

Central Sierra Audubon Society's
Sierra Squawker



Volume XXXIII, Number 5

January, 2013

January 16 Program

"Birds Matter"

Sure, they're pretty, but what's a bird done for you lately? Birds, and in turn, birders and birdwatchers, make enormous contributions to our economic, environmental, physical, and psychological health and well being. Our guest speaker for January's general meeting, Dan Webster, will present photographs and discussion that will deepen your love of birds.

Dan Webster is a local naturalist and bird fanatic. He has worked in the outdoor education field for many years for Sutter, Monterey, and Stanislaus Counties where he introduced thousands of children to the wonders of the natural world and trained dozens of young educators to be naturalists. For twenty-six summers he has worked at Camp Kawanhee in Maine as a wilderness trip leader and now serves as the camp director, returning annually with his family. Dan leads custom natural history tours for Y'explore, the Yosemite Conservancy, and Yosemite Guide Service as well as bird walks for Central Sierra Audubon.

Please join us at the Tuolumne County Library at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 16th. Everyone is welcome and refreshments will be served after the meeting. For more information, contact David Harden at 533-1668 or email dharden@sonnet.com.

Adopt-a-Highway Clean-up

Our next clean-up on Highway 49/120 will be held on Thursday, January 16. Meet at Perko's at 7:30 a.m. to carpool or be at the Don Pedro Vista parking area (near the bridge) at 8:00 a.m. If weather is questionable, call Tom Harrington before 7:00 a.m. at 694-8564. Thanks to all of the volunteers!

Upcoming Programs

Third Wednesday, 7 p.m.

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"*

**Monthly programs are held in the
Tuolumne County Library.**



Photo: Barry Boulton

At the far end of Camp 9 Road beside the Middle Fork of the Stanislaus River, Judy Serra and her CBC team counted 41 mature and 27 immature Bald Eagles. This is an exceptionally high count and is probably due to the abundance of Kokanee Salmon that are currently in the river.

Barry Boulton

President's Message

I hope that everyone has had a happy holiday season and is enjoying the drier if somewhat cool weather. From what I have heard the folks who participated in the various Christmas Bird Counts had a fine time out with the birds and enjoyed the evening gatherings that followed. I know that Pamela and I had fun with Dan Ward, walking the length of Algerine and Twist Roads, covering one small part of the Sonora Count. Many thanks are due to Steven Umland who has organized and led the Sonora CBC for so many years. He also gets up at 3 AM to find and count the many owls that would otherwise be missed. Thanks also to Kathy Harrington for her generous contributions of food and decorations for the potluck dinner we all enjoyed at the Jamestown Community Hall. And of course, a big thank-you to all of you who participated once again and provided the input that is so valuable for the longest-running citizen science survey in the country.

I would also like to suggest that you go to the National Audubon Society's website and check out the winners and top 100 images from their annual bird photography contest. There are some wonderful and amazing pictures that you will be sure to enjoy.

Happy New Year, one and all!

David Harden

Christmas Bird Counts

Results for the CBCs are still being tallied--remember, we cover two counties and several separate zones. We should have a full report for the next issue of the Sierra Squawker. A conservative estimate is just under 100 species and around 14000 individual birds! Look for a full report in February.

Steven Umland

Eagle Counts

I view of the fact that BLM will not be providing funding for a Lake Don Pedro Eagle Count this year, the event has been cancelled. However, the New Melones Lake Eagle Count is still on

for Saturday, January 12. For more information contact: Cindy Watson, 209-536-9094, Extension 216 or creppond@usbr.gov.

Coming Field Trips

The February issue of the Sierra Squawker will include field trips for both the local birding hot spots and the "away" trips. Our Field Trip Coordinator has been working diligently, preparing a methodical approach to cover the best birding areas in both Calaveras and Tuolumne counties. Its time to dust off our binoculars and birding scopes and be ready for a great season of bird watching!

Irv Logan

Groveland GCSD Field Trip

The next two "First Wednesday of the Month" Bird Walks at the Groveland Community Services District property (located at 18966 Ferretti Road, Groveland) will be Wednesday, January 2 and February 6. 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 two-to-three hours. If you have any questions, call Jeanne Ridgley at 962-7598.

This just in:

Ralph Baker, Barbara Connelly, John Harris, Suzanne Kilburn, David Lukas, Carol Rosalind, and Sal Salerno joined me this morning (January 2). We added a new species for this site---Golden-crowned Kinglet---for 134 species since we began keeping records here in November of 2007. Other highlights were Lesser Scaup (seen only once before in December of 2009), Peregrine Falcon and Green-winged Teal (seen only occasionally here).
Jeanne Ridgley



Mystery Bird (see Ed. Comments) Photo: Irv Logan



Rich Cimino is leading trips to **Nome** (Alaska), **New Mexico** and **Wisconsin** in 2013. For more information on all three trips contact: Rich Cimino at 925-353-0266. yellowbilledtours@gmail.com or visit the website www.yellowbilledtours.com

Editor's Comments

The series of pictures on the left is one of my favorites. We had just parked in the new street-side parking by Yosemite Falls. I asked a man across the street if he had seen or heard a Great-horned Owl. He pointed to an oak tree just off the trail. There was this large owl in a hollowed-out tree, half asleep. I hesitated, thinking what a dull shot, but brought out my camera and tripod and set it up, hoping for something to happen. Soon, two Ravens began attacking the owl (I've got one picture with the Raven scoring a hit on the owl's back). In the second picture you can see the owl wedging himself in with his wings while he fought off the attackers with its claws and its beak. The fourth picture, taken a few weeks later, shows what the owl was so valiantly protecting. By my next trip to the valley the old oak had fallen, along with my hopes of many more exciting photos!

The tail on the "Mystery" bird is real. The body was about the size of a house finch. The mystery bird was not listed in any of my dozen or so books on bird identification, so I called one of you (I didn't know many of you yet) and you had seen the bird--in Africa! I am almost certain that this bird had escaped from a zoo or someone's exotic collection--I don't think he was just "off course". He hung around for a couple of days. Name: Pin-tailed Whydah, from south of the Sahara Desert.

Your Audubon Board

- David Harden, President 533-1668
- Dan Ward, 1st VP/Programs 533-3940
- Tom Parrington, 2nd VP/Conservation 928-3835
- Tom Harrington, Secretary 694-8564
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- Jeanne Ridgley, Membership 962-7598
- Pamela Blair, Education 533-1668
- Jan Jorn-Baird, Publicity 532-1106
- Irv Logan, Newsletter 505-3250

Your Audubon Committees

- Suzanne Kilburn, Bird Box Trail 532-1938
- Tom Harrington, Book Sales 694-8564
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- Joyce Schieferstein, Scholarship 586-1680
- John Turner, Website 852-2348
- Steven Umland, Sightings, Sonora CBC 352-6985
- Barry Boulton, Calaveras CBC 795-8225

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General Meetings

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

Board Meetings

First Wednesday (September through May)
Jamestown Community Hall, 6 p.m.

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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