

THE HOOT OWL



May / June 2014
Issue 3, Volume 52

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 9.

Annual Chapter Picnic

Saturday, May 17

Save the date! On Saturday, May 17, San Joaquin Audubon will hold its 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. We'll also have a short 10 minute Annual Business Meeting to elect Chapter officers for the coming year. Meet in the fish hatchery parking lot (below the dam).

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

Volunteers are needed to conduct roadside Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) routes in California in 2014.

The route needs to be run just once each year during the months of May or June; exact dates vary with each route. 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>

If you are interested in volunteering for a survey route or two, please contact Lyann Comrack at 916-341-6981 or e-mail her at lcomrack@dfg.ca.gov.

FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, May 3—*Introductory Birding / Birding by Ear*

Join leader Jim Rowoth 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.

SATURDAY, May 10—*Cosumnes River Preserve / River Walk*

Join leader Jim Rowoth (487-3489 or rowoth@sbcglobal.net) for the monthly River Walk bird count through the varied habitats of the CRP. Meet Jim at the visitor center on Franklin Rd. Check website www.cosumnes.org for last minute updates. Double check with Jim for start time.

WEDNESDAY, May 14—*Round Valley Regional Preserve*

Join leader John Blades (473-7073) for a mid-week visit to this 1900 acre preserve in the inner coast range near Brentwood. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Toot Sweets, (northwest corner of March Lane and Quail Lakes Drive in Stockton) to carpool, or meet at the preserve at 8:00 a.m. Take Highway 4 west approx. 30 miles from I-5. Go past Discovery Bay. Turn left (at a stoplight) onto Marsh Creek Rd. After 2 stoplights and about 5 miles, you will come to Round Valley Regional Preserve on the left side of the road. Expect eagles, raptors, and Lewis's Woodpeckers. Bring lunch.

SATURDAY, May 24—*Electra Road*

Join leader Joann Katanic (209-483-2578) for this visit to the banks of the Mokelumne River just above Jackson in Amador County. Specialties include Western Tanagers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Yellow Warblers, and Bullock's Orioles. Meet at the Park-n-Ride at I-5 and Hwy 12 in Lodi @ 7:00 a.m. for carpooling. To meet in Jackson, be at the parking lot for Mel & Fay's diner at 8:00 a.m.

SUNDAY, May 25—*Calaveras Big Trees State Park*

Join leader Kurt Mize (915-6264, 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.

SATURDAY, May 31—*Ripon Oak Grove Park*

Join leader Jim Rowoth for a visit to this 55 acre park on the banks of the Stanislaus River in Ripon. Meet at 7:00 a.m. in the parking lot at Toot Sweets, (northwest corner of March Lane and Quail Lakes Drive in Stockton) to carpool.

(Continued on Page 3)

VERNA JOHNSTON

Verna Johnston, 95, a founding member of the Calaveras Big Trees Association and resident of Camp Connell, died in Carmel Valley March 1st. Verna was a science educator, photographer and writer as well as a self-described lover of nature.

Born and educated in Illinois, she came to California, where she taught biology and environmental science at San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton for 37 years. A well-known naturalist, Mrs. Johnston lived to educate and reveal the beauty and wonder in nature.

She published more than 100 articles in professional journals and popular magazines ranging from Audubon to The New York Times. Her first book, "Sierra Nevada," was published in 1970 as part of the series "A Naturalist's America," edited by Roger Tory Peterson. Life Magazine featured her in an article in November 1998.

In 1982, she retired to Camp Connell to "hibernate, hike and write." It was there that she wrote two more books, "California Forests & Woodlands: A Natural History" in 1994 and "Sierra Nevada: The Naturalist's Companion" in 1999, both published by The University of California Press. Her photos illustrate these books and the most recent is still available at the new Calaveras Big Trees State Park bookstore.

Ms. Johnston was an active member of the Sierra Club, National Audubon Society, the Wilderness Society and other groups. She was one of the first presidents of the (then) Stockton Audubon Society and was a respected environmental leader in Stockton for many years. She worked to protect native plants and animals in the Sierra and in California's Central Valley, and was also active in helping to set aside Point Reyes National Seashore. She served on the San Joaquin County Parks and Recreation Commission during the time when Oak Grove Regional Park was developed and was a leader in having part of that park preserved as a natural area. She was also a founding member of the Calaveras Big Trees Association, where her photos will be on view at the new visitors' center.

