

THE HOOT OWL



September / October 2009
Issue 5, Volume 47

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

Meetings

The meeting location is at Central United Methodist Church, 3700 Pacific Avenue (across from UOP) in Stockton, and begins at 7:30 p.m. Plenty of parking and refreshments. Everyone is welcome.

TUESDAY, September 8
Jim Estep

"Swainson's Hawk Ecology and Conservation"

Jim Estep is a wildlife biologist who has been working with Swainson's hawks for 25 years. He has conducted research on various aspects of the species' ecology, prepared management and conservation plans, and conducted surveys throughout the Central Valley and elsewhere. He is also the Chair of the Swainson's Hawk Technical Advisory Committee, an ad hoc group of researchers that facilitates research on the species and advises federal, state, and local agencies regarding conservation and land use issues. Jim worked for the California Department of Fish and Game from 1984 to 1989, the natural resources consulting firm of Jones & Stokes from 1989 to 2005, and has been an independent consulting biologist since 2005. Jim's presentation will focus on the distribution, abundance, and natural history of the Swainson's hawk in California. The discussion will touch on morphology and plumage characteristics, habitat use, nest site selection, foraging behavior and diet, mate and site fidelity, reproduction, migration, and

PLEASE NOTE DAY AND TIME CHANGE FOR THE OCTOBER MEETING:

MONDAY, October 26, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.
"Wood Duck Boxes"

This will be a joint meeting with the Delta-Sierra group of the Sierra Club. The location is the same as indicated above. Further information on the October meeting is pending. Please contact Kasey Foley (209) 639-6501 for more information as the date approaches.

Field Trips

SATURDAY, September 5—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

Join leader Kasey Foley (209) 639-6501 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, September 19—*Point Reyes National Seashore*

Mid September is an ideal time to visit outer Pt. Reyes peninsula. It is mostly grassland with small stands of cypress at the ranches which attract vagrant eastern warblers. Expect the weather to be foggy and cold. Bring lunch. Three hours travel time. E-mail or call if interested. Liz West 209-744-0218 or elizwest@sbcglobal.net

SATURDAY, September 26—*Caswell Memorial State Park*

Join leaders Mark and Lorna Elness (209) 629-4673 on Saturday, September 26th at 8:00 a.m. for a leisurely stroll through this riparian jewel. There is a \$6 per vehicle day use fee, so carpooling is encouraged. Bring insect repellent. Caswell SP is located at the south end of Austin Rd. in San Joaquin County. Rain cancels.

SAT/SUN, September 26-27—*Luke Cole 400 Species Challenge*

See article on page 3 for more information.

SATURDAY, October 3—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

Meet leader Liz West (209) 629-4673 elizwest@sbcglobal.net at 8 a.m. on Laurel Ave. next to Lodi Lake (see above for more details).

SATURDAY, October 10—*Cosumnes River Preserve - River Walk*

Join leader John Schick as he conducts his monthly bird census on a leisurely walk through this excellent habitat. Meet John at the visitor center at 7:00 a.m. To get there, take I-5 north to Twin Cities Rd., go east to Franklin Blvd., then south on Franklin to the visitor center. Please call John in advance at 464-8304 to confirm date and time.

SUNDAY, October 18—*Stillman Magee County Park*

Contact lead counter Jim Rowoth (956-2648, rowoth@sbcglobal.net) for meeting time and place.

FRI/SAT/SUN, October 23-25—*Monterey "Surf & Turf"*

This weekend is centered around a Monterey Seabirds' pelagic trip (7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.) on Saturday. Cost is \$105 per person and advance reservations are required. You can reserve online at <http://www.montereyseabirds.com>, or by phone at (831) 375-4658. The other days will be spent land-birding at some of the well-known hot spots in the area. For more information, contact leader Kurt Mize at (209) 915-6264.

GAME THEORY MEETS DARWIN AND RAVENS

Game theory, the branch of mathematics best known for exploring economics, has for the first time successfully predicted animal behavior in nature. It forecast a foraging strategy for Ravens that was later observed in the wild.

Game theory analyzes how people (or animals) act in situations where an individual's success depends on both his own decisions and those of others. In 2002 Sasha Daji, a mathematical ecologist at the University of Exeter in England used a game theory model to explain why young ravens scout for carrion alone but then recruit other birds to join the feast. This apparently altruistic behavior is evolutionarily sensible, he found, because it helps the scout fight off territorial adults and secure dominance over recruits.

Dali's model predicted another successful strategy, one that had never been observed in Ravens: gang foraging, in which a large group of birds scavenge together. Within a year, behavioral ecologist Jonathan Wright of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology discovered this very behavior in the field. He tracked Ravens in North Wales by implanting carcasses with different-colored beads that the birds ingested and later coughed up. Analysis of the beads indicated that Ravens in some roosts were searching, eating, and benefiting together, just as Dali anticipated. Wright and Dali merged their mathematical and field-based work in a paper published in February.

Charles Darwin noticed that animals' teamwork could make evolutionary sense for groups, but Wright's research shows that joint efforts can pay off even in situations that emphasize the role of individual success. "Ravens are smart and selfish," Wright says, "but there's a lot more stability to cooperation." (Reported in Discover Magazine, June 2009 by Andrew Grant)

If you want to read more about the intelligent behavior of Ravens I recommend that you try "Ravens in Winter" by Bernd Heinrich.

