

Central Sierra Audubon Society's
Sierra Squawker



APRIL PROGRAM

“Mountain Lions” with Harold Basey



Photo: Graphicshunt

Our guest speaker for April's General Meeting will be Harold Basey from Groveland. His talk will focus on the mountain lions of the Sierra Nevada. Mr. Basey has earned two master's degrees in the study of mammals of the Sierra Nevada and has worked for many years for the National Park Service in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. He has taught natural history courses at Modesto Junior College and currently works as a biological consultant in Tuolumne and surrounding counties.

Please join us for this enlightening and entertaining program at the Tuolumne County Library on Greenley Road in Sonora. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 17 at 7 p.m. Refreshments will be served and the public is always welcome. For more information contact David Harden at 209-533-1668 or email dharden@sonnet.com.

Coming Programs:

Third Wednesday at 7 p.m. Tuolumne County Library

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------|---|
| May | Nancy Muleady-Mecham: | “Giant Sequoias” |
| June | | Potluck / Annual Elections |
| July, August | | No meetings / Happy birding! |
| September | | Jim Mori: “Butterflies” |
| October | | Ed Pandolfino: |
| | | “Natural History of Sierra Nevada Birds” |
| November | | Chris Calonje: “The Birds of Colombia” |

FIELD TRIPS

**GCSO: Groveland Community Service District
 Wednesday, April 3 (Local)**

Trip leader: **Carol Rosalind and Barbara Connelly**
 Phone: **209-962-6018 (Carol)**

Time and Directions: 8 a.m. to 10:00 or 11:00 a.m. From Highway 120 in Groveland take Ferretti Road and then watch for the GCSO 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. Rain cancels the event.

**Pinnacles Field Trip CANCELLED!
 Weekend, April 26-28 (Away)**

John Turner has had to cancel the field trip to the Pinnacles on April 26 through 28 because there are no camping sites available. All the campsites have already been reserved. If a trip is to be scheduled next spring, and you wish to go, reservations must be made at least four months in advance.

**Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua (June 14-16)
 Online Registration Begins, April 15, 6:30 a.m.**

Internationally famous Mono Lake lies on the boundary between the western Great Basin and California's Sierra Nevada, which rises 6,000 feet above the lake's surface...From the Sierra crest to the shores of Mono Lake, the Mono Basin watershed is a diverse mix of habitats: marsh, alkali meadows, sagebrush steppe, piñon-juniper forests, Jeffrey pine forest, mixed coniferous, mountain mahogany, and riparian vegetation. With 14 different ecological zones, over 1,000 plant species, and roughly 400 recorded vertebrate species within its watershed, the Mono Basin encompasses one of California's richest natural areas...Over 325 species of birds have been observed within the Mono Basin.

Early registration is suggested to reserve the most desirable events. Information: www.birdchautauqua.org

San Joaquin Audubon Society Field Trips

Lodi Lake Wilderness Area

Saturday, April 6--Introductory Birding Field Trip

Leader undetermined at time of printing. Meet at the north end of Laurel Avenue in Lodi at 8 a.m. for a leisurely stroll on the trails of the Lodi Lake Wilderness Area. Birders of all skill levels are welcome. Extra binoculars and field guides will be available.

Round Valley Regional Preserve

Wednesday, April 10

Join leader John Blades (473-7073) for a mid-week visit to this 1900 preserve in the Inner Coast Range near Brentwood. Meet in the parking lot at Toot Sweets, near the northwest corner of March Lane and Quail Lakes Drive in Stockton at 8:00 a.m. to carpool. Expect Eagles, Raptors and Lewis' Woodpeckers. If you can carry a scope--bring it. Bring lunch. Rain cancels.

Consumes River Preserve

Saturday, April 13

Join leader Jim Rowoth (rowoth@sbcglobal.net or 956-2648) for the monthly River Walk bird count through the varied habitats of the CRP. Meet Jim at the visitor center on Franklin Road. Check the website www.consumnes.org for last minute updates. Double check with Jim for start time.

Buckley Cove

Sunday, April 14

Join leaders Kathy and Virginia Bonham (bonhamtwin@att.net) for a morning visit to this small but surprisingly productive spot on the edge of the delta. Meet at the Buckley Cove parking lot at the west end of March Lane in Stockton at 8:00 a.m.

