

Sierra Squawker



PUBLIC PROGRAM - MAY 21

Thinking like a Naturalist: Reclaiming the Art of Natural History

Presented by Jack Laws

Learn how to get more out of every nature ramble. Developments in neuropsychology have opened doors in our understanding of the brain and cognition and how you can train yourself to see more and to be more curious about what you discover. Naturalist and illustrator John Muir Laws will demonstrate simple and fun techniques that you can incorporate into your own recreational nature study or share with others. A perfect experience for teachers, home school parents, and anyone interested in taking their birding and nature study to the next level.



Naturalist, educator and artist John (Jack) Muir Laws is in love with the natural world and has lived his life sharing this passion with others. He is trained as a wildlife biologist and is a Research Associate of the California Academy of Sciences. He teaches the tools to help people develop as naturalists and stewards, including ways to improve your observation, memory and curiosity, conservation biology, natural history, scientific illustration, and field sketching - all while having fun and falling more deeply in love with the world. In 2009, he received the Terwilliger Environmental Award for outstanding service in Environmental Education.

Join us at 7 PM, May 21st at the Tuolumne County Library on Greenley Road in Sonora to enjoy Jack's presentation. He has visited CSAS on several occasions to great acclaim, so if you haven't seen him in dynamic action previously, this is a great opportunity - but come early! 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 and on sale at each meeting, including books by Jack.

CSAS Annual Meeting & Potluck - Wednesday June 18th Jamestown Community Hall, 8250 Main Street, Jamestown

The time has come, the walrus said"....ah, but that was Alice in Wonderland, whereas we celebrate the Wonderful World of Birds at our potluck in June when a new group of lucky people are harnessed to maintain the energy and purpose of Central Sierra Audubon. Why don't you come along too, bring a delectable dish? Then you can meet and check out our slate of Officer nominees: President, **Tom Parrington**; Vice-President Conservation, **Walt Kruse**; Vice-President Programs, **David Harden**; Treasurer, **Linda Millsbaugh**; Secretary, **Tom Harrington**. Maybe you'd like to nominate yourself, or simply offer some form of assistance that you would enjoy doing. Anyway, come along and enjoy the camaraderie - and the excellent food.

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UPCOMING PROGRAMS

September: Ed MacKerrow, Bird Photography

November: Steven Umland, Africa Tour, Part I

October: David Arsenault, Grebes and Owls

December: Christmas Bird Count Report & Potluck

2013 TRAVELOGUE

Southern African and Madagascar by Steven Umland. Part VIII

Mozambique

Mozambique has so much to offer. With very little infrastructure away from the few big towns, one can experience true African birding. Long drives down endless dirt/sand roads. Having to bring everything with you as “stores” are few and far between. If you speak Xitswa, you can wrangle a haunch of Duiker (antelope) from one of the small scattered villages and cook it over the braai (grill or barbecue) that night – but it’s very stringy!

North of Maputo, the capital, runs the EN-1, the only paved road in the country. Some of the spurs that go to the few beach towns are also tarred. Most of the roads that leave to the west of the EN-1 are dirt/sand. A sturdy vehicle makes traveling these by-ways easier to achieve. The country was embroiled in a bitter civil war and one of the casualties was their big mammals. They used to have an abundance of big mammals, like their neighbors. Sadly, this is no longer true. In an effort to bring them back, they import them from neighboring countries and put them in large enclosures, not the optimum viewing opportunity for these majestic animals.

We spent a lot of time on their magnificent coast. The Indian Ocean and extant wetlands provide good birding opportunities. Inland, however, birding is more difficult due to the lack of infrastructure. Granted, we never went to the north in the country but we heard that the situation was the same there. Our base of operations was south central Mozambique in the village of Mabote, where our daughter lives (and will live for the next three months). Around the town, there was an abundance of hornbills and bulbuls. To see anything else I had to hop in the truck and head out into the bush. On one occasion, I drove one hour to the west and was graced with Lilac-breasted Rollers, Turacos, Parrots, White Helmetshrike, Brubu, Apalis, 2 species of Drongo, and many others.

The birding highlight was an overnight trip to Zinave NP. At the turnoff to Redeana’s village from the main road was a sign that advertised an eco-lodge somewhere inland; no mileage, no other info except the icons that said that there was wildlife viewing and food. We found that this place was at Zinave, so one day we made the drive to the Park. It was one and a half hours from Mabote and we brought one of the rangers with us as we had met him the night before while we were at dinner. When we arrived at the camp/lodge, we found that there was NO lodge and no food available. Good thing we brought some food of our own. We stayed in a sturdy tent with only a few holes in it (have to worry about malaria) with a good view of the Save River.

