



# THE HOOT OWL

## SAN JOAQUIN AUDUBON SOCIETY

NOV.-DEC. 1997 VOL. 35 #6

① → NEW BD MEMBS  
④ → crane fest (EM)  
⑤ → ch. ct.

Saturday Nov. 1 San Luis Wildlife Refuge. Dave Wagner will lead this trip for waterfowl and has arranged for the manager of the Refuge to discuss habitat restoration and show us the Tule Elk of the area. 7:30 at Burns Tower or call Dave at 943-6997.

② → Symposium

Friday Nov 7- Monday Nov 10. **Lodi Crane Festival**. Field Trips each day, and programs Saturday and Sunday at Lodi High School. Info: 1 (800) 304-LODI.

③ → sales

Saturday Nov. 8 Cosumnes Preserve Bird Census. Call John Schick for details at 464-8304. 6:30 at Willow Slough Trailhead.

⑥ → Big Year

Sunday, Nov. 9 Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. Open Touring Day. Explore at your own pace between 10 and 2. Elk Grove Exit from I-5, go west & park.

Tuesday Nov. 11. **YOLO BASIN RESTORATION**. John Kemper of the Yolo Basin Foundation will tell us about the projects and partnerships which have led to the restoration of this valuable wetland area between Sacramento and Davis. 7:30pm at the Central Methodist Church off Fulton across from U.O.P. Refreshments, announcements, ample parking and social contact.

(~24 pgs.)

Thur. Nov. 27. Annual Thanksgiving Day Bird Count. This is your own personal count which you do for one hour in a 15 ft. dia circle..which can be right outside your living room, or recovery room window. For forms contact your editor: 465-2729.

Thur Dec 4-Sun, Dec. 7 **Central Valley Birding Symposium**. For information call Cindy at 1 (800) 350-1987. or send e-mail to: kfoley @inreach.com.

Tuesday Dec. 9. **LOCAL BIRD IDENTIFICATION**. Local experts will share their slides of local birds to help hone your identification skills so that you can step it up a notch when you go on your next outing or big Bird Count. 7:30pm at the Central Methodist Church off Fulton across from U.O.P. Come join us!

(~24 pgs.)

Saturday Dec. 13. Cosumnes Preserve Bird Census. Call John Schick for details at 464-8304. 6:30 at Willow Slough Trailhead.

Sunday, Dec. 21. **Stockton Bird Count**. Join us for this traditional annual survey of the birds which winter between Stockton and Lodi, from 99 west into the Delta. We need novices and the experienced birders to help out. Contact Jim Rowoth 462-7512

Saturday, Dec 27. **Sacramento Bird Count**. If you can't get enough of these counts they would be glad to have help in Sacramento. Contact Stan Snyder (916) 725-4037.

Saturday, Jan 3. **Wallace-Bellota Count**. Join us for our other annual count when we get above the fog into the sunny? foothills. Contact & Sign-up. Kasey Foley 473-3904

## BIRD SIGHTINGS FOR SEPT. / OCT.

All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County unless otherwise specified.

This has been a very active fall migration. A Blue-winged Teal (fem.) picked out at LSP. Sept. 6 (DGY, JRo, MW) is thus far only the 2nd of the year. Two American Golden Plovers, one Aug. 27 (WRH) and another one Sept. 13 (BWb), were both at LSP. where they were difficult to separate from the Pacific Golden Plover(s). Solitary Sandpipers were also at LSP., two Aug. 26 (DGY) and one Sept. 2 (GU). On Aug. 26 a Willet was found at SSP. (DGY, WRH, BVA). A Marbled Godwit stopped in on B.T. for one day, Aug. 23 (SM). Our first Ruddy Turnstone (imm.) to be seen since we've been allowed back into SSP. was there Sept. 10 (DGY). An imm. Semipalmated Sandpiper at LSP. Sept. 28 (WRH) was on the late side. There were six+ Baird's Sandpipers at SSP. Aug. 26 (DGY, WRH) and a Pectoral Sandpiper was at LSP. Aug. 27 (FO, EM). An amazing 10,000 Dowitchers were observed on B.T. Aug. 24 (JRo). Only a few hundred were left by the afternoon because the water level in the field where they were got too high for them. No one manages habitat for shorebirds in S.J. Co. Shorebirds are left to take advantage of suitable conditions which briefly pop up when a sewer pond or a farmer's field is being flooded or drained. Ten thousand Dowitchers could be more than just a one-morning's sight if someone purposefully created habitat.

