

Central Sierra Audubon Society's
Sierra Squawker



March Program

"Sketching Birds" with John Muir Laws



Drawing birds is one of the best ways to train your observational skills. If you think you cannot draw, this one-hour interactive presentation will change your mind. Learn how to use sketches to make quick, accurate field notes of living birds. What are the most important things to notice when you see a bird? What do you do if it moves? Do you need a photographic memory? What are the most important tips to get your drawings to start looking like the bird you see? Once you start drawing birds, you will begin to notice details you have missed for years and develop the art of gestalt birding (identifying birds not by field marks but by feeling).

John Muir Laws is a naturalist, educator, and artist, and the author of the Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada and the Laws Guide to Drawing Birds. He is a research associate with the California Academy of Sciences and we are very lucky to have him return every year as our guest speaker.

Please join us at the Tuolumne County Library on Greenley Road in Sonora at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20 for this informative and delightful program. Laws will happily sign books after the show as we enjoy the refreshments. For more information call David Harden at 533-1668 or email dharden@sonnet.com.

Coming Programs

April **Harold Basey:** *"Mountain Lions"*

May **Nancy Muleady-Mecham:** *"Giant Sequoias"*
 (Monthly programs are held in the
 Tuolumne County Public Library)

URGENT! Help Wanted

Like most small, community based organizations, Central Sierra Audubon relies on volunteers to carry out its mission. We strive to contribute to the conservation of birds and wildlife habitat here in the Sierra foothills through our education and scholarship programs and by offering field trips and engaging speakers at our general meetings. A small handful of people do the work necessary to keep our chapter viable.

This is where YOU come in. If you like our programs and are concerned about the environment of the Central Sierra, maybe it is time to step forward. We would love to have new faces and ideas and welcome any help you could offer. The annual election for our Board of Directors is coming up soon, and there are also other opportunities for willing participants. Please lend us your expertise and let us know that you're willing to help.

Ken Smith, John Turner, and Paolo Maffei have graciously agreed to serve on a nominating committee for this year's election. They or any of the Board members would love to hear from you.

David Harden, President

CSAS "Adopt a Highway" Cleanup March 21

If you'd like to join in the fun, and hopefully see some early wildflowers, meet at Perko's at 7:30 a.m. and we'll head for the Don Pedro vista parking lot on Hwy 49/120. We should be back to Perko's by 10 a.m. If weather is questionable, call **Tom Harrington**, 694-8564, before 7 a.m. The money for the recyclables we collect goes into our scholarship fund. Our account at Cal Sierra is "Sierra Audubon" if you'd like to donate your recyclables to the cause. Thanks."

Scheduled Field Trips

Sunday, March 3 (Away)

Merced NWR & San Luis NWR

Trip leaders: **Ken and Evelyn Smith**

Phone: 949-922-1455 kenksingz_2@yahoo.com

Time and Directions

Meet Ken & Evelyn in the Perko's parking lot to carpool for a 7 a.m. departure time. We will also stop briefly at J59 & LaGrange Road between 7:30 & 7:45 a.m. for birders who find this a more convenient location to meet. A great trip to both San Luis and Merced National Wildlife Refuges. These areas are always great for waterfowl, raptors and especially for Sandhill Cranes. It is a real spectacle to see and hear them fly in with the waning light of evening at Merced NWR. We last visited February 12th and were treated by the spectacle of thousands of Snow & Ross Geese slowly rising and flying to the North. It resembled an undulating column of white smoke for more than 40 minutes. En route we will be stopping at Dawson Pond on J59 just south of LaGrange Rd. (Highway 132). Please call and let Ken know in advance if you intend to meet there. This is a full day trip and we will most likely stop for dinner on the return trip. Remember to bring drinking water and a lunch or snacks. Hiking boots or sturdy walking shoes, clothing (muted colors recommended), a sun hat, sunscreen and insect repellent are advisable for all trips. The weather is starting to warm, so dressing in layers is advisable for "iffy" weather. Binoculars are a must, bird books are advised, and spot-ting scopes are optional and much appreciated. Those who have family band radios, please bring them so we can communicate between cars and help assure that all the birders get to see the birds.

