

Central Sierra Audubon Society's  
*Sierra Squawker*



Volume XXXIV No. 3

November 2013

## PROGRAM - NOVEMBER 20<sup>th</sup>

### The Birds of Colombia with Chris Calonje



Vermillion Flycatcher in Cali - by Barry Boulton

Colombia's rich tropical ecosystems contain close to 1850 bird species, compared to around 900 in the whole U.S., and around 650 in California. Cali, in the south west of Colombia, is one of the newest birding spots since the Colombian government eradicated the big drug cartels. The birds of Colombia are rich in variety, plumage and behavior, and so this presentation will be one

of those special mouth-watering occasions where you will feel drawn to make a trip to see them!

Our presenter this evening, **Christopher Calonje** was born and raised in Colombia and received a degree in Natural Resources Planning from Humboldt State University. He has worked as an environmental consultant in the Pacific Northwest and specializes in wetland science, environmental restoration, botany and environmental education. Chris lives part of the year in Cali, Colombia, and part of the year in Oregon. He has been birding in Colombia since 2008, and founded Colombia Birdwatch to promote responsible social and environmental eco-tourism in Colombia. Visit: <http://www.colombiabirdwatch.com/>

Please join us at 7 PM, **November 20** 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

At our last monthly meeting on October 16, some fifty of us were privileged to hear and see Ed Pandolfino present his program on *Birds of the Sierra Nevada*, his new book co-authored with Ted Beedy. Everyone there agreed that it was one of the best presentations we have had in a long time, and I overheard much excited talk afterward about folks' favorite photos or bird songs. For me, the haunting song of the Hermit Thrush brought back the many days I have happily traipsed through the Sierra. Ed covered numerous topics as he spoke about the natural history, status and distribution of our local birds and accompanied his talk with marvelous illustrations from the book, painted by Keith Hansen. We are very lucky to have guest speakers of this caliber. and if you haven't been coming to the library on the third Wednesdays of each month, you're missing out. This month, on November 20<sup>th</sup>, we will host Chris Calonje who will give an illustrated talk on the birds of Colombia. If you are familiar at all with the spectacular variety and beauty of neotropical birds, you know what a treat this show will be. So please plan on joining us for another great evening.

**David Harden**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- Dec** Christmas Bird Counts - please sign up. See sign-up information below.
- Jan 15** Sea Otter research from Elkhorn Slough.
- Feb 19** John Sterling on Birds – topic TBD

## CSAS on facebook

I would like to encourage you to visit the CSAS **facebook** page that is maintained very actively by Dan Webster. You can list your recent sightings, upload your photos, and comment on others' posts. This is a great interactive technique for us all to learn more about our local birds. Thanks Dan!

## 2013 TRAVELOGUE

### Southern African and Madagascar by Steven Umland. Part II

The morning after we hired our guide, Loret, we all drove up to the entrance to Ranomafana NP. It was a cool, overcast, and drizzly day. Loret quickly proved his worth by pointing out various birds we could see and identifying those we could hear (and later see). His uncanny ability to locate lounging lemurs was uncanny. Of course, being in touch with all the other guides via phone, helped his tracking abilities immensely. Ranomafana and the other three parks we visited are thick jungly forests with excellent trail systems. Ranomafana has some very steep sections to hike. Guides are mandatory



throughout the NP system in Madagascar. The three we used were extremely knowledgeable about all aspects of the surroundings from plants to insects/spiders to birds to mammals.

Depending on who you are researching, Madagascar has from 200 to 240 species of birds with from 119 to 140 not found anywhere else (endemic). Long isolation from the African continent has let natural selection mold the avian/mammalian fauna into many strange types.

One of the endemic families are the Vangas. There are 22 species of Vanga on the island (again, depending on your source). They are another apparent example of adaptive radiation, coming from a single stock of bird, a zillion years ago when the island broke away from Africa. We started with the vivid Blue Vanga and by the end of our trips through the park, we saw 5 species. A face-to-face meeting with a Madagascar Sparrowhawk caused our hearts to beat faster as it came barreling up the tunnel-like trail only to veer off at the last second! A close encounter with a Madagascar Wood-Rail also was a thrill.

