

THE HOOT OWL



May / June 2009
Issue 3, Volume 47

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

Meetings

There will be no general membership meetings during our regular summer hiatus (May through August). The next general membership meeting will be Tuesday, September 8.

THE "BIRDING SUBCULTURE" GENRE

Possibly the idea of seeing as many species of birds as possible in a year can be traced back, as can many things birding, to the record 572 species seen by Roger Tory Peterson in 1953. It would not be long before the books started coming out about this new phenomenon.

You may have already finished one of these light reads which have become popular in the last few years. They take various forms but all are meant not to be read by "hard-core" birders but rather by those who are curious about this hobby, pastime, fascination, or as some would say, obsession. This is not to say that some birders would not read these books, particularly those by well known and respected birders such as Kenn Kaufman and Pete Dunn.

The genesis of this type of "birding" book goes back at least to "Kingbird Highway" by Kenn Kaufman which came out in 1997. His own description of what was going on was; "The Story of a Natural Obsession That Got a Little Out of Hand". Kenn was young back in the early 1960's when the new competitive type of birding really got started. That is when some expert and often young birders started lists which eventually became life lists of over 600 species. In early 1972 Kenn decided to cover the country in an effort to surpass 600 species in one "big year". Many of these competitive birders spent much time birding together. At 16 Kenn was well on his way to becoming the self trained expert who would write such books as "Lives of Birds of North America.. Another expert who writes for everyone with an interest in birding is Pete Dunn. He has written essays on birders and birding for many bird related publications. His "Tales of a Low-Rent Birder" and "More Tales of a Low Rent Birder"

(Continued on Page 3)

Field Trips

SATURDAY, May 2—Introductory Birding Field Trip

Join leader Dave Wagner for a leisurely stroll on the trails of the Lodi Lake "wilderness" area. Meet at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi (east of Lodi Lake Park off of Turner Road). Birders of all skill levels are welcome but the focus will be on birding basics.

SATURDAY, May 16—Annual Chapter Picnic

At the Mokelumne River Day Use Area/Fish Hatchery. We will start off birding at 8:00 a.m., combining our bird walk with the monthly bird census of this delightful park. The pot luck brunch will follow at approx. 10:00 a.m., so bring a dish to share. After you go in the unmanned entrance gate on your left, turn right and follow the gravel road to the end and park. We will start our walk from here.

SATURDAY, June 6—Introductory Birding Field Trip

Meet leader Jim Rowoth at 8 a.m. on Laurel Ave. next to Lodi Lake (see above for more details).

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, June 12-14—Sierra Valley

Join leaders Dave Wagner and Walt McInnis for this 2 or 3 night camping/motel outing to the magnificent Sierra Valley. The Sierra Valley and Yuba Pass areas offer great habitat for birds with many lakes, meadows, marshes, streams, rivers and trees. Call Dave Wagner or Walt McInnis for details and to RSVP. Phone # Dave: (209) 943-6997 Walt: (209) 835-8165.

We will actually meet at the The Round-up Café, Hwy 89 & 49. in the town of Sierra Valley on *Saturday* morning, June 6, at 7:30 a.m. Restaurant phone # 530-994-3704.

Recommended driving route to the area: Interstate 80 to Truckee, and north on Hwy 89 to Sierra Valley area.

Recommended campground: Cottonwood Creek Campground, about 5 miles up from Sierraville on Hwy 89 from Truckee. This campground is quiet, no reservations necessary, and has excellent birding habitat with forest, riparian, and willow marsh present as well as a nearby trail walk around and over cottonwood creek. For information on other lodging in Sierraville, call Dave.

SATURDAY, June 20—Calaveras Big Trees State Park

Join leader Kurt Mize (915-6264, k1mize@aol.com) for this visit to one of California's oldest and most beautiful state parks. We'll be on the lookout for local specialties and breeding migrants. Bring drinks, a picnic lunch, mosquito repellent, and sunscreen. We'll picnic by the river. Meet at the park in the North Grove parking lot at 8:30 a.m., or at the Country Café in Lockeford at 7:00 a.m. if you wish to carpool.

The Waldo Holt San Joaquin Wildlife Conservancy * Presents:

Bring lawn chairs & blankets!

the 2ND ANNUAL



WALDO MUSIC FEST

SATURDAY * MAY 30, 2009 * NOON-6PM
CALAVERAS RIVER BANK * 3536 RAINIER AVE. * STOCKTON



Tickets only **\$25**
available at the door or at:

*Empresso Coffeeshouse/
Empire Theatre*
1825 Pacific Ave.