[Note: All CSAS field trips are open to the public, and beginning birders, including children, are welcome on day trips. Heavy rain cancels--if in doubt, call the leader at least one hour prior to the meeting time.]



Merced National Wildlife Refuge

Photo: Irv Logan

Wednesday, March 6 (Local)

GCS D: Groveland Community Service District

Trip leader: **Jeanne Ridgley**

Phone: 209-962-7598

Time and Directions: 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 or 11:00 a.m. From Highway 120 in Groveland take Ferretti Road and then watch for the GCS D sign on the left at 18966 Ferretti. Drive in and park in the lot to the left.

This Bird Walk is held the first Wednesday of the month. The property encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water storage ponds. 132 species of birds have been seen there since November of 2007

Saturday, March 16 (Local)

Indigeny Reserve in Apple Valley Ranches

Trip leaders: **David Harden and Pamela Blair**

Phone: 209-539-1668

Time and Directions: 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Meet at Indigeny in Apple Valley Ranches. Take Lyons-Bald Mountain Road to the Ranches. Take the first left, cross the covered bridge and go to the end of the road. Carpooling is strongly recommended. Car poolers meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Library on Greenley Road to join up and be at Indigeny by 9:00 a.m. We will be viewing Apple Valley Estates with a short hike to the north side of Phoenix Lake. Those that wish may stay and "taste the wares".

Saturday, March 9 (Stanislaus Audubon Society)

San Luis NWR and Sante Fe Grade Road

Trip Leader: **Dave Froba**

Phone: 209-521-7265

froba@comcast.net

Time and Directions: Meet at the Stanislaus Library parking lot at 1500 "I" Street in Modesto at 7 a.m. We'll be back by mid afternoon.

These two birding jewels near Los Banos offer wetlands and grasslands habitats that can be expected to be rich in their birds this time of year.

Sunday, March 17 (Stanislaus Audubon Society)

San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge

Trip Leader: **(not listed)**

Chapter President: **Sal Salerno**

Phone: 559-985-1232

Time and Directions: Meet at the Stanislaus Library parking lot at 7 a.m. We'll be back early afternoon. This refuge is huge and offers the most diverse habitats in the are, including mixed species transitional savannahs, riparian forest, oak woodlands, grassland and seasonal wetland. Each trip leader chooses the particular habitats to visit each month based upon conditions and season.

Field Trip Reports

Woods Creek Park/Quartz Mountain Reservoir

Guy Van Cleave, Trip Leader, 2/17/13 (20 Birders)

Comments: This was a "birding the neighborhood event". At first I was apprehensive about the large number of participants with their wide range of experience, but it worked out marvelously with several flexible sub-groups spread out along the trail working on different birds. Participants circulated between sub-groups. I had also invited members (6 attended) of my Columbia College, Birds of Central CA, class to introduce them to CSAS. To that end, David Harden, talked briefly about the local Audubon chapter. The day was sunny with temperatures in the mid 60's and a light breeze.

The day produced 42 total species of which 8 were seen before we left the parking lot. Both sites delivered "promised" species: Red-breasted Sapsucker, Band-tailed Pigeons, Red-shouldered Hawk and a Hermit Thrush at Woods Creek; Say's Phoebe, Western Bluebirds, American Wigeons, Buffleheads and Ruddy Ducks at the reservoir.

Central Hill Road, Old Southern Pacific & Calaveras River Patty Raggio, Trip LEader, 2/16/13 (9 Birders)

Comments: I had a great time on the bird walk and hope the folks that came did too. I had eight people attend, all pretty new birders. I have their names and emails if that is something you would like to have? We did not see anything too spectacular but for new birders, learning even the most ubiquitous birds is exciting and that is wonderful to see and help nurture! We did find a dead cooper's hawk so were able to look up close at it and discuss accipiters. Thanks for the opportunity and look forward to joining more hikes with everyone!

