



# THE HOOT OWL

## STOCKTON AUDUBON SOCIETY

Vol 22 #5

# Calendar



Sept-Oct '84

Tuesday September 11 POTLUCK DINNER AND MEMBERSHIP SLIDE SHOW.

Bring your favorite dish, tableware, and ten of your best nature slides. We will eat at 6:30 and then view the slides at 7:30. Fireside Room, Central United Methodist Church on Pacific Avenue in Stockton...so no alcohol please.

Saturday Sept. 15. Field Trip to Oak Grove Park & Lodi Ponds.

Both migrating land and shore birds can be expected in these two areas north of Stockton. All ages and abilities are encouraged to join us. The trip is slow paced and takes only the morning. Kurt Mize will be on hand to point out any specialties. Meet at the Oak Grove at 8:00am. Further information, call Kurt at 957-0676.

Saturday Sept. 29. Field Trip to Pt. Diablo & Marin Headlands.

There's no better spot on the west coast to witness the spectacular raptor migration than Pt. Diablo. Over 13 species of raptors have been seen from this vantage point. Many other migrants including unusual species such as Pinyon Jays and Black Swifts have been observed. Call leader David Yee for more information on where and when to meet. 951-1526 or 466-3337. *work*

Tuesday October 9 At our monthly MEMBERSHIP MEETING, Donna Burt will share the movie she has made about WOOD DUCKS. The movie was filmed in Stanislaus County where three hundred nesting boxes are located. 7:30 Central United Methodist Church.

Sat-Sun Oct 13-14 Bolinas Lagoon & pt. Reyes Weekend Field Trip

A repeat of last years successful trip to some of the richest birding habitat in n. California. October is the time to visit this area where the birds concentrate...including rare ones. Our fine accomodations will be provided by Ann Mullin. In addition we will visit the Point Reyes Bird Observatory and observe their bird banding. Space and accomodations limited to 13 so call Ann at 957-3366 for reservations.

Sat Oct 20. Woodbridge Road-Sandhill Crane Field Trip

The Sandhill Cranes traditionally return to winter here and Arvil and Ellen Parker traditionally take us out to see them. Meet the Parkers at the Standard Station in Thornton at 9am. Many other waterfowl & shorebirds are expected. Questions? 916 775-1029.

Sat. Oct 27 Stockton Water Treatment Plant Field Trip

Stockton's hottest bird spot usually produces the legendary Little and Black-headed Gulls among countless other species. This is the right time of year to add these beauties to your expanding list. Meet John Geer at 9:00 at the Pond entrance on Hwy 4. 463-8305.

(see the last page for a calendar of all of our 84-85 programs)

President's Letter

As you can see from the list of programs for the upcoming year (on the last page of this issue--please detach and save) we have a great year in store for us at Stockton Audubon. I'm especially looking forward to this month's program on the 11th, the potluck dinner and slides. I won't be able to bring any slides because my few nature slides are terribly out of focus, but I'm really looking forward to the ten best of many of our top birder-photographers. Our fall potluck always proves a great time to renew old acquaintances as well as making new ones. Hope to see most of you there.

- Kathy Schick

Oak Grove News

Summer watering seemed to go a bit faster this year. The new hoses helped, and finally the park got a new pump so there can be some water pressure. Now if they can only get all the water lines cleaned up-- and kept clean-- especially around the Bird oasis. Grateful thanks to all of you who helped with the watering crews this summer.

There will be only one more month of watering before nature takes over and makes the park green again. September watering dates are the 8th and the 22nd at 8:15 AM. Call Kathy Schick (464-7083) or Dick Filson (466-8414) if you can help.

This summer a number of Auduboners discovered that taking children to fish in the lake is a real treat. Come out this fall if you can, and picnic while admiring the falling leaves, acorns, and oak galls.

Carnegie New Town

The planned "New Town" to be located in the foothills south-west of Tracy has won the initial approval of the San Joaquin County Planning Commission and will soon be heard by the County Board of Supervisors. We have closely followed this proposal because of its possible impact on the San Joaquin Kit Fox, an endangered species known to occupy the site, and on other threatened types of wildlife. It is very difficult to see how the Kit Fox will be able to survive in the vicinity of a major development. The small fox is now endangered because of loss of habitat to agricultural and other development in the San Joaquin Valley.

The development is being pushed as an alternative to having further residential development of agricultural lands. But how does this really protect those lands? Some feel that development of the land between Tracy and Carnegie may develop even faster because of Carnegie. Some of the area residents are very much opposed to the proposal. If you would like to get in contact with them, contact your editor at 463-2459.

