

THE HOOT OWL



September / October 2010
Issue 5, Volume 48

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

PROGRAMS

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 14
Ed Pandolfino

"Central Valley Winter Raptor Survey Results"

Please join the San Joaquin Audubon Society to see what we are doing. This month's program is a shining example of what we do with your contributions as funding for this project by the San Joaquin Audubon Society helped get it off the ground.

California's Central Valley is, arguably, North America's most important wintering area for raptors. Larger numbers and a greater variety of open country raptors winter here than anywhere else on the continent. In spite of this, there has been very little research on winter raptors in the Valley. When one considers the recent rapid conversion of Central Valley grasslands to urban and intense agricultural uses, this lack of information makes conservation planning very difficult.

To address this, Zach Smith and Ed Pandolfino created a project to survey winter raptors in the Valley. For three winters volunteers surveyed roadside routes from Shasta County in the north to Kings County in the south. Zach and Ed will present some of the conclusions from this work that shed light on the important habitats for various species and the variations in abundance and diversity across our region.

Ed Pandolfino is on the board of Sierra Foothills Audubon Society and serves as its Placer County Conservation Chair. He is also on the board of Western Field Ornithologists and is one of the Regional Editors for northern California for the publication, *North American Birds*.

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FIELD TRIPS

SATURDAY, September 4—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

Join leader Jim Rowth 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. Extra binoculars and field guides will be available.

SATURDAY, September 11—*Cosumnes River Preserve*

Leader John Schick conducts bird census walks through this excellent habitat on a monthly basis. The walk covers about four miles and, at a leisurely pace, should take approximately five hours, so be sure to bring a lunch and liquids. Meet John at the visitor center at 6:30 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.

SATURDAY, September 18—*Delta Meadows State Park*

Meet leader Kurt Mize in the parking lot of the Starbucks on Trinity Parkway (in the Spanos Park West shopping center at Interstate 5 and Eight Mile Rd.) at 7:30 a.m. for San Joaquin Audubon's first-ever field trip to this undeveloped and relatively unknown state park at the confluence of the Mokelumne and Sacramento Rivers near Walnut Grove. The habitat—a mixture of riparian forest, meadows, ponds, and sloughs—is excellent, and should provide a good variety of species. For more information, contact Kurt at 209-915-6264 or klmize@aol.com.

SUNDAY, September 19—*Stockton Rural Cemetery*

This beautiful and historic cemetery is a good place to look for fall migrants and winter residents alike. Join leader Jim Rowth at the entrance at the N end of Cemetery Lane at 8:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, October 2—*Introductory Birding Field Trip*

See entry for Saturday, September 4. Join leader Dave Wagner at the north end of Laurel Ave. in Lodi at 8:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, October 9—*Del Puerto Canyon*

Join leader Susan Schneider for an autumn trip to Del Puerto Canyon, always a good birding spot. We will be on the lookout for fall migrants and local specialties such as Roadrunner and Lawrence's Goldfinch. I have yet to miss Rock Wren there, and I've admired Golden Eagles several times. Bring hats, sunscreen, and lunch, as we will be picnicking at Frank Raines Park. Meet in the parking lot at Toot Sweets (corner of March Lane and Quail Lakes Dr. in Stockton) at 7:00 a.m. for carpooling. For more details email Susan at sschneider7@juno.com.

HOGAN DAM FOR A WINTER BIRDING & WALKING DESTINATION

Hogan Dam blocks the flow of the Calaveras River where it exits the Sierra foothills east of Stockton. The reservoir provides water for farms east of Stockton and for some areas of the town. Once you have reached Valley Springs on Highway 12 you are almost to Hogan Reservoir, which can also be reached from Silver Rapids Road or Hogan Dam Road off of Highway 26. This trip will take you less than an hour from Stockton on either of these routes. The Lake sits at about 700 feet in elevation in hills covered by foothill oak woodland and chaparral. Roadrunners and California Thrashers used to be seen with some regularity in chaparral areas around here, but as the area has built up, chaparral has been removed and there are fewer of these species to be seen. The lake itself is a good area to observe birdlife, particularly in fall and winter. Look for Bald Eagles, grebes, and waterfowl in winter. From March through late May wildflowers abound. Water sports are popular, except for the coldest months, as is camping in the three campgrounds.