QUIZ: What am I? (See answer on last page)



Photo Credit: **Bird Forum.net**

CSAS Needs You!

CSAS has introduced our BIRDING LOCALLY program designed to introduce new people and novices to the fun and enjoyment of bird-watching. One needn't travel far to experience or participate in this activity. For instance, recently the Audubon National 2013 Great Backyard Bird Count, Friday, February 15, through Monday 18, was conducted. This is an ideal birding experience for the novice as well as the experienced birder. This is also an opportunity to learn about birds, their beauty, migrations, environments and interactions with humankind, and to contribute valuable information to science via various birding activities such as the national annual Christmas Bird Count and the Great Backyard Bird Count. The Birding Locally program offers monthly local field trips in Tuolumne and Calaveras County led by experienced bird-watchers. **We need experienced bird watchers to lead these field trips.**

Many of the birders I know are reluctant to volunteer because they do not feel they have enough experience or birding background. To this I say: You have more experience and knowledge than most of the people who will participate. Be honest; give them your background and possible reservations. You will find you have more to offer than you realize. Sighting a bird, giving the novice the tricks of locating the bird, its description, and relevant information strengthens your own abilities and gives the novice the basic information they need to get started. **That is what Birding Locally is all about – Getting them started!** If you have a sighting that you are unsure of, dig out the field guides with the group and work together to come up with the name of the bird. This engages the novice and everyone learns from the experience. If by chance, someone in the group has more experience than you, USE THEM! Contributions from everyone are helpful.

I was not a birdwatcher and had never been on a birding field trip in my life when I found myself having to lead the first five birding trips I participated in. My new employer gave me a pair of binoculars and a Peterson Field Guide to Western Birds and said "Meet these people at 7 a.m." When I said I knew little about birds, he responded, "You'll learn with them." He was right. That was in 1972.

As you can see in this issue of the Squawker, we do not have a field trip scheduled in Calaveras County for March. We very much need volunteers to lead Birding Locally field trips in the Tuolumne and Calaveras County area. **YOU CAN DO IT!** You do not need to be a member of the Audubon Society to volunteer, although we would love to have you. Contact Ken Smith, CSAS Field Trip Chair at 949-922-1455 or **kenksingz_2@yahoo.com**.

Central Sierra Audubon Society

(A Chapter of the National Audubon Society)

P.O. Box 3047

Sonora, CA 95370

209-532-0570

www.centralsierraaudubon.org

General Meetings: Third Wednesday, 7 p.m.

(Except July and August)

Tuolumne Public Library,

Board Meetings: First Wednesday, 6 p.m.

(September through May)

Jamestown Community Hall

Join CSAS_Birds Listserv!

You will be informed of the most recent local sightings, encouraged to post your own sightings, able to ask questions and exchange information on birds and birding knowledge. Our club would like to build up a database of sightings, and your participation is needed.

It is very easy to join: Just send an email to csasbird@gmail.com and request to join the CSAS_Birds Listserv. You will receive a return "invitation" via email and all you need to do is click on the line to join. It is that easy! If you have any questions, please contact csasbird@gmail.com.

John Turner, Website

Thanks to **John Turner**, for picking this month's Mystery Bird!

Answer to Quiz: First year White-crowned Sparrow. If you have a suggestion for a Mystery Bird please contact the editor. Thank you!

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
Rick Baird, Treasurer, Past President	532-1106
Ken Smith, Field Trips	949-922-1445
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
Anthea Neilson, Hospitality	533-0360
Joyce Schieferstein, Scholarship	586-1680
John Turner, Website	852-2348
Steven Umland, Sightings, Sonora CBC	352-6985
Barry Boulton, Calaveras CBC	596-0612

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)*

Name _____ Phone _____

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