Our 2nd **Laughing Gull** record was of an imm. at LSP. Aug. 27 (WRH) (1st record is of an ad. at SSP. July 2, 1986). An ad. Sabine's Gull did a brief fly-by at SSP. Sept. 26 (WRH). This was followed by an imm. that stuck long enough for m.obs. to see Oct. 1-4 (WRH, JB). The only fall reports of Vaux's Swifts were three Oct. 3 (DGY) and two Oct. 6 (EM, SM, FO) at WEARd..

Photos were taken of what is thought to be an imm. **Broad-tailed Hummingbird** Sept. 20 (DGY, SY). This is an extremely rare bird in the C.V. and final identification awaits revue by the Sacramento Bird Records Committee (the northern third of S.J. Co. is in the Sacramento Checklist Area). Usually field identification of imm. *Selasphorus* hummingbirds is considered unreliable. Therefore, it is exciting that another imm. *Selasphorus* hummingbird (male), seen in

the same yard as above, can be identified as an Allen's due to the pendulum motion of its aggressive display which is characteristic (and diagnostic) of that species Sept. 3 (TDM). A Hairy Woodpecker and a Stellar's Jay were found up where they are supposed to be in the mountainous southwest corner of the county Oct. 17 (WRH, TRo). Violet-green Swallows have been scarce this year. The only ones reported for the fall were three Oct. 3 (DGY) and five Oct. 6 (EM, SM, FO) at WEARd.

A **DUSKY WARBLER** was observed for several minutes at WEARd Oct. 3 (DGY). There are only four records in California (all from coastal counties) prior to 1997 of this migratory Old World Warbler. Positive identification of this highly unusual sighting is pending peer review from the California Bird Records Committee.

Our 2nd county record of a **Northern Parula** (fem.) comes from WEARd. Sept. 11 (DGY). Our 1st county record of **Indigo Bunting** was a male in molt in the company of Lazuli Buntings at WEARd Aug. 29-Sept. 3 (DGY). Indigo had been long overdue in S.J. Co., as Sac. and Stan. Cos. have had multiple records for years. Our case of Indigo-Bunting-envy was doubly slaked when a second male (different molt stage) was also found at WEARd Oct. 4 (DGY, WRH). The first recollected instance of a Vesper Sparrow in migration was also at WEARd Oct. 6 (RC, RJR). The high winter water on the Mokelumne encouraged the weedy vegetation in the floodplain at WEARd. This in turn fostered the high amount of bird activity.

Sage Sparrows (Bell's Sparrow) came down a little lower in the non-breeding season to offer us good views at K.C. Sept. 21, 23, 26 and, 27 with a high of five+ on the 26th (TRo). The first White-throated Sparrow of the season, came to a home feeder on Oct. 15 (SY).

Compiled by Waldo Holt, Oct. 19, 1997

Observers: John Blades, Richard Ciminno, Waldo R. Holt, Timothy D. Manolis, Ester Milnes, Suga Moriwaki, Frances Oliver, Robert J. Richmond, Terry Ronneberg, Jim Rowoth, Gene Udwin, Brian Van Atter, Bruce Webb, Margaret Williams, David G. Yee, Sue Yee

Abbreviations: B.T.= Brack Tract, C.V.= Central Valley, K.C.= Kiln Canyon, LSP.= Lodi Sewage Ponds, m.obs.= many observers, SSP.= Stockton Sewage Ponds, WEARd.= West End of Accampo Road.





### SPOTTED OWL DIET

Owls regurgitate the less digestible portions of consumed prey (bones, feathers, exoskeletons, fur) in formed pellets. Pellet contents were examined to identify the species of prey taken by the owls.

In oak woodland habitats, 20 prey species were identified. The dusky-footed woodrat comprised about 80% of the prey biomass taken by the owls in these lower-elevation habitats. Pocket gophers made up 11% of the biomass, followed by birds (including scrub jays and other small owls) and a variety of small mammals. At higher elevations the woodrats were replaced by flying squirrels as 51% of the diet. (Sierra National Forest)

### CALAVERAS RIVER BIKE PATH

The path was supposed to be extended from West Lane to Cherokee Lane on the Diverting Canal by Sept. '96. This has been held up by the flood control project which requires the increase in height of some of the local levees. Call San Joaquin Co. COG 468-3913 to check the status of this project.

### BIRDING LINKS

National Audubon Society:  
<http://www.audubon.org>  
The Birder Home Page:  
<http://www.birder.com>  
Newsgroup: rec.birds  
Direct links to these and other birding sites: <http://www.connect-time.com/aug97/nature.html>

Professional Quality Camera Equipment, photo blind. Bogen tripod with head..binoculars. George Welch at 477-9618 for details.

### TAXES FROM BIRDING RECREATION

Federal.....\$516 million  
State Sales Tax....\$306 million  
State Income Tax \$73 million  
This is non-consumptive recreation

### OTHER SUMMER- FALL OBSERVATIONS

Neil Kerr had a Western Slope Flycatcher in his Ripon yard Aug 24 along with the Black-chinned Hummers which have been there for some time.

Valerie and Dennis Smith had a boat trip in the Birds of Prey Natural Area near Boise where they observed 11 Golden Eagles and 12 Prairie Falcons.

In July Steve Stocking ob. Common Mergansers in Dinkey Lakes Wilderness Area PLUS Ray Acker & Sharp-shinned Hawk nearby. In Aug he and R. Boubelik saw a Goshawk on the Lamark Lake trail out of Bishop Creek. Norm Smith reports 20 NeNe's on Kauai in August.

Early wh-crowned sparrows on 9-22 in Carbona, south of Tracy by Jay Furry

### A.O.U. Checklist Changes

The 41st Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Checklist of North American Birds was published in the July issue of the Auk. Many interesting changes were made to bird names and taxonomy throughout the hemisphere, the following are only those which are most pertinent to San Joaquin County. Plain Titmouse is split into Juniper Titmouse (east of the Sierras) and Oak Titmouse (west of the Sierras). Solitary Vireo is split three ways. Blue-headed Vireo (easern); Plumbeus Vireo (Great Basin and Deserts); and Cassin's Vireo (west).

### RED-TAILED HAWK HABITAT

A three year survey was done of 44 active nests on 3 private ranches & Camp Roberts in San Luis Obispo Co. 60% of the nests were in the upper 20% of the selected large trees. They has a strong preference for the tallest, largest trees with the broadest canopies. This gave good protection from predators and accesibility to ..hunting areas.

This is one more reason to keep large trees in areas as they become developed for both agricultural and urban uses. (U.C. Ag. & Natur. Res.)

### MORO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

40 field trips, workshops, presentations. Palagic trips, whales and much more. January 16 through 19 1998 For brochure call (800) 231-0592

# BIRDS

## LODI CRANE FESTIVAL; NOVEMBER 7-10

Join the fun as the Lodi Conference & Visitor's Bureau kicks off this inaugural family-oriented nature festival. The festival is co-sponsored by San Joaquin Audubon, California Department of Fish and Game and a variety of other nature education, & recreation groups.

Activities will focus on the annual return of Sandhill Cranes to our area. Centered at Lodi High School where there will be workshops and fun activities for all ages on Saturday and Sunday. From Friday through Monday there will be a wide variety of tours throughout the area to view cranes and other delta wildlife. Saturday through Monday there will be a crane art exhibit at 111 S. School St. in Lodi.

You won't want to miss this big event. For details call: 800 304-LODI

## CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM: December 4-7

There will be an exciting birding workshop coming to Stockton in December. There will be great speakers like Kenn Kaufman, K. Garrett, Jesse Grantham who spoke to us about gardening for hummingbirds and Bob Stewart who was our butterfly speaker. There will also be local talent like Don & Kathy Crump who have spoken to us several times about the great work they do with their raptor rehab program. THE Keith Hansen who designed our wonderful San Joaquin Audubon-T shirts will be there showing us how to sketch birds in the field. A taste of some of the workshops include Warbler ID, Hummingbird ID, Sparrow ID, Shorebird ID and bird Photography. In addition to the workshops there will be programs focusing on Swainson Hawks in the Central Valley, Birds of the Tulare Basin, Gardening for Birds, Ca. Butterflies and more.

Information: Cindy 1 (800) 350-1987, or e-mail to kfoley@inreach.com

### Stockton

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Rowoth 462-7512

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

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MR JAMES D ROWOTH  
427 E WYANDOTTE  
STOCKTON CA 95204-6026