidly. These observations probably just illustrate the dynamic nature of bird distribution and the need for further bird observation in the Sierra Nevada.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

December 21, 2011 - February 22, 2012
(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

Judy Kane saw a pair of **Western Tanagers** feeding in a persimmon tree in her yard on December 28th. She had seen a single tanager on December 19th.

While participating in the Wallace-Bellota Christmas bird count, December 31st, Lorna and Mark Elness found a **Hammond’s Flycatcher**. It is a first record for the circle. It was last seen January 7th.

On January 17th, Jeff Davis found a **Dusky Flycatcher** in the group campground at Caswell Memorial State Park. It was still present when he returned the next day.

During a January 29th visit to the Lodi Sewage ponds Jim Rowoth found a **Pacific Golden Plover** amongst the several hundred Black-bellied Plovers. It was last reported January 30th.

Dan Kopp saw a **California Thrasher** at Caswell Memorial State Park on New Year’s Eve.

Terry Ronneberg reported the presence of two **Western Gulls** at the gravel pit pond on Koster Rd., on February 11th.

San Joaquin Audubon Society
P.O. Box 7755
Stockton, CA 95267

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Stockton, CA
Permit #450

Address Service Requested

San Joaquin Audubon Society

Lorna Elness	President
Alan England	President-elect, Membership
Walt McInnis	Past President
Liz West	Secretary
Dennis Smith	Treasurer
Dale Smith	Director at Large
Susan Schneider	Director at Large
Jim Rowoth	Director at Large
Dave Wagner	Director at Large

Kasey Foley	Website, Programs
Steve Stocking	Education
Kurt Mize	Newsletter Editor
David Coursey	Listserve Moderator

New website: www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Calif. Birding E-mail Discussion Groups

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Calbirds>
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sjbirds/>
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central_valley_birds/
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sta_birds/
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central-sierra-birds/>
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sierra-nevadabirds/>

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.)

Introductory rate:	\$20	Student/Senior:	\$15
Basic Family;	\$35	Lifetime (ind.):	\$1000
Newsletter only: (non-member)	\$10	Lifetime (fam.):	\$1500

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address _____

The Hoot Owl is published six times a year by the San Joaquin Audubon Society.