We decided to forego the enclosed big mammal enclosure and concentrate on a fair sized “lake”. We spent a total of 3 hours there over two days. We managed to squeeze over 50 species of birds from here including Spur-winged Goose, 8 egret/heron, African Fish-Eagle, Hoopoe, Wood-Hoopoe, Goliath Heron and many others.

It seems I have been going on forever here. To reiterate, Mozambique has so much to see. I hear the North is exquisite in many ways with lots of great birding. The Mozambique coast has many beautiful stops for everyone. If you can, include this country in your itinerary.

Steven Umland



Goliath Heron

Spur-winged Geese



UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

May 7th & June 4th, GCSD

Jeanne Ridgley will, as usual, lead the Bird Walk at the Groveland Community Services property. 137 species of birds have been seen there since November of 2007, and 27 species were seen on the April 2 Bird Walk. Wintering waterfowl will be leaving. Swallows are returning for the Summer and Bull-ock's Orioles which nest here were seen on April 6. 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**.

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May 3rd, Big Trees S.P., Birding Field Trip Leader Class

Last fall, Nancy Eileen Muleady-Mecham Ph.D. National Park Ranger, Retired, conducted a wonderfully informative Birding Field Trip Leader Class that was very much enjoyed by those who participated. Nancy has agreed to offer another Field Trip Leader Class again.

The purpose of the class is to train interested birders to lead and to strengthen our chapter's ability to conduct quality "Birding Locally" field trips in Tuolumne and Calaveras County. In the past, this has fallen to a very dedicated few whose numbers have lessened due to time and circumstance. We need new people to replace this loss. You do not need to be a "fantastic birder" to lead a trip. I know this from my own personal experience. Years ago, I led the very first birding trip I ever attended. There were 15 people participating that I had never met before. We all learned together that day.

The class is outdoors. Nancy will spend time with birding props to demonstrate bird characteristics; how to properly set up your binoculars for maximum clarity and sharpness prescriptive to your eyes; and then out to the trails to learn how and where best to look for birds and convey this to your field trip participants.

The class will meet at Calaveras Big Trees State Park, at the Jack Knight Hall (NOT the new Visitor's Center) at 8:00 A.M. There is a day use fee of \$10 per vehicle, \$9 if you're a Senior Citizen aged 62 or older.

Tuolumne County birders - meet at Perko's Restaurant in Sonora on Mono Way. (Saves gas & reduces entrance fees as they are per vehicle). Be prepared to leave for Calaveras Big Trees by 7:00 a.m. The class should be finished by around 10:00 a.m. As usual, wear muted colors, sturdy shoes, bring your binoculars. Why not bring a lunch or snack and spend the rest of the day enjoying the park and perhaps practicing what you just learned.

Ken Smith (949)922-1455, kenksingz_2@yahoo.com

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May 10th, Tri-color Blackbird Field Trip

Almost all (95%) of Tri-colored Blackbirds live in California's Central Valley and surrounding foothills. The sites we will be visiting are on Hwy 108, and Rock River Road. Rock River Road is narrow and in some places full of potholes which are safely negotiated at slower speeds. Parking is limited so carpooling is a good idea. Be sure you have plenty of gas for this trip - none in the area once we leave Jamestown. This terrain is good for raptors - Golden Eagles, Red-tailed Hawks, Prairie Falcons and American Kestrels. Grassland and migrating summer visitor birds such as Western Kingbirds, Western Meadowlarks and Northern Orioles are also likely sightings.

Meet at Perko's (Sonora) parking lot at 7:30am. Refreshments are non-existent, so bring water and snacks or lunch. This is open country so bring a hat and sunscreen, wear muted colors, sturdy shoes. Bring your binoculars and/or spotting scopes, and your 2-way radios if you have them. Children are welcome. Inclement weather will cancel the trip.

Ken Smith (949)922-1455, kenksingz_2@yahoo.com

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CSAS FIELD TRIP REPORTS & SIGHTINGS

April 6th, "Spring Foothill Birds and Blooms" New Hogan, Milton, Salt Springs Valley School and Orvis

We met at the Hogan Dam overlook and 22 of us soon were stopped by the magnificent display of Foothill



Poppies on the river below Hogan Dam where we also observed a pair of **Wood Ducks**. From there we were on to Milton where a **Greater Yellowlegs** landed in a pool while we were observing Gold-

fields. On to the Salt Springs Valley where a beautiful **Bald Eagle** came out to welