



## Field Trip ~ February 19 Elkhorn Slough

John Turner has reserved spaces on Safari Nature Tours' roomy and stable 27-foot pontoon boat, *The Safari*. The two-hour trip, up seven miles of coastal wetlands of Elkhorn Slough, starts at about 1 PM at high tide. On the trip we can expect views of sea otters, harbor seals, and many species of waterfowl and migratory shorebirds.



**Note: You must reserve your space on the boat by calling John at 852-2348 no later than February 9th.** The cost is \$32 for adults, and there also is a discount for seniors. You will pay with cash or check (**no credit cards**) when we check in with Safari Nature Tours in Moss Landing. **According to Safari Tours policy, if you are unable to attend after making your reservations, you will still be responsible to pay for your boat trip. Heavy rain will cancel the boat trip.** For additional information, call John at 852-2348, or email him at [josanbird@gmail.com](mailto:josanbird@gmail.com).

Plan on meeting in the Perko's parking lot at 6:45AM to carpool, and leaving at a 7AM departure time, or you may meet John Turner at 7:30AM at the intersection of La Grange Road and Highway-132, near the town of La Grange. The travel time will be about four hours. Before and after the boat trip, we will do some birding on the jetty and other local areas, if time allows. We will plan on stopping for dinner on our return trip.

Remember to bring drinking water, snacks and a sack lunch. Hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes, a sun hat and sunscreen, and insect repellent, are advisable for all trips. The weather may be cool, given the wind-chill factor while on the pontoon boat, so dressing in layers is recommended. Binoculars are a must, bird books are most helpful, and spotting scopes are optional and are much appreciated. This should also be a good opportunity for photography.

All CSAS field trips are open to the public. Beginning birders, including children, are welcome on day trips. Heavy rain cancels; however if in doubt, call the leader, John Turner, 852-2348, **no less than one hour** before the meeting time.

## Program ~ February 16 Great Gray Owl

The Great Gray Owl, the largest of our owls, up to 2 feet high and with a wingspan of up to 5 feet, symbolizes the magnificence of Yosemite, particularly as in 2010 it was established the population centered in Yosemite and the surrounding forests is a genetically distinct population. This population is separated by hundreds of miles from the next closest populations in Northern California and Southern Oregon, and exhibits genetic differences from the subspecies that are resident across the rest of the western U.S. Behavioral differences also appear to exist in the Yosemite subspecies, including differences in migration patterns, prey preference, and nest site selection. Each of



—John Turner photo

### Great Gray Owl

these genetic and behavioral characteristics indicates that the Sierra Nevada population of great gray owls has been isolated from other populations for an extensive period of time.

Our speaker, Josh Hull of the US Fish & Wildlife Service based at UC Davis, will discuss this population and its distinct characteristics at our February 16th general meeting. A member of a team that established the Yosemite population as a genetic subspecies, Josh is interested in the evolutionary forces that shaped this population differentiation. Among elements of particular interest to him are the identification of specific landscape features, life history characteristics, and historic geological factors that influence population structure. To address these questions, he studies raptor populations using a variety of tools, and he will be sharing much of this as it relates to the Great Gray Owl.

The meeting will be held in the Community Room of the Sonora Public Library on Greenley Road at 7 PM, Wednesday, February 16. The public is warmly welcomed at these events, and refreshments are served afterwards. Products and publications on many topics are available at each meeting.

# Citizen Science

Many of you probably participated in one or several Audubon Christmas Bird Counts over the holidays. What you may not know is that by getting out and counting birds, you also made a significant contribution to science. The results from each individual count are compiled by volunteers and then submitted to Audubon. Audubon in turn makes this information available to the public on its website. In its 111th year, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count is the longest-running citizen science survey around.

Bird count information allows researchers, conservation biologists, and others to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America, to identify threats, and to promote broad awareness. In 2009, Audubon California used bird distribution information from Christmas Bird Counts and North America Breeding Bird Surveys to examine bird response to future climate change in California. CBC information has been tapped for multiple publications, including Common Birds in Decline, which revealed that some of America's most beloved and familiar birds have taken a nosedive over the past 40 years, and Watchlist 2007, which identified 178 rarer species in the continental U.S. and 39 in Hawaii that are imperiled.