Verna donated books and photos to the Calaveras Big Trees Association and supported the Park in other ways as well. Her love of books and the out-of-doors also led her to establish the Verna Johnson Nature Collection at the Arnold branch of the Calaveras County Public Library.

Following her wishes, Verna's ashes will be mixed with the earth of the Sierra Nevada, the place she called "home."

Steve Stocking, Education Chair
San Joaquin Delta College, Retired
Board Member, Calaveras Big Trees Association

Help SJ Audubon Go Green

Each issue of *The Hoot Owl* is distributed to 600+ recipients. That's a lot of paper and energy expenditure that adds to our carbon footprint--not to mention a \$2900 annual drain on our minimal treasury. Many conservation organizations are moving towards electronic-only communications. If you are willing to receive *The Hoot Owl* in an electronic-only version, please let us know at wdchkgqsqrl@yahoo.com.

Thanks,
Alan England, President/Membership Chair

San Joaquin County Annual Summer Butterfly Count

Saturday, June 14, 2014, 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 a.m. at the Nature Center at Oak Grove Regional Park. No experience or expertise is required. All participants should bring a hat, sunscreen, water, and lunch or a snack (and field guides, binoculars, and nets if you have them). Call Kathy Schick (209) 612-5130 for more information.

FIELD TRIPS

(continued from page 1)

SUNDAY, June 1— *Big Trees Wildflowers and Birds*

Join leader Steve Stocking for this easy walk through the ancient and majestic trees of the North Grove, where Steve will point out the many specialties of the mixed coniferous forest. Meet in the park at 8:30 a.m., at the picnic area by the meadow. There is a \$10 per vehicle entrance fee, so carpooling is recommended. For more info, contact Steve: 209-754-9029, snlsox@earthlink.net.

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY, June 6-8 — *Annual Sierra Valley Campout*

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 (209-943-6997, dajwagner@aol.com) to RSVP for information on motels and camping spots in the area. We will be camping at the Cottonwood Creek campground on Hwy 89 north of Truckee. For anyone wanting to join us early Saturday Morning, we will be meeting at the Chuckwagon Cafe in Sierraville at 7:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, June 7— *Introductory Birding Field Trip*

See entry for Saturday, May 3. Join leader Mark Elness at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi at 8:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, June 14— *Cosumnes River Preserve*

See entry for Saturday, May 10. Meet leader Jim Rowoth at the visitor center on Franklin Rd. Double check with Jim for start time.

SATURDAY, June 21— *Woodbridge Wilderness Area*

Join leader TBA 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 29— *Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery*

Join leaders Liz West and Joanne Katanic for our monthly census of this lovely little riparian area below Comanche Dam. Meet Liz in the fish hatchery parking lot at 8:00 a.m.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

February 14, 2014 - April 14, 2014

(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

March 14, David Yee found a second dark-lore **White-crowned Sparrow**, probably *oriantha*, just beginning its molt into first adult plumage, in his back yard. The adult dark-lore sparrow, first found in November, was seen as recently as March 12.

Sal Salerno reported a colony of several hundred **Tri-colored Blackbirds** in a marsh just south of the Koster Rd. gravel pond on March 20. The colony was still present April 12.

Mike Sanders found two **Cassin's Kingbirds** on Bird Rd, March 22. By the time Jim Rowoth came by with his Delta College birding class they had disappeared. The same day Mark and Lorna Elness saw two **Cassin's Kingbirds** at Corral Hollow Rd., building a nest on an electrical tower. They were still present as of April 9. Cassin's Kingbirds have been seen at this location in previous years.

On March 30, Jim Rowoth found a **Pacific Golden-Plover** amongst hundreds of Black-bellied Plovers at the Ripon Sewage Treatment Plant. It was still present at least through April 8.

Mark and Lorna Elness saw a singing **Grasshopper Sparrow** on Waverly Rd. north of Flood Rd, March 30.

Nan Ballot reports that a **Blue Grosbeak** was still present in the Brookside area of Stockton, as of April 9.

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

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Attn: Membership
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Stockton, CA 95267

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