

Central Sierra Audubon Society's  
*Sierra Squawker*

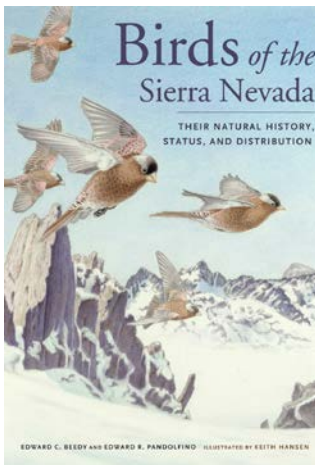


Volume XXXIV No. 2

October 2013

**PROGRAM - OCTOBER 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Natural History of Sierra Nevada Birds  
with Ed Pandolfino**



Ed will take us on a virtual transect of the range from the oak savanna in the west, through serene conifer forests of the west side, up into the majestic alpine regions, and down the steep eastern escarpment to the pinyon/juniper woodlands and open steppes of the Great Basin. Along the way we'll see and hear the stunning diversity of birds that make the Sierra their

home. We'll learn about which birds are in decline and which are expanding and increasing. We'll address some mysteries surrounding some of those species and discuss how birders can help to solve them.

**Ed Pandolfino** is the President of Western Field Ornithologists, a Regional Editor for Northern California for the North American Birds, and has published more than two dozen articles on status and distribution of western birds. He co-authored with Ted Beedy, *Birds of the Sierra Nevada: Their Natural History, Status, and Distribution*, illustrated by Keith Hansen. Published by U.C. Press available now. If you have a copy already, bring it along and perhaps Ed will autograph it for you!

Please join us at 7 PM, **October 16** at the Tuolumne County Library on Greenley Road in Sonora for what is sure to be an enlightening and entertaining program. The public is always welcome and refreshments will be served after the program. Products and publications on a wide range of birding topics are on display at each meeting.

For information please contact **David Harden, 533-1668** or email [dharden@sonnet.com](mailto:dharden@sonnet.com)

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Fall has arrived with a gentle rain on the Autumn Equinox. We hope that the moisture will help with this horrendous fire season and allow the area decimated by the Rim Fire to begin the long, slow process of healing. As previously noted, the tasks performed by CSAS rely on a team of dedicated volunteers. I would like to thank one of our longest-standing members, **Tom Harrington**, for all the work he has done for more than fifteen years. Tom has served in many capacities during this time and is our link to those who have been involved with our chapter in the past. Currently he serves as Secretary, and does a fine job with keeping track of our meetings with the monthly minutes. In addition, he coordinates all of our sales and fundraising efforts at general meetings and the semi-annual bird house sales. He builds and donates bird houses and is always a friendly presence with the answers needed by our many customers. He is also the driving force behind our Adopt-a-Highway participation with Cal Trans, where we pick up trash along Highway 49/120 near Lake Don Pedro. So, the next time you see Tom, tell him thanks for all the years of dedicated service. He is much appreciated.

**David Harden**

**UPCOMING PROGRAMS**

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Nov 20</b> | Chris Calonje<br>The Birds of Colombia   |
| <b>Dec</b>    | No meeting - just Christmas Bird Counts.<br>Please sign up; they're great fun. |
| <b>Jan 15</b> | Sea Otter research from Elkhorn Slough.  |
| <b>Feb 19</b> | John Sterling on Birds – topic TBD   |

## 2013 TRAVELOGUE

### Southern African and Madagascar by Steven Umland.

#### Part I

My wife, Suzi, and I took a ten week tour of Madagascar, Mozambique, and Kruger National Park in So. Africa this past summer. Our daughter, Redeana, is in the Peace Corps in Mozambique so that was what sparked the trip. The first leg of the trip took us to the mysterious island nation of Madagascar. With a large percentage of endemic bird species (almost 50%), this former French colony has always been a place I have wanted to visit but never thought I would. In the months leading up to the trip we keyed on three National Parks to visit in our short time, Ranomafana, Analamazaotra/Mantadia, and Masoala. These are on the Eastern side of the island. After spending a couple of days in the capital, Antananarivo (Tana), Suzi, Redeana, her friend Ellie, and I piled into a hired SUV and headed south for the two day trek to Ranomafana.

Non-residents are prohibited from driving in Madagascar. Of the 35,000 km of roads in the country, 16% are classified as paved. While traveling on these paved roads one encounters areas of potholes that increase travel time as you maneuver around them. As we passed through the countryside, I could not help but notice the deforestation that has occurred in the central plateau. I saw very few native trees and the areas that were replanted were graced with non-native pines and eucalyptus. Most of this area is given over to agriculture and most of this is subsistence farming. It was not until we were on the road to the Park that the vegetation changed to a more "natural" jungle type setting.

We were birding along the road in town when our driver, Wilhelm, called us over and introduced us to Loret, who was, he said, a guide for the animals in the Park. He also pointed out that he was named in the bird book I was carrying.

Next month we will find out how good a guide he actually was.

**Steven Umland**

(Steven is our bird sightings coordinator and all round bird identification guru)

## CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS (CBC)

### Sonora Area CBC – December 14th

December 14<sup>th</sup> marks the 29<sup>th</sup> local Count. Started in 1985 with about 8 people, we now field over 40 intrepid enthusiasts each year to count our avian population. Our Count is one of over 2300 worldwide. We need participants of all skill levels to go out and help with this endeavor. The count starts at midnight of the 14<sup>th</sup> and runs 24 hours (most people opt out of trying for night birds). The info is then put into a database that can be used by most anyone to notice any population trends.

Please sign up early as this helps the compiler, me, to get everything arranged in plenty of time. Contact me, **Steven Umland at (209) 352-6985**, or email to sign up at [stevenum71@gmail.com](mailto:stevenum71@gmail.com)!

### Calaveras County CBC – December 28th

Because we depend so heavily on Tuolumne County birders for our CBC, we select a different date and so Saturday, December 28 is a good date to walk off those heavy turkey dinners!

I will separately contact previous participants, but if you haven't participated before, please contact me by email [rbarryboulton@gmail.com](mailto:rbarryboulton@gmail.com) or phone (209)596-0612. If you've never done it before, or you're a recent birder, I can arrange for you to join an existing group.

As last year, there will be no potluck.

**Barry Boulton**

### Birdhouse Sale – October 12 in Jamestown

Our much acclaimed birdhouse sale in conjunction with CNPS will take place at Rocca Park in Jamestown on Saturday, October 12<sup>th</sup>. Selling time is from 9am to 12 noon and we need you artful sales champs to come along and help build up our educational scholarship fund! It would be great if we could expand our scholarships program from the current two to three per year for which birdhouse receipts are crucial. And, this is the best time of year to buy **and** install bird boxes so that the birds become familiar with the boxes well before they're ready to construct nests. In the case of birds, familiarity breeds confidence to use the boxes.

**Info: Tom Harrington 694-8564**

## FIELD TRIPS

### CSAS Field Trips

#### October 2 & 19, Groveland Community Services Dist.

In October, Jeanne Ridgley will lead **two** more of her excellent regular walks on the GCS D property that encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water storage ponds. 133 species of birds have been observed since November, 2007.

Meet the group in the GCS D parking lot at 8:00 AM. Bring binoculars and a birding field guide if you have one. Rain will cancel the trip. The walk will last about two-three hours. If you have any questions, call Jeanne at 962-7598.

Last month, Jeanne and crew cleaned out the Wood Duck boxes at a very dry and depleted GCS D treatment pond.

Photo: **Carol Rosalind**



## November 16, Wards Ferry Road, Sonora

Leader: Tom Parrington. Meet at 8am by the barn at 15589 Ward's Ferry Rd. Bring your lunch to eat and talk with Tom and other birders in the barn. Contact Tom Parrington at (209) 928-3835 or [eattep@sbcglobal.net](mailto:eattep@sbcglobal.net)

## Stanislaus Audubon Field Trips

October 19, San Joaquin River NWR is huge and offers the most diverse habitats in the area, including mixed species transitional savannas, riparian forest, oak woodlands, grassland, and seasonal wetlands. Trip leader, Bill Amundsen (521-8256, [birdscouter@prodigy.net](mailto:birdscouter@prodigy.net)), chooses the particular habitats to visit each month based on conditions and season. Meet at the Stanislaus Library parking lot at 1500 I Street. at 7:00 a.m. We'll be back early afternoon.

October 26, San Luis NWR near Los Banos, has many habitats, including forests, grasslands, and several kinds of wetlands. This diversity should produce a long list of bird species. In addition, all the wintering species should have returned. Trip leader Sal Salerno (526-9832, [bees2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bees2@sbcglobal.net)) will guide your eyes and ears to the birds. Meet at Stanislaus Library.

**Editor's note 1:** this should be a very good time to visit the NWR with some very accomplished birders. But, you probably don't want to drive via Modesto, so call Sal to find out starting location and time at San Luis.

**Editor's note 2:** we still need more volunteer field trip leaders. Remember you don't need to be a great bird identification expert. You just need to know a good birding route in your neighborhood.

## BIRD SIGHTINGS REPORTS

### Strange White Bird.....

John and Sandi Turner have observed this bird several times over the past month near their home at Lake Don Pedro. On the first occasion and at some distance when it was sitting in the crown of a tree, John assumed that it was an egret, but the shape was obviously strange. So they returned the next day, camera in hand, intending to get to the bottom of the mystery, and this is what John captured – a **leucistic** Red-tailed Hawk.

If you're interested to understand the difference between **albinism** and **leucism**, view this website:

[http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/Albinism\\_Leucism.htm](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/pfw/AboutBirdsandFeeding/Albinism_Leucism.htm)



## GCSD on September 4

During Jeanne Ridgley's regular walk, the group observed 20 species despite the depleted lake. Highlights were a Rufous Hummingbird and Western Tanager.

## Red Hills, Chinese Camp on September 13

Charlotte Ginn saw her first White-crowned Sparrow of the season.

## Valley Springs on September 11

Ailene Garrido saw several birds including a covey of California Quail, and many Phainopeplas feasting on pokeweed berries – what a spectacular sight!

## CONSERVATION

-----ACTION REQUESTED-----

### AB711 – Lead Shot (elimination) Bill

The bill bans lead shot from hunting - specifically, it "Requires the use of nonleaded ammunition for the taking of wildlife in California". Research shows that lead from ammunition is a danger to both birds and people. Scavenging birds such as the California Condor, Bald Eagle and Golden Eagle are particularly at risk.

As I write this, the bill's status is that it was passed by both State houses – Assembly and Senate – and now sits on Governor Brown's desk awaiting signature. However, no one is confident that Brown will sign it and so **please contact his office and simply state that you want him to sign**. It's easy to do; by phone, call (916)445-2841, select option 1 (English) and then option 6 which sends you to an aide who will take your call - just ask the Governor to sign the bill! Alternatively, you can email him by going to this site and filling out the response form:

<http://govnews.ca.gov/gov39mail/webmail.php>

You select the issue, AB711, from a dropdown dialogue. You can add a few comments – but do check the **Pro box** at the top of the comment page because it's a numbers game.

### State of the Birds 2013

This annual report of bird species trends on private lands is worth reading to understand the concerns related to birds and loss of habitats. It is loaded onto the CSAS website at the bottom of the Home page:

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

### Central Valley Birding Symposium

This annual 3-day event based in Stockton will take place over November 21 – 24 with a rich variety of field trips and presentations. You can view the program and register at:

<http://www.2013cvbs.org/> Most of the field trips have openings, but will fill up as the event comes closer.

# Central Sierra Audubon Society

(A Chapter of the National Audubon Society)

P.O. Box 3047

Sonora, CA 95370

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

## EDITOR'S CORNER

Very soon that great and mysterious movement called *migration* will be in full flood as roughly half of the world's bird species follow their age-old instincts to either breed in the southern hemisphere or take refuge in the more temperate parts of our hemisphere. Movement either way affords us so many opportunities to enjoy, admire and appreciate our "feathered friends". Most obviously of course, we will once again be captivated by the splendid colors of the returning ducks as they populate our lakes and ponds.

I'm looking forward to the return of the Kokanee Salmon to the Middle Fork of the Tuolumne River along Camp Nine Road in (hopeful!) anticipation that the large numbers of Bald Eagles that graced the canyon last fall and early winter will return this year and then make it an annual event; we shall see.

**Barry Boulton**

**General Meetings:** Third Wednesday at 7 p.m.  
(except July and August). Tuolumne Public Library.

**Board Meetings:** First Wednesday at 6 p.m.  
(Sept. through May). Jamestown Community Hall.

## YOUR AUDUBON BOARD

David Harden, President	533-1668
Tom Parrington, VP Conservation	928-3835
Walt Kruse, VP Programs	588-8067
Tom Harrington, Secretary	694-8564
Rick Baird, Past President	532-1106
Ken Smith, Field Trips	(949)922-1455
Jeanne Ridgley, Membership	962-7598
Pamela Blair, Education	533-1668
Jan Jorn-Baird, Publicity	532-1106
Barry Boulton, Newsletter	596-0612

[rbarryboulton@gmail.com](mailto:rbarryboulton@gmail.com)

## YOUR AUDUBON COMMITTEES

Suzanne Kilburn, Bird Box Trail	532-1938
Tom Harrington, Book Sales	694-8564
Anthea Neilson, Hospitality	533-0360
Pamela Blair, Scholarship	533-1668
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 the National Audubon Society with a subscription to Audubon magazine, and a member of the Central Sierra Audubon Society, with a subscription to the CSAS newsletter *The Sierra Squawker*, complete this form and submit it with a check for \$20 payable to National Audubon Society.

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To become a member of CSAS, with a subscription to the CSAS newsletter *The Sierra Squawker*, please make your check for \$15 payable to CSAS. Please mail either request to:

**Jeanne Ridgley, CSAS Membership Chairperson**  
**9353 Pine Mountain Drive, Groveland, CA 95321**

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

Street address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Newsletter preference (circle one):    Email            U.S.Mail            Website ([centralsierraaudubon.org](http://centralsierraaudubon.org))

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