

Central Sierra Audubon Society's
Sierra Squawker



Volume XXXIII, Number 4

December, 2012

Christmas Bird Count

President's Message

On Christmas Day in 1900, ornithologist Frank Chapman, an early officer in the then-budding Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition - a "Christmas Bird Census" - that would count birds rather than shoot them. This humble beginning has grown into the longest running citizen science survey in the world. The data collected over the years has proven to be a valuable record of the dynamics of bird populations and movement.

The local CBC's need as many people as possible to help make them a success. You don't have to be an expert birder to participate; everyone is welcome. Please contact one or all of the following count compilers and join in the fun.

David Harden

Groveland: Friday, December 14

Contact: Bill Zachman, whzerd@conifer.com
(home) 209-962-6689 (cell) 209-769-0147

Sonora: Saturday, December 15

Contact: Steven Umland 209-352-6985

Calaveras County: Saturday, December 29

Contact: Barry Boulton, 209-596-0612

Feeder Watch: Saturday, December 15

Would you like to participate in this year's CBC but cannot get out into the field? Do you maintain feeding stations in your yard or property? Then I have the answer for you: become one of a cadre of feeder watchers! Your job will be to monitor your feeders throughout the day on Saturday, December 15. Keep a list of the numbers of each species that visit at different times throughout the day. If you are interested contact me, Steven Umland, at 209-352-6985 or email stevenum71@gmail.com and I will send the information to you. Thank you!

Steven Umland

A plea for help!

You can really help the organizers of the CBC's by calling and letting them know of your interest. A call to them will be welcome (no one will yell at you!) as it will let them know which of you they can expect to show up!

Bird Sightings

Mid-October to Mid-November

With the cold weather having settled in, so have our Winter birds. Phoenix Lake has had it's winter residents for about a month now. The "common" birds--**Common Mergansers** and **Goldeneyes**-- have joined the rest of the crowd this past week. The arrival of the occasional **Bald Eagle** keeps the local denizens on their (webbed) toes. The only thing missing is some **Hooded Mergansers**. We have not had any reports of these from either county as of yet. Bill Zachman reports that Kathy Ryan found a **Snow Goose** on Pine Mountain Lake on November 14. Charlotte Ginn has posted on the CSAS Birds list that she is seeing a lot of **Pine Siskins** at her thistle feeder in the Red Hills.

Don't forget the Christmas Bird Count on December 15. Call/email Ken Smith or me. Don't forget the After-Count Potluck is at the Jamestown Community Center this year. Aaaaannnd--there is no fee to participate although donations will still be cheerily accepted!

Please send me your sightings or post them on the CSAS Bird list on the Internet. HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Steven Umland

Upcoming Programs

December

Christmas Bird Count (no regular program)

January

Dan Webster: "Birds Matter"

February

Lee Pagni: "Lighthawk"

March

John Muir Laws: "The Art of Drawing Birds"

April

Harold Basey: "Mountain Lions"

May

Nancy Muleady-Mecham: "Giant Sequoias"

Season's Greetings

Groveland GCSD Field Trip

The first Wednesday of the month Bird Walk at the Groveland Community Services District property (located at 18966 Ferretti Road, Groveland) will be led by **Barbara Connelly** and **Carol Rosalind** on Wednesday, December 5. The property encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water treatment ponds. There have been 132 species of birds identified there since November of 2007.

Please meet in the GCSD parking lot at 8:00 a.m. Bring binoculars and a birding field guide if you have them. Rain will cancel the trip. The walk will last about two -three hours. If you have any questions, call Carol at 209-962-6018.

Working Together To Help Birds on Farms



Miles DaPrato

"They know what birds are there and not long ago, Audubon California met with Sacramento Valley farmers to discuss ways that we could work together to provide forage and nesting opportunities for birds that use fields of wheat and rice, without adversely affecting the crop. For Audubon California, the listening we do at these meetings is usually more important than the talking.

"Nobody knows this land better than the people that work on it every day," says Audubon California's Valerie Calegari. They know how their management of the land affects those birds."

At this meeting, one of the local farmers, Fritz Durst, invited us to visit the lands he manages in the Dunnigan Hills. We met with his staff and learned about their work on the farm and the birds they encounter. Among the things we talked about was how to identify and avoid disturbing ground nests for Northern Harriers. Soon afterwards, Thomas Leacox (pictured above), who works on Durst's farm, used what he learned to maneuver his 25-foot-wide harvester around a Northern Harrier nest, saving two chicks and an unhatched egg.

We Made a Difference

Your support of Audubon California this year helped make a real difference for birds, their habitats and the people who care about them.

Thanks to you ...

- Birds in the drought-stricken Klamath Basin survived this past spring and summer, after water releases sought by Audubon members were ordered.
- Vast new protections were given to small fish that make up the diet of many of California's seabirds.
- 75,000 acres of land in the Central Valley were made more bird-friendly when nearly 200 rice farmers signed up with Audubon and partners.
- Tens of thousands of young people -- the next generation of conservationists -- began their lifelong journeys into nature at Audubon center and sanctuaries.

These are just a few of the victories you've helped make possible.



Northern Pygmy Owl

Photo: **John Turner**

Stanislaus Audubon Society

Check out their upcoming Field Trip

Saturday, December 8. Cooperstown and Willms Roads run north/south and just west of the line with Tuolumne County, the beginning of the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. First, we'll be looking for a few species like Lewis' Woodpecker that are pushed by the cold weather into the lower elevations of our county. Second, we'll be looking for all the distinctive species of this relatively pristine grasslands habitat. (What's that bird that looks like a little Meadowlark?) Finally, our leader Dave Froba, (209-521-7265, froba@comcast.net), who wrote the book on this area, says "This area is superb for raptors..." and it is indeed. We'll see one of the best selection of hawks and eagles that can be seen anywhere in the U.S.A. Meet at the Stanislaus Library parking lot at 1500 "I" Street at 7:00 a.m. We'll be back early-to-mid afternoon.



"Its going to be a long winter!" Photo: Irv Logan

Come Warm Up After The CBC!

Join your fellow birder-counters for wild boastings and a delicious pot luck dinner starting at 5:00 p.m. on December 15 at the Jamestown Community Hall! A ham, coffee, and tea will be provided. Just bring a side dish (appetizer, salad, or dessert) AND your own table setting (plate, silverware, glass/cup) and beverage. Call Pamela Blair for any questions:

CSAS Executive Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 5, 6 p.m.
Jamestown Community Hall

Editor's Comments

Thanks, John, for the great picture of the Northern Pygmy Owl. The only time I came upon one of these he was less than ten feet away, without any obstructions and he posed as long as I wanted, and I didn't have a camera! Groan!!!

I took the photo of the feeder this morning to show that birds are better at conservation than some of us. I put the feeder up a couple of years ago at our retirement community and had neglected to fill it for some time. The Acorn Woodpeckers knew what to do with it. Every acorn in there is one less in my garage!

I'm still asking for those pictures you'd like to share but just haven't gotten around to figuring out which memory card they are on.

One more appeal for the CBC: Be there if at all possible. Although it is a little more challenging in inclement weather it is still fun--don't let it deter you. Or be a feeder watcher! Watch for news next month regarding January's Eagle Count. If you haven't been on one--give it a try. A lot of good fellowship is waiting (even if the eagles aren't)!

I hope each one of you has a pleasant Holiday Season and a blessed New Year.

Irv Logan irvlogan@aol.com

Your Audubon Board

David Harden , President	533-1668
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Tom Harrington , Secretary	694-8564
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John Turner , Website	852-2348
Steven Umland , Sightings, Sonora CBC	352-6985
Barry Boulton , Calaveras CBC	795-8225

SIERRA SQUAWKER

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General Meetings

Third Wednesday (except June and July)
7 p.m., Tuolumne Public Library

Board Meetings

First Wednesday, September through May
6 p.m., 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 for \$20 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 for \$15 payable to CSAS**)*

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