Kiln Canyon Hummingbirds

Wednesday, April 24

Join leader John Blades for our annual mid-week visit to this hummingbird hot spot in the foothills west of Tracy. Meet in the parking lot at Toot Sweets near the northwest corner of March Lane and Quail Lakes Drive at 7:00 a.m. to carpool, or at the entrance to Carnegie SCRA (18600 Corral Hollow Road, southwest of Tracy) at 8:00 a.m.

Panoche Valley

Monday, April 29

Join leader Terry Ronneberg (835-7847) for a trip to this important bird area. Meet Terry at 8:00 a.m. at the Park 'N' Ride at the entrance to the Tracy Outlet Mall located at MacArthur and Pescadero in Tracy. Please call Terry if you have any questions.

Central Sierra Audubon Needs YOU!

Spring Birdhouse Sale April 20

April 20 is the date for the spring birdhouse sale. We still need volunteers to build birdhouses, especially Bluebird/Violet Green Swallow houses (1 1/2" entrance hole) and plans are available from Tom Harrington, 694-8564 or John Turner, 852-2348. Set-up starts at 8 a.m., sale begins at 9 a.m. and ends at 12:00 noon. We could use volunteers to help with set-up, sales and pack-up. We are still at Rocca Park in Jamestown and the California Native Plant Society will also be selling their plants as usual. Our sales help pay for the two scholarships we award annually, so thanks for your help and participation in this semi-annual fundraiser.

Conservation Issues

Two recently introduced bills in the California Legislature are of concern regarding the protection of birds and bird habitat. The first is AB 516. This bill introduced by Assemblyman Brown would state the intent of the Legislature to enact legislation that would establish a mechanism for permitting the taking of birds, eggs, and nests, subject to reasonable avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures to facilitate the construction of electrical transmission infrastructure. This bill would authorize the Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue a permit to take birds-of-prey and the nests and eggs of any bird. Currently the taking of certain birds of prey are prohibited. This bill does not appear to apply to removal of birds from existing electrical transmission towers but would likely apply to any expansion of such facilities.

The second bill, AB 350, as introduced by Assemblymen Wieckowski and Bigelow, would expand the exemption from the requirement of a timber harvesting plan for cutting of trees on private property. The Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 prohibits a person from conducting timber operations unless a timber harvesting plan prepared by a registered professional forester has been submitted to the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection except for the harvesting of trees up 18 inches, or up to 24 inches in stump diameter for fuel reduction purposes if near a legally permitted structure, or in an area of a fuel break in a community wildfire protection plan. This bill would, instead, exempt the removal of trees less than 28 inches in stump diameter and permit the removal of trees less than 34 inches within 500 feet of a permitted structure, or within a fuel break area under an approved plan. Larger trees seldom create the fire hazard if smaller trees and brush are removed and such larger trees are valuable habitat for wildlife. It appears that the bill would provide a financial incentive for clearance of smaller trees by allowing harvesting of the more valuable larger trees.

Tom Parrington, Vice-president, Conservation

Field Trip Reports

Salt Springs Valley 2/3/13

D. Harden/P. Blair, Trip Leaders (18 Birders/56 Species)

Comments: A group of 18 CSAS birders visited Salt Springs Valley and reservoir near Copperopolis on a very sunny, albeit chilly, Sunday, February 3rd, where we saw a total of 56 bird species. The water species ranged from ducks, including the elegant Northern Pintail, to Western, Clark's and Pied-billed Grebes, Double-crested Cormorants and, unusually, a small flock of White Pelicans. Among the raptors, several Ferruginous Hawks displayed their low-level talents while an American Kestrel kited nearby. A Peregrine Falcon showed itself and as you'd expect, the Red-tailed Hawk was a common sight in its various plumages. At the reservoir itself we heard a Belted Kingfisher rattling out of sight while numerous Oak Titmice fussed and foraged in the trees and bushes. Western Meadowlarks were present in abundance, flocking together and then conspicuously singing and displaying with their flashing yellow chests. Lark and Savannah Sparrows also showed up although in small numbers, but making up for that by being quite tolerant of us. Nearing the end of the trip we were delighted to see the Lewis's Woodpecker who was busily searching for tasty morsels in a very large oak tree. Thanks to Jeanne Ridgley who kindly kept track of the observed species.

Barry Boulton, Calaveras CBC

Indigeny Reserve 3/16/13

Tom Parrington, Trip Leader (14 Birders/29 Species)

Comments: Fourteen of us wandered the lovely grounds of Indigeny Reserve and enjoyed a gorgeous March morning. We had a good look at many of our foothill bird species with a highlight being a busy Bushtit building its nest. **Species spotted:** Canada Goose, Mallard, Great Blue Heron, Oak Titmouse, Acorn Woodpecker, Western Bluebird, Wild Turkey, Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey Vulture, Spotted Towhee, California Towhee, Black Phoebe, Lesser Goldfinch, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Robin, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Mourning Dove, Band-tailed Pigeon, Red-winged Blackbird, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Flicker, Dark-eyed Junco, European Starling, Bushtit, California Quail, White-crowned Sparrow, Steller's Jay, Western Scrub Jay and House Finch.

Participants: Pamela Blair, David Harden, Ken Smith, Eve Smith, Keith Ensminger, Donna Ensminger, Sue Redhead, Paolo Maffei, Janet Maffei, Rebecca Chimenti, Augusta Parrington, Tom Parrington, Jan Jorn and Cyril Ashe.

Tom Parrington

Winter Sightings

Spring migration is kicking into high gear! The first reported swallows of the area were seen on February 20 when a flock of 50 Tree Swallows showed up at the

bottom of Rock River Road about a half mile up from the Tuolumne County line. Hundreds of Tree, Violet-green, Cliff and Northern Rough-winged Swallows were seen moving through the Stanislaus River Canyon on the road to Goodwin Dam on March 10. The lovely sounds of amorous avians are filling the air. Geese are pairing up on our local impoundments. Nests are being constructed everywhere. Those feathered friends who nest elsewhere are heading out. Many ducks are heading north to raise their families and the raucous calls of Sandhill Cranes can occasionally be heard overhead as they make their way to their nesting grounds. Our wintering finches will soon be gone also. Please report your First of Season birds as well as the last day you saw a species in your yard.

Here is a recap of our winter oddities: A single Snow Goose was seen on Pine Mountain Lake in early December. Phoenix Lake was the destination of choice for an Eurasian Wigeon, 7 Northern Shoveler, and 3 Canvasbacks during this time. All stayed briefly (as they seem to do in our area). The appearance of 2 Lesser Scaup on Lambert Lake in December and one on Pine Mountain Lake in January was a treat. Certainly the biggest show was put on by an errant American White Pelican on Phoenix Lake which delighted the neighbors. It even made the front page of the Union Democrat! This marvel was seen first on February 26 and on the morning of the 27th. There are frightfully few reports of Pelicans in our area--the bulk are seen soaring overhead in flocks. Two Yellow-billed Magpies delighted John Turner on his morning walk on January 25. Again, we have paltry reports of this species up here in the hills. Jeanne Ridgley continues to keep us up to date on the happenings in the Groveland area. Her frequent visits to the GCSD and Cherry Lake Road are very informative. Sage Sparrows are a frequent sight on CL Road as she viewed 2 on December 9. Last, but not least, the flock of Evening Grosbeaks first seen by Steven Umland as he left his classroom at Sonora High in December was seen by various people until early January.

I would like to thank all of you who continually report your sightings on CSAS for all of us to enjoy! The more you report, the better our understanding of the distribution of birds in our area. Please post your findings at CSAS or send them to me, **Steven Umland** at stevenum71@gmail.com.

What am I?

(See last page for the answer)

Photo: **Ken Smith**



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

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 or yellowbilledtours@gmail.com or visit the website www.yellowbilledtours.com

Editor's Comments: For each person referred by CSAS that takes one of the exciting "Yellow-billed Tours" a percentage of the fee is donated to this organization. Thanks, Rich!

Please remember to send your photos, suggestions and comments to the editor. Thanks you!

(Answer to Bird Quiz: a pair of American Avocet chicks)

Your Audubon Board

David Harden, President	533-1668
Tom Parrington, 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)*

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