Submitted by Steve Stocking.....Education Chair



13th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium

It's party time again! The 13th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium will be held Nov.19-22 in Stockton, CA, at the Stockton Hilton.

Attend workshops with raptor expert Bill Clark, birding pros Jon Dunn and Joe Morlan, as well as other informative folks. Our evening programs include Murrelet Halterman on Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Stephen Shunk on "The Magic of Birding".

We have drawing and digiscoping workshops, our always popular and informative ID Panel with guest experts, programs for beginning birders, and more. The many Field Trips frequently turn up chase-able goodies. The Birder's Market is full of artists and vendors with a wonderful selection of bird- and nature-related items.

For more info, check the website at www.cvbs.org, or contact Frances Oliver at hummer52@sbcglobal.net or (209) 369-2010.

The economy may be down, but the birds are still here to lift you up with their wings. Come and enjoy them with us. See you there!

Cheri Pillsbury
Central Valley Birding Symposium



Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival

Mark your calendars for the 13th annual Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival, to be held Nov. 6-8, 2009, at Hutchins Street Square, in Lodi. The festival kicks off Nov. 6 with a wine & hors d'oeuvres reception from 6:00-9:00 p.m. that opens the festival and art show. This year's festival features family activities, an art show, workshops, wildlife demos, and nature tours. General admission to the festival is FREE, although there is a charge for field trips. There is a full schedule of programs on Saturday and Sunday, and a wide variety of field trips is offered both days. For registration and information, call (209)367-7840, or visit the Lodi Chamber of Commerce website at: www.LodiChamber.com/cranefestival.html

LUKE COLE 400 SPECIES MEMORIAL CHALLENGE

Back on July 6, 2009, Mark Eaton, Steve Glover, Alan Hopkins and Brent Plater posted notice on many birding groups throughout California announcing their plans to establish the Luke Cole 400 Species \$40,000 Memorial Challenge. They established the Memorial challenge as a tribute to an extraordinarily fine human being and to raise money for an organization that he started and supported until his untimely death, the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment (CRPE).

The event will be held on September 26th & 27th, 2009. Some county people (and for SJ county that was me) were asked to help organize members of their county to participate in the Memorial challenge and I would like all of you to participate with us.

You can participate with us in a number of ways:

- You can join me in driving around the county to find as many bird species as possible.
- You can put together a group of your own friends and go birding.
- You can stay home and record all of the bird species that you see on your own property.

The only other thing that is necessary to do is to send me the list of the species that you saw. I will take care of everything else.

I would greatly appreciate it you would let me know if you plan to participate. Also, if you have an interest in one of the neighboring counties let me know and I will put you in contact with that coordinator.

I have included the announcement for the Luke Cole Memorial Fund below so that you can read it again if you would like to.

Frances Oliver
209--369-2010
hummer52@sbcglobal.net

"To celebrate Luke's life some of his friends have come up with the kind of harebrained scheme Luke would have loved; a California-wide birding event to raise funds to help keep CRPE running strong.

Here's the challenge: Can a group of birders find 400 bird species in one weekend in California? And can we raise donations amounting to \$100 per species for the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment?

Unlike a Birdathon, teams and individuals in the Challenge will be working with each other instead of competing against each other. Everyone from elite birder to backyard observer can add to the ultimate state total. In the spirit of Luke's passion for county listing, species will be tallied county-by-county as well. Focusing county-by-county will be essential if we are to reach the 400 species mark, as we'll need a grass-roots effort from observers looking for such isolated species as Great Gray Owl in Tuolumne County, Yellow-footed Gull in Imperial County and Greater Sage Grouse in Lassen County.

As of this point, the dates are set and we're working hard to set up the coordinators for all 58 counties in California. Also, we're working hard with our friends at CRPE to set up a simplified mechanism to pledge donations to the effort. As soon as these details are sorted out, we'll send out an update, but mark your calendars now to join us!"

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Mid-June - August, 2009

(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

Susan Schneider saw a late spring migrant Willow Flycatcher in cottonwood alley at White Slough on July 12th.

The Ross' Goose originally found by Jim Rowoth on June 6th was seen again by the SJAS Lodi Sewage ponds field trip attendees at the Shin Kee wetlands July 18th.

Terry Ronneburg found a Willet at the Tracy Sewage ponds on July 29th. It has been seen by many other people and was still being reported as of August 19, 2009.

Sara Blauman found a Hermit Warbler August 3rd, at Buckley Cove in Stockton; it was still present the morning of August 6th. Susan Schneider saw one at the same location on August 9th.

On August 11th Daniel Burmester saw three immature Brown Pelicans on Mildred Island.

San Joaquin Audubon Society

Walt McInnis	President
Alan England	Secretary
Dennis Smith	Treasurer
Jerre Murphy	Director at Large
Susan Schneider	Director at Large
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
Kurt Mize	Newsletter Editor
Cheri Pillsbury	Listserve Moderator

New website: www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org

Calif. Bird Alerts

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