

# THE HOOT OWL

May / June 2012  
Issue 3, Volume 50

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 11.

## Working Lands

Audubon California is increasingly working with the owners and operators of working lands throughout the state to increase the value of these properties for birds and wildlife. We do this by working with landowners to modify land management practices and encouraging restoration of native habitats in these landscapes.

One of the biggest transformations in California over the last 150 years was the conversion of millions of acres of natural wetlands, grasslands, and stream-side forest to create one of the world's most productive agricultural landscapes. While this resulted in the irreparable loss of habit for birds and wildlife, the reality is that we must find ways for conservation and agriculture to coincide. Private agricultural lands encompass 25 million acres of open space in California - fully one-quarter of the state. Fortunately, we are learning that farms and ranches can be effective surrogates for natural habitats that have been lost and, when appropriately managed, can support wildlife diversity approaching that found on natural lands. Private lands are vital for a diversity of wildlife, including 60 percent of the threatened and endangered species in the U.S. The importance of private lands for birds is particularly evident. Over 200 bird species in California depend on agricultural habitats for at least part of their annual life cycle. This is not difficult to imagine when witnessing the still spectacular congregations of birds in agricultural fields of the Central Valley during migration and over the winter, where large patches of white indicate where as many as 100,000 Snow Geese have gathered in a single field.

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## FIELD TRIPS

### **SATURDAY, May 5—*Introductory Birding Field Trip***

Join leader Jim Rowoth (956-2648 or [rowoth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rowoth@sbcglobal.net)) 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. Extra binoculars and field guides will be available.

### **SUNDAY, May 6—*Caswell Memorial State Park***

Join leader Lorna Elness for this trip to one of the best examples of mature riparian oak forest left in California. It should be good for spring migrants. Insect repellent is recommended. Meet Lorna at the registration area at 8:00 a.m. Please note there is an \$8 per vehicle entry fee, so car pool if you can.

### **SATURDAY, May 12—*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. Meet in the fish hatchery parking lot (below the dam).

### **SATURDAY, May 19—*Woodbridge Wilderness Area***

Join leader Liz West for our monthly census of this beautiful little riparian area on the lower Mokelumne River. Meet Liz at the north end of Meadowlark Lane, off of Woodbridge Road, in the town of Woodbridge, at 8:00 a.m.

### **SUNDAY, May 20—*White Slough Wildlife Area***

Join leader Dale Smith at the entrance to the wildlife area at 8:00 a.m.

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

See entry for Saturday, May 5. Join leader Liz West at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi at 8:00 a.m.

### **SATURDAY, June 9—*Calaveras Big Trees State Park***

Join leader Kurt Mize (915-6264, [k1mize@aol.com](mailto:k1mize@aol.com)) for our annual 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.

### **SUNDAY, June 10—*Cosumnes River Preserve / River Walk***

Contact leader Jim Rowoth (956-2648 or [rowoth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rowoth@sbcglobal.net)) for start time and meeting location.

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## FIELD TRIPS

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

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

### **SUNDAY, June 17— 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.

### **FRI-SUN, June 22-24— Sierra Valley/Yuba Pass**

The Sierra Valley/Yuba Pass areas offer great habitat for birds with many lakes, meadows, marshes, streams, rivers and trees. Phone or email trip leader Dave Wagner to RSVP for information on motels and camping spots in the area. Dave's phone no: 209-943-6997. For those who choose to meet us Saturday Morning, we will meet at the Round-up Cafe in Sierraville at 7:30 a.m. (Dave's cell phone: 209-988-6898).

## WALK ON THE WILDSIDE!

If you'd enjoy a fun, **FREE**, family-oriented day in the country with lively entertainment and up-close and personal views of many wildlife species, mark your calendar and plan to attend **Walk on the Wildside** on Saturday, May 19, 2012. Join Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and local partners in celebrating International Migratory Bird Day and local conservation successes. The free event is held from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. near the town of Freeport, California, at the Beach Lake Picnic Area.

Event highlights include: live wild animal presentations by Wild Things, Inc., live folk music by Horse Sense, children's puppet show by Jason Adair, tours of wetlands, riparian forests, and heron rookeries, 30+ conservation exhibitors and hands-on activities, children's activity center, and food vendors. Event and parking are **FREE!** For more information, call (916) 875-9453.

## BREEDING BIRD SURVEY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Volunteers are needed to conduct roadside Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes in California during 2012. For those not familiar with the survey methodology, the BBS is the national survey which is the primary source for breeding bird population trends in North America. This survey, which began in 1966, has over 4100 randomly located roadside routes across the U.S. and Canada (and efforts are underway to expand into Mexico). Each route is 24.5 miles long with 50 stops spaced 0.5 miles apart. At each stop during a 3 minute period, the observer tallies all birds seen and heard within 1/4 mile. A route begins 30 minutes before local sunrise and continues until you finish which is normally around 10 a.m.