When you reach the lake, a road will take you from the dam east past the campgrounds. Parallel to the road is a paved trail which is popular both with hikers and bicyclists. It is 10.5 miles in length and has no steep grades. Along the trail look for various woodpeckers, Oak Titmouse, Black and Say's Phoebe, California and Spotted Towhee, Phainopepla, White-breasted Nuthatch, and various sparrows. This trail starts near the dam and goes around the east side of the lake past the campgrounds but does not circle the lake. Parking and restroom facilities are available at the start of the trail near the dam. A visitor center there is open weekdays to provide information. A scenic overlook is also located here with picnic facilities, as is the headquarters of the Army Corps of Engineers. Bald Eagles can sometimes be spotted from this point in winter. Hogan is a popular fishing spot and there are boat-in campgrounds across the lake on the east side.

Another trail is the one mile "Trail of the Skulls" accessed below the dam on the Calaveras River. Calaveras means skulls and was named for the skulls found here by Spanish explorers. The rough-surfaced nature trail passes through oak woodland and along the river. Beavers and many birds, including Belted Kingfisher, warblers, hawks, Western Bluebird, Rock Wren, and Wood Duck are common here.

"HAWKS TAKE OUT SPARROWS"

"Through its adaptability, deliberate and accidental introductions, and natural dispersal, the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) has become the archetypical bird of human-modified habitats around the world. In recent decades, however, populations in many parts of its range have declined markedly. In Britain, urban populations have suffered the steepest declines. Bell et al. therefore considered the role of predation, specifically by Eurasian Sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*) in this decline. Using occurrence data from winter garden feeding stations, the authors compared the eastward and southward colonization of Britain by the Sparrowhawk with spatial and temporal patterns in sparrow populations. Greater declines were found where Sparrowhawks were present. The suggestion is made that the urban populations have been free from avian predators for so long that they were especially vulnerable when the Sparrowhawks appeared. Certainly makes sense!

Science 23 July 2010, taken from Auk 127. 411 (2010)

Contributed by Steve Stocking, Education Chair

PROGRAMS

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TUESDAY, October 12

Paul Tebbel

"Learning Sandhill Crane Behavior"

This is our annual joint San Joaquin Audubon Society and Delta Sierra Group, regional unit of the Motherlode Chapter of the Sierra Club, program. This joint meeting is a great way to get like-minded people together to share ideas.

For most birdwatchers and nature lovers, learning about bird behavior is interesting but it doesn't rank up there with new places or new species. This presentation might change your mind. Sandhill Cranes are great communicators and their size makes them easy to watch. Cranes communicate with each other in a variety of different ways and this presentation will help you recognize many of these. You will learn about their common vocalizations, body language and how to recognize juveniles, tell subspecies apart, distinguish between dancing and aggression and many other details that will help you better understand and appreciate Sandhill Cranes. Your presenter is Paul Tebbel, who has worked with cranes since 1976, including 11 years as the director of Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte River in Nebraska where more cranes gather every spring than any other location in the world. Paul is also a river conservationist and is currently executive director of Friends of the River in Sacramento. This presentation will be of interest to serious birders and beginners alike.

Paul Tebbel first worked on cranes in the 1970's doing research on Sandhill Cranes in Michigan and Ontario. After a decade of work in the private sector, he took over Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte River where he helped central Nebraska communities build their magnificent spring bird migration spectacle. His morning long workshops on crane behavior have sold out at the Festival of the Cranes at Bosque del Apache NWR in New Mexico every year since 2001. His current paying job is as Executive Director of Friends of the River in Sacramento.

BIRD SIGHTINGS

Mid-June, 2010 - August 11, 2010

(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

Jim Rowoth found a juvenile **Solitary Sandpiper** at the Lodi sewage ponds July 5th. Kathy Parker saw it the next day.

On a July 23rd visit to the Lodi sewage ponds, David Yee saw a **Snowy Plover**, a juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper** and a **Solitary Sandpiper**. The following day Jim Lomax saw the snowy plover and a **Common Tern**. In addition to the Snowy Plover, Rob Fowler refound the Semipalmated Sandpiper July 24th.

On August 1st, Rob Fowler saw a **Solitary Sandpiper** and a **Bank Swallow** at the Tracy sewage ponds. On the same day Jim Rowoth had six **Marbled Godwits** at the Lodi sewage ponds.

On August 8th, Jim Rowoth reported a juvenile **Snowy Plover** at the Lodi sewage ponds. Tim Fitzer, Kathy and Virginia Bonham saw it earlier in the day. Participants of a Sacramento Audubon field trip saw it the next day.

During the Sacramento Audubon trip at the Lodi sewage ponds on August 9th, Ed Harper found a **Baird's Sandpiper**. It was present in the southeast pond through at least August 10th.

Sal Salerno saw six female **Lawrence's Goldfinches** at Caswell State park August 11th.

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Attn: Membership
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