Blackwater Cafe
912 N. Yosemite St.

- * Silent Auction
- * Wine & Art
- * MORE!

DIRK HAMILTON * STRINGIN' ALONG
*** WATER BROS. ***

KEEP TICKETS HOT!
 Call 979-6308 or 979-6309 or
 email info@waldocase.org
GET YOUR TICKETS NOW!

*The Waldo Holt San Joaquin Wildlife Conservancy is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the conservation legacy of Waldo Holt through the purchase of wildlife habitat. Go to <http://www.waldocase.org> for more information

Financial support for this event was provided by the California Wildlife Crossroads Fund of the Tobin Foundation.

The Rose Foundation for Communities and the Environment has set up a special fund to help the Waldo Holt Conservancy raise tax-deductible contributions to preserve sensitive habitat in San Joaquin County. Donations to this fund are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law. Make your check payable to: Rose Foundation/Waldo Holt Fund. For more info about Rose Foundation and its programs, visit www.rosefnd.org

THE “BIRDING SUBCULTURE” GENRE

(Continued from Page 1)

are fun and to be enjoyed by all except the few who take themselves and their avocation too seriously.

In case you think that Americans are the only obsessional birders you might try; “Birders: Tales of a Tribe” by Mark Crocker. He relates many interesting tales of his and others’ birding exploits in both Britain and further afield. My final recommendation from this genre is “The Big Year, A Tale of Man, Nature, and Fowl Obsession” by Mark Obmascik. In what may be one of the most extreme examples of the competitive branch of bird “listing” four expert birders made the effort to break the then current record of 721 North American species in 1998. The fun adventures they went through in this wild trip are amazing.

But don’t be tempted by the most recent book of this type; “A Supremely Bad Idea, Three Mad Birders and Their Quest to See It All” by Luke Dempsey. This 2008 book might be a good one for new birders in that it does define terms used by birders such as jiz, pishing, and birdiness. Luke and his friends travel 8 states to observe more than 400 species of birds. But I give the book an “R” rating for content, some language, and suggestive humor. Basically Luke has a potty mouth which distracts from the otherwise well written book. Try one of the others for a light read.

Submitted by Steve Stocking, Education Chair

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Mid-February - April 19, 2009

(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

Cheri Pillsbury first saw a Slate-colored Junco in early February, in her yard. On March 13th she confirmed a second Slate-colored Junco.

On March 22 Jim Rowoth and Carol Day found three female or immature Hooded Mergansers at Stillman Magee County Park.

While he was kayaking on the Mokelumne River from the fish hatchery down to the Bruella Rd. bridge, Frank Clayton saw a Long-eared Owl perched along the river on March 27th.

Jim Rowoth found a probable Bank Swallow colony April 18th in the gravel pit just outside the boundaries of Stillman Magee County Park. He saw numerous holes and about four Bank Swallows in with a flock of Cliff and Northern Rough-winged Swallows. The next day Joanne Katanic and I saw a couple of Bank Swallows.



San Joaquin County Annual Summer Butterfly Count

Saturday, June 20

Saturday, June 20, 2009, we will hold the annual San Joaquin County Summer Butterfly Count. This family-friendly field trip is a cooperative project of the San Joaquin Audubon Society, the University of California Cooperative Extension, and the North American Butterfly Association.

We will begin at 8:00 am at the Nature Center Oak Grove Regional Park and finish the count between 3:00 and 4:00 pm. No experience or expertise is required for butterfly counters, however, we encourage you to bring nets and field guides if you have them. All participants will need to bring water and lunch and should alert the count organizer, Kathy Schick (209/464-8304 or kaschick@berkeley.edu), that they plan to attend. Our count was begun 35 years ago, and we have recorded changes in butterfly species, populations and numbers in the intervening years. San Joaquin Audubon has sponsored the count as a field trip since 1986.

San Joaquin Audubon Society

Jerre Murphy President
Alan England Secretary
Dennis Smith Treasurer
Walt McInnis Conservation/President-elect
Kurt Mize Newsletter Editor
Jim Rowoth Director at Large
Lorna Elness Director at Large
Liz West Director at Large
Dave Wagner Director at Large

Kasey Foley Membership, Website
Steve Stocking Education
Sandi Schoeppe Hospitality
Cheri Pillsbury Listserve Moderator

New website: www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Calif. Bird Alerts

Central Valley 916-783-2331
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
San Diego 619-688-2473

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
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

Notice: "Newsletter only" yearly dues have increased

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

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

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