The route needs to be run just once each year during the months of May or June; exact dates vary with each route. The effort would involve a pre-survey scouting trip just to familiarize yourself with the route and all of the stops and a little paper/computer work after the route is completed. On average, volunteers spend about 10 hours per route each year. The main requirement for volunteering is the observer needs to be able to identify most of the birds along the route by call/song and all by sight.

California has 228 BBS routes and currently has 94 routes that are vacant. Maps showing the available routes can be found here: <http://www.pwrc.usgs.gov/bbs/results/routemaps/index.html>. The static maps can give you an idea of the general direction of the route while the interactive maps will show you the start location and a bird species list for the route (just click on the "vacant" icon).

If you are interested in volunteering for a survey route or two, please contact Lyann Comrack (contact info listed below). Thank you!!

Lyann Comrack  
California Department of Fish & Game  
Wildlife Branch – Nongame Wildlife Program  
1812 9th Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811  
916-341-6981 (Phone)  
[lcomrack@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:lcomrack@dfg.ca.gov)

# Working Lands

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Millions of waterbirds rest and feed in wetlands provided by winter flooded rice fields in the Sacramento Valley and it's estimated that 70 percent of the food needed to support the more than 5 million waterfowl wintering in the Central Valley every year is produced by private agricultural land.

## Conservation on working lands

Over the past decade Audubon California has built up its private lands work, partnering with farmers and ranchers through a number of its programs, especially our Landowner Stewardship Program based in the Sacramento Valley. Through our work with over 75 farming and ranching families in the Central Valley, Audubon has developed a reputation as a reliable partner able to help deliver habitat restoration projects on working farms and ranches. Public agencies and agricultural organizations view Audubon as an important collaborative partner and emerging leader in private lands conservation.

## Other examples of Audubon California's private lands work includes:

- Leading the Tricolored Blackbird Working Group and working with farmers to voluntarily protect this rare bird as an alternative to it being listed as an endangered species;

- Working with private landowners surrounding Audubon's Kern River Preserve to eradicate invasive weeds and manage riparian habitat;

- Partnering with the Sycamore Family Trust under a five year agreement to develop a conservation vision and implement restoration projects on their 5,000 acre Davis Home Ranch in the Sacramento Valley;

- Deepening our collaboration with the California Rice Commission through our work with the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership and working with individual rice growers to identify and implement field management practices that enhance the habitat value of rice farms for birds; and

- Partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to permanently protect and implement habitat enhancement projects on private ranches in northeastern California.

Read more about Pacific migration, and track the birds' journey by visiting <http://ca.audubon.org/welcome-pacific-migration>.

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

*February 23, 2012 - April 17, 2012*

*(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)*

Submitted by Liz West

Periodically from February 23<sup>rd</sup> through March 2<sup>nd</sup> Joanne Katanic and Jan Katayama had an early **Black-chinned Hummingbird** visiting their feeders.

On Cord Rd., while leading a Sacramento Audubon field trip, Linda Pittman found a **Sage Thrasher** at the corral just south of Highway 12 February 26<sup>th</sup>.

On a March 17<sup>th</sup> trip to the Lodi Sewage ponds Jim Rowoth saw a male **Eurasian Wigeon**. Jim last saw it on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

During a March 18<sup>th</sup> Mokelumne Fish Hatchery bird count, Jim Rowoth, Frances Oliver, and Liz West witnessed a large number of **Violet-green Swallows** moving through. They were perched on all the bare branches adjacent to the river. On March 24<sup>th</sup> the Violet-green swallows though diminished in numbers still outnumbered the tree swallows at the fish hatchery.

While looking through a hundred plus **Western Gulls**, March 24<sup>th</sup>, near the Recology plant on Gaffery Rd., David Yee found a probable **Iceland Gull**, pending approval by the California Bird Records Committee.

Liz West saw a first cycle **Glaucous Gull** among many **Western Gulls** and **Glaucous-winged Gulls** near the Recology plant on Gaffery Rd, March 31<sup>st</sup>.

On an April 1<sup>st</sup> visit to the Lodi Sewage ponds Jim Rowoth found a **Hooded Merganser**. Jim Rowoth and Susan Schneider saw a **Marbled Godwit** at the Lodi Sewage Ponds on April 14<sup>th</sup>.

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*New website:* [www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org](http://www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org)

## Calif. Birding E-mail Discussion Groups

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Calbirds>  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sjbirds/>  
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San Joaquin Audubon C2ZC220Z  
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Stockton, CA 95267

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