But the Christmas Bird Count is just the beginning. There are many other opportunities to contribute to science by counting birds. Over the past couple of years, Audubon California relied on citizen science volunteers for surveys of Tricolored Blackbirds, Long-billed Curlews, Yellow-billed Magpies, Mountain Plovers, Purple Martins, and more. We also work closely with our chapters to monitor sensitive bird species. Your everyday observations can be submitted to Ebird ([www.ebird.org/content/ca](http://www.ebird.org/content/ca)) to enrich the body of knowledge available to researchers (no observation is too small!). For more information visit: [www.ca.audubon.org/citizen\\_science](http://www.ca.audubon.org/citizen_science).

— Jordan Wellwood

## Results: Sonora CBC

Though the inclement weather played a huge factor in the Count, it could not keep the Counting Crew from the field. A total tally of 17,739 individuals was fairly low, but not the lowest. The lowest number of birds for the Sonora CBC was achieved for 36 species with no highs being attained. Two additions to the Count were Cinnamon Teal (why has it taken so long to be seen?) and Eurasian Collared Dove (no comment). The total species count of 90 was quite low. American Robins put in an excellent showing with 8,926 individuals counted. We have not seen that high a number in over a decade. Any trends in species populations was hidden by the adverse weather. I will send the finished spreadsheet to the CSAS website soon so you all can get a look at the numbers.

The after-Count warm-up at the Senior Center helped us share information and eat a satisfying meal provided by all that attended. Next (I mean, this) year's Count will be on Saturday, December 17, 2011. I put in a strong bid for excellent weather (wait a minute, I did that for THIS Count also. I wonder if I can get my money back). Thanks to all of you who participated and to those who were kept indoors by the nasty weather. I hope to have you all out in the field for the next one. — Steven Umland

# Great Backyard Bird Count

Feb. 18 through Feb. 21, 2011

As many of you have already practiced your identification skills in the Christmas counts, here's another chance to refine them still further: To participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count:

- ❖ Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count.
- ❖ You can count longer than that if you wish.
- ❖ Count on as many of the 4 days as you like.
- ❖ You may count in different locations on the same day, but note them separately.
- ❖ Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time.
- ❖ Submit a separate checklist for each new day.
- ❖ If you count in more than one location on the same day, submit a separate check list for each location.
- ❖ Enter your checklists on the homepage, <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/howto.html>, where, beginning on the first day of the count, you will see a button marked "Enter Your Checklists!" It will remain active until the deadline for data submission on March 1st.
- ❖ Helpful tools and information:
- ❖ You may find it helpful to print out the checklist ahead of time so you know what information you need to be aware of, such as snow depth etc.
- ❖ If you're new to bird watching, you may want to check the "Learn About Birds" section, where you'll find help with tricky bird identifications, choosing binoculars, bird feeding tips and more.
- ❖ In the FAQ section, you can find answers to frequently asked questions such as "Why hold the count in February?", "How many lists may I submit?", or "How are the results used?"

A GBBC participation certificate, to give out to students or to anyone who takes part, will be posted just before the count begins.

Information on the GBBC Photo Contest rules is at: <http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/photo-contest-rules>

## Results: Eagle Counts

New Melones, January 8, 2011

Central Sierra Audubon & Bureau of Reclamation

Bald Eagles: 15 adults, 12 sub-adults = Total 27.

Golden Eagles: 8 adults, no sub-adults = Total 8.

Total Eagles: 35.

No Ospreys were sighted

Don Pedro Lake, January 15, 2011

Central Sierra Audubon & Bureau of Land Management

Bald Eagles: 11 adults, 14 sub-adults = Total 25.

Golden Eagles: 5 adults, no sub-adults = Total 5.

Total Eagles: 30.

Ospreys: 3.

# COMING EVENTS

## March 18-20: Pinnacles Nat. Mon.

Located south of Hollister, this can be a two- or three-day field trip. There will be birding excursions on Friday afternoon, all day Saturday, and Sunday morning. Accommodations are either 30 miles north at a motel in Hollister, or camping at the monument's Pinnacles Campground just inside the east entrance off Highway 25. John and Sandra plan on arriving on Thursday with their trailer. For information about making reservations in the campground, call John Turner, 852-2348 or email [csasbird@gmail.com](mailto:csasbird@gmail.com).

## April 30-May 1: Audubon Canyon Ranch

Audubon Canyon Ranch, formally known as Martin Griffin Preserve, is one of the most significant and well-studied nesting sites of Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets and Snowy Egrets on the West Coast. In April, the courting rituals among the birds are taking place and by late April into May, many eggs and chicks are visible. Accommodations are available at the preserve. There are unheated bunkhouses with separate restrooms and showers. There is no fee; however a \$15 donation is encouraged as the donations support ACR's preservation, education and research programs. Located near Bolinas Lagoon, we will also visit the lagoon area for marsh and water birds. For additional information call John Turner, 852-2348 or email [csasbird@gmail.com](mailto:csasbird@gmail.com).