Turning to lemurs---Our first encounter came on a cheesy "Night Walk". We were going to see a nocturnal Brown Mouse-Lemur. We could hardly wait. We had to drive to the spot and when we got there we were instantly greeted with the promised lemur. When I noticed the shiny well of sweet syrup it was licking. I thought, how convenient, a natural sweet treat for the lemur and how lucky for us that the guides knew about it. Of course, someone putting the syrup in place during the day vastly increases the public's chances of seeing it during the night. We were graced with

sightings of several species over the next few days. Standing below a dozen Golden Bamboo Lemurs was a great treat. The Park was created to preserve the habitat of this species and our guide said he was instrumental in its formation. All in all, Ranomafana was a fabulous start to our trip. However, I had a "target" bird for this trip. Next month, tune in to see the outcome of the search for the Helmet Vanga.

Steven Umland

## 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. Call me, **Steven Umland** at (209) 352-6985 or email to [stevenum71@gmail.com](mailto:stevenum71@gmail.com) and sign up!

### 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 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 newer birder, I can arrange for you to join an existing group. As last year, there will be no potluck.

Barry Boulton

### Wallace-Belotta CBC – December 28

To participate, contact Kasey Foley at (209)473-3904 or [kaseyfoley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kaseyfoley@sbcglobal.net)

### Birdhouse Sale – Report

Thanks to all of you who participated in the bird house sale at Rocca Park on October 12th. Preliminary sales figures indicate we sold \$779 of merchandise.

Rick Baird

## FIELD TRIPS

**Note:** All CSAS field trips are open to the public, children are welcome. As usual wear muted colors. Wear a hat, sun protection, bring water, a snack, sturdy but comfortable shoes. It is fall and the weather is variable, consider dressing in layers. Bring binoculars, field guides and spotting scopes if you have them. Rain may cancel the trip – see trip details.

## CSAS November & December Field Trips

### November 6<sup>th</sup> & December 4, GCSD

Jeanne Ridgley will lead her excellent regular walks on the GCSD property on both dates shown here.

Meet the group in the GCSD parking lot at 8:00 AM. Rain will cancel the trip. The walk will last about two-three hours. If you have any questions, call Jeanne at 962-7598.

## Stanislaus Audubon November Field Trips

### Nov. 9: Consumnes River Preserve – near Lodi

If you count on one hand the best birding sites in Northern California, this would be one of the fingers. Especially at this time of year as the wintering birds have settled in. It has excellent wetlands which are managed especially for birders and make you easily accessible to birds. There are also a number of other wonderful habitats. Leader Dan Gilman (209)765-9481, spiderman1974@att.net.

Meet at the Stanislaus Library parking lot at 1500 I Street. at 7:00 a.m. We'll be back mid- afternoon.

**Editor's note:** call Dan to find out at what time he'll be at Consumnes, presumably the Visitors' Center (confirm with him), and meet him there.

## STORY TIME

### “CB” by Steven Hicks

Back in the '70s we lived in the Bay Area, East San Jose foothills which have the same type of flora as these valley foothills. One day, my brother and I saved a baby bird from a fallen nest out of an Oak tree.



My mom had a bird book and we determined it wasn't a Blue Jay as no feathers were sticking out from back of head. We chose California Bluebird and called him CB. We didn't actually know if CB was male or female. My mom had the great idea to use raw ground beef and water in an eye dropper to feed him. He grew fast and strong. His first flight was from the counter to the dinner table. He flew around the house, turned corners instantly to various rooms, tormented the cat (Buffy) and ate from our mouths. He had this loud, attention getting, *squawk*.

CB was left out at night and each morning he would wake us up with his loud squawk, while standing on the clothes line cover my dad had made; seems it was always at dawn. We'd feed him the raw meat.

CB was gone one day, and we hoped he found a mate. We had him from a very young couple of inches to the size in the picture. I can't remember how long, I was a kid.

There was a commotion after we thought he was gone for good. My mom and brothers thought he was outside with a mate. One Bluebird got close while the other hopped away higher into a pine tree, calling as he went. Was one of them CB? We will never know, but they both left and that was the last we saw of him. What a wonderful experience that was to have had CB, a beautiful bluebird.

Steven Hicks

## BIRD SIGHTINGS REPORTS

### Phoenix Lake on October 1

I had the pleasure of a first of season (FOS) Lewis' Woodpecker that was being harassed by two Acorn WPs, constantly calling as they aggressively flew toward it and making contact. The Acorns continued to harass it even as it tried to land. The next day I saw three Northern Shovelers at the lake. On a side note, on Sept. 27 at my house, I observed several FOS species – Steller's Jay and Golden and White-crowned Sparrows.

Steven Umland

### Groveland Community Services District.

**Oct. 6:** Carol Rosalind and I birded the property where we saw 27 species. Highlights were a Great Horned Owl and a FOS Hermit Thrush.

**Oct. 18:** seven birders joined me and we saw 29 species. Highlights: first of the season Buffleheads and Dark-eyed Juncos. Other good sightings were a Bewick's Wren, Eared Grebe and also, a Wrentit was heard.

Jeanne Ridgley

### Pinecrest

**Oct. 8&9:** I just returned from my Pinecrest cabin with beautiful weather and very few occupants because the campgrounds are closed. Easy walks in the basin revealed many species, highlights being: Bald Eagles - adult and juvenile (successful nest this year of two youngsters), White Headed and Hairy Woodpecker, Williamson Sapsucker – female, Pacific Slope Flycatcher and Hermit Thrush - plus coyote whose family serenaded us one night!

A drive up to Leland Meadows off Hwy 108 revealed a large flock of Cedar Waxwings, perhaps as many as 75, and a large flock of mixed Golden-crowned, White-crowned sparrows, both adult & juveniles, in nearby brush.

Jackie Bobrosky

**Oct. 20:** we were up at our cabin the first time since the fire. While not too much bird activity in the vicinity of the cabins, we did see Common Mergansers on the lake, at least 10 in several groups. There was also a Great Blue Heron on the shore on Friday. A few times we heard a Pileated Woodpecker near our cabin and saw it briefly on Saturday morning when it flew to the top of a mostly dead tree.

Ellen Reintjes

## CONSERVATION

### AB711 – Lead Shot (elimination) Bill

I am delighted to tell you that Governor Brown signed this bill that mandates non-lead bullets for hunting. This step will improve the probability of the California Condor surviving, and reduce the risks to Bald and Golden Eagles.

### Rim Fire shenanigans!

As usual, the occasion of a devastating fire allows the slash and burn politicians to come out of the woodwork to do the logging industry's dirty work. In this case of the Rim Fire, Congressman Tom McClintock has introduced HR 3188 to ensure that salvage logging gets done not only in the vast burned areas that are non-controversial, but also to push salvage logging into highly controversial national forest and Yosemite Park wilderness or roadless areas. The legislation **mandates** NPS and USFS to create logging plans **notwithstanding any law**. The plans are not subject to administrative or judicial review (or public input). The legislation also sticks the NPS (courtesy of the taxpayer) with the bill for any damage that results from logging. The bill has not yet passed the House, but is nearly identical to an amendment McClintock successfully placed in HR 1526, (the deceitfully named "Restoring Healthy Forests for Healthy Communities Act) which was passed by the House on September 23, 2013. HR 1526 mandates and encourages destructive logging and other harmful industrial activities across vast swaths of America's public lands. It would destroy the benefits our forests provide like

clean drinking water, recreational opportunities, and fish and wildlife habitat. H.R. 1526 has not yet been considered by the Senate. You can express your concern to California's Senators: Dianne Feinstein at 2500 Tulare Street, Suite 4290, Fresno, CA 93721 and Barbara Boxer at 2500 Tulare Street, Suite 5290, Fresno, CA 9371.

Please see the CSAS website for more details.

**Tom Parrington, V.P. and Conservation Chair**

### 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 close.

### Editor's Corner

I am editing and finalizing this edition of the Squawker from somewhere in south-west China where I'm visiting minority communities and observing their customs. As I go, I'm naturally looking for birds, but generally they are few and far between. However, our trip commenced in a delightful place named Guilin, known for its spectacular limestone karst structures along the River Li. I was lucky to see a flash of blue streaking across the lagoon at high speed to alight in a tree at some distance, but just close enough to photograph with the lens on my camera. To my delight it was a Kingfisher that stayed for a while!

**Barry Boulton**

### Central Sierra Audubon Society - CSAS

Chapter of the National Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 3047  
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[www.centralsierraaudubon.org](http://www.centralsierraaudubon.org)

#### LOGISTICS

**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.

#### Membership of Audubon & CSAS

If you are not already a member, we would be honored to have you join us. You can join either as a full member of the National Audubon Society which includes dues for CSAS membership but, alternately, you may join as a local member of CSAS in which case you will receive the monthly Squawker newsletter and be privy to all other CSAS activities.

An application form is on the front page of the CSAS website at: [www.centralsierraaudubon.org](http://www.centralsierraaudubon.org)

#### YOUR AUDUBON BOARD

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