Attendance at the Planning Commission hearing would have been an eye-opening experience for any of you interested in wildlife. Some of the Commissioners seemed to have little information about the endangered species nor about the importance of the diversity of plant and animal life in general. One questioned if the Kit Fox had any "Value"; in other words did it eat ground squirrels? I do not know that education about endangered species would be of value at this point, but if you are concerned, contact your County Supervisor.

S. Stocking



FIELD TRIP  
Summer  
which

FIELD TRIP HIGHLIGHTS (By DAVID YEE)



Summer time field trips are often poorly attended due to the many plans which have already been made. However, many people planned their summer outings around the fieldtrip calendar this year and came away with some memorable experiences.

During the middle of the July heat-wave, 7 people took off for Yosemite to be treated to the best Sierran birding. We meandered through the less crowded areas of the park at an easy pace, taking advantage of the cool mountain air and the majestic scenery which is second to none. Some of the many small birds seen flitting about the meadow's edge and along the sides of streams were 4 species of warblers, Solitary and Warbling vireos, Lazuli Bunting, Purple and Cassin's Finches, Red Crossbill and countless Black-headed Grosbeaks. However the highlight had to be the booming male Blue Grouse at Olmstead Point that approached us so closely that our optics couldn't focus on him. We topped the trip off with a quick jaunt up to Tioga Pass to sit amid a flock of Rosy Finches and witness the splendor of Lee Vining Canyon.

Nine of us attempted to observe the majestic flight of the endangered California Condor during the end of July. One hour after we arrived at the spot which has been a very reliable location to view these relics of days-gone-by, an adult appeared over the horizon and flew within  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile over us. The lighting was perfect. Everyone looked on in awe as only the naked eye was needed to see the finer details of this truly amazing bird. Later that afternoon we went to the top of Mt. Pinos, the traditional Condor tookout point, and saw a multitude of birds including a Cooper's Hawk, Clark's Nutcracker, all 3 nuthatches, Western and Mt. Bluebirds, Chipping Sparrow and Green-tailed Towhee. After a beautiful night spent camping on the mountain we drove back through Maricopa in search of the elusive Le Conte's Thrasher. While the Thrasher was truly 'elusive' we did manage to see a couple of Roadrunners and a beautiful Lesser Nighthawk.

Monterey Bay beckoned 25 Stockton Auduboners, friends, and guests during the end of August to what turned out to be a truly eventful weekend. When the Monterey Bay area weather is at its best, as it was during this weekend, it's a pleasure to be there even if one goes birding and sees nothing. Not seeing birds was not a problem we had to contend with. On Saturday morning we started at Moss Landing and were treated to Elegant Terns, many shorebirds and a distinct look at a Marbled Murrelet. Lunch was eaten at the Monterey Coast Guard pier where we observed Sea Lions, Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants and a flock of Surfbirds close-up. Pt. Pinos near Asilomar produced the usual gulls and shorebirds and also treated us to long unobstructed views of Virginia Rail and Sora. We topped the day off by walking down the Carmel River where several species of migrating passerines were seen and where we had some great views of both Pectoral and Baird's Sandpipers.

Sunday's pelagic trip out on the bay produced a large list of pelagic bird species and several not too often seen marine mammals. Highlights included 3 species of shearwaters including over 100 Black-vented, N. Fulmar, Arctic Tern, Sabine's Gull, 3 species of Storm-petrels and many Pomarine Jaegers. Mammals seen were Sea Otter, Dall's Porpoise, and Minke Whale. However, the real "wower" of the trip was the up to ten Orcas or Killer Whales we observed for up to 20 minutes. This is one of the largest groups of Orcas ever seen along California...they were truly magnificent. Fall is when the largest concentrations of birds visit n. California. We will again be visiting the many areas that have been interesting and productive in the past. Of course, we will also be visiting some new spots. Do plan to join us and if you have any ideas or would like to lead a fieldtrip, just let me hear from you. (951-1526, 466-3337)

# Bird Sightings



(4)

All sightings by David Yee unless otherwise noted. The editor needs to hear from the rest of you, send a card or call at 463-2459, eve. SSP is Stockton Sewage Pond, OG

The Ultr  
"Since  
into  
UT

is the Oak Grove Regional Park and DF the Durham Ferry Park Area. 6-27 a pair of Blue-winged Teal, a Black-bellied Plover, 7 Whimbrel and a Long-billed Curlew were at SSP. on 6-29 they were joined by a Willet and 2 Short-billed Dowitchers. 6-30 there were 10 Burrowing Owls at the Tracy Sewer Ponds and a Lesser Nighthawk at Corral Hollow Rd near Tracy. 7-2 found a Lesser Yellowlegs at SSP. 7-4 a Marbled Godwit at SSP. On the 13th of July Steve Stocking observed 5 Kestrels in a Deodar Cedar near U.O.P. 7-26 there were 2 Sanderling & 3 Red-necked Phalarope at SSP. 7-30 a Warbling Vireo, 2 Wilson's Warblers & 10 Lazuli Bunting at DF. 7-31 found 1 Ruddy Turnstone and over 5000 California Gulls at the SSP. 8-2 found 7 Western Flycatcher, 3 Western Tanager & a Mac Gillivay's Warbler at the Oak Grove (OG). On 8-6 Dick Brown, Steve Stocking and Jim Sellers observed 2 Golden Eagle, one carrying a large snake, near Tokopah Falls in Sequoia Natl. Park, also observed a Solitary Vireo and many small warblers. On 8-8 they observed Red Crossbills at Cedar Grove in Kings Canyon Natl. Park (low elevation) and watched 3 Perigrine Falcons being released by the Perigrine Fund and UCSC near Grizzly Creek Falls in the Kings Canyon. We were told that although none had been observed there for years, one appeared to check things out when the young were being released.. During the first week of August 3 Burrowing Owls moved into some squirrel holes at Pacific Avenue and the Calaveras River, but they did not stay long. Possibly too much human and dog activity in this location? (S. Stocking). On 8-10 there was a Semipalmated Sandpiper and a Willow Flycatcher at DF. On 8-12 a Townsend's Warbler at the OG. On 8-13 Karl Kothe and Steve Stocking observed Northern Phalaropes, a Barn Owl, N. Shovelers and terns at the I-5 Burrow Pit Ponds near the corner of I-5 and Hwy 12. Also on 8-13 there was a Hutton's Vireo and three Black-th. Gray Warblers at the OG. David observed a White-Faced Ibis at DF on 8-18 and on 8-28 both a Semipalmated Sandpiper and a Pectoral Sandpiper at the Lodi Sewage Ponds.



## WORTH REPEATING

A world where people are beginning to crowd one another intolerably is a world too small for animals. Until recent centuries, big clusters of people were widely separated. In the towns some animals, such as pets, sparrows, and cockroaches, thrived, but the realm of wild birds and mammals was between towns. Now the planet is becoming a city. Animals that once lived on farms or simply away from civilization soon will no longer find space. They use "our" air, land, food, and water. If that nonhuman life is to continue, it will be only because it is purposely included in the human designs on the Earth, because animals are more valuable than the resources they use. In a world of periodic starvation and widespread poverty, where wants are created daily by civilization itself, that will be a hard value to prove. A huge, well-fed human population, sustained by global manipulations of our island planet, cannot afford animals — not unless they are essential to us.



—Paul Shepard  
Avery Professor of Human Ecology  
Claremont Graduate School

The Ultraviolet Receptor of Bird Retinas (Science July 20, 1984)

"Since the discovery that the visible spectrum for many insects extends into the near-UV, much effort has been invested in looking for natural UV signals in the nectar guides of flowers and the patterns of reflectance of butterfly wings. The idea has developed that insects have a sensory subchannel available in the near-UV that they do not share with vertebrates in general and vertebrate predators in particular. The finding that birds have cones maximally sensitive in the nearUV forces a reexamination of this idea. For example, the wax bloom on many berries reflects nearUV, and for birds, this may enhance the contrast of small fruits seen against green, UV-absorbing leaves. Birds, like some fish, may have four cone pigments and a tetrachromatic color vision. Honeybees see nearUV light as a distinct color, but analagous behavioral experiments have yet to be done on birds. In any event, sensitivity to nearUV light by a variety of vertebrates is more common than our own visual experience has led us to expect. "

Relative Grape Damaging Potential of Three Species of Birds.

Both Starlings and Robins did 3.5 times as much damage as the House Finch, but as Starlings and robins pluck entire grapes they may not do the same type of damage as the finches which peck holes in the skin and eat the pulp, which may lead to infection and further damage from disease. Birds do forage in vineyards for food other than grapes and the presence of large flocks does not necessarily indicate that significant damage is occurring. These tests were done in captivity and the economic importance of individual species under actual field conditions is not yet known. California Agriculture, March-April 1984

NATURAL HISTORY OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

Would you be interested in learning more about the plant and animal life of Central California? Would you like to see what lives in a fresh-water marsh, an Oak Grove, or any of the other natural systems which remain in our Central California area? This is an ecologically oriented, non-technical class which will be offered from 3:30 to 5:30 on Monday afternoons at Delta College this semester. There will also be some weekend trips. Call Steve Stocking 463-2459 for more info.