## Beginning Birding Field Trip

The club is planning a beginning birding field trip for mid-May. Check the March newsletter for date, time and additional information or on our web site, [centralsierraaudubon.org](http://centralsierraaudubon.org).

## June 3-5: Yuba Pass & Sierra Valley

In the past we have stayed at Herrington's Sierra Pines Resort in Sierra City on Hwy. 49. Some rooms overlook the North Yuba River, but reservations need to be made early for these rooms. We will bird the Yuba Pass area, the Gold Lakes area and the Sierra Valley to the east of Yuba Pass. For additional information call John Turner, 852-2348 or email [csasbird@gmail.com](mailto:csasbird@gmail.com).

### Your Audubon Board:

|                                |                |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Rick Baird, President          | 532-4323       |
| Barry Boulton, Vice President  | 795-8225       |
| Tom Harrington, Secretary      | 694-8564       |
| Sandra Turner, Treasurer       | 852-2348       |
| Jeanne Ridgley, Membership     | 962-7598       |
| Christine Meyers, Conservation | (808) 753-4390 |
| Pamela Blair, Education        | 533-1668       |
| Kate Sim, Newsletter           | 728-9022       |
| David Harden, At-Large         | 533-1668       |
| Kathy Harrington, Publicity    | 694-8564       |
| John Turner, Past President    | 852-2348       |

### Your Audubon Committees:

|                                 |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Steven Umland, Sightings        | 352-6985 |
| Suzanne Kilburn, Bird Box Trail | 532-1938 |
| Tom Harrington, Book Sales      | 694-8564 |
| Anthea Neilson, Hospitality     | 533-0360 |
| John Turner, Field Trips        | 852-2348 |

## BIRDBOXES, BATS AND BOOKS

The new year is flying by and it will soon be time for our semi-annual birdhouse, batbox, feeder and book sale which will be held April 9, from 9AM to 2PM. As usual, it will be held at Rocca Park in Jamestown, in conjunction with the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society's semi-annual plant sale. **If anyone would be willing to construct bird or bat houses or bird feeders, please contact John Turner at 852-2348 or Tom Harrington at 694-8564 for plans or wood.** Also, please consider volunteering a few hours on April 4 to man our booth and help with the sale.



In his ineffable style, John Muir lauds the Water Ouzel (American Dipper):

Find a fall, or cascade, or rushing rapid, anywhere upon a clear stream, and there you will surely find its complementary Ouzel, flitting about in the spray, diving in foaming eddies, whirling like a leaf among beaten foam-bells; ...He seems to be especially fond of the larvae of mosquitoes, found in abundance attached to the bottom of smooth rock channels where the current is shallow. When feeding in such places he wades upstream, and often while his head is underwater the swift current is deflected upward along the glossy curves of his neck and shoulders, in the form of a clear, crystalline shell, which fairly encloses him like a bell-glass, the shell being broken and re-formed as he lifts and dips his head.

*Central Sierra Audubon Society gratefully accepts tax deductible gifts to help support our meetings, scholarships, and educational programs. Please mail to: CSAS, PO Box 3047, Sonora, CA 95370.*

## February Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 22

Jamestown Community Hall, 2PM

# SIERRA SQUAWKER

Central Sierra Audubon Society

(A Chapter of the National Audubon Society)

P.O. Box 3047

Sonora, CA 95370

209-532-0570

[www.centralsierraudubon.org](http://www.centralsierraudubon.org)

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Permit #1  
Jamestown, CA  
95327

## February 2011

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### General Meetings

3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (except June, July, Aug. & Dec.)

7 PM, Tuolumne County Library

### Board Meetings

4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, August through May (except Dec.)

2 PM, Jamestown Community Hall

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

To become a member of BOTH the National Audubon Society, with subscription to *Audubon* magazine, and of **Central Sierra Audubon Society**, with subscription to CSAS newsletter, *Sierra Squawker*, complete this form and mail with **check payable to National Audubon Society** to:

**Jeanne Ridgley, CSAS Membership Chairman, 19353 Pine Mountain Dr., Groveland, CA 95321**

*(To become a member of only CSAS, (with subscription to the CSAS newsletter, *Sierra Squawker*, please make your check payable to CSAS)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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New Audubon Member Special Introductory Rate (includes CSAS): \$20 for first year

CSAS only: \$15/yr.

**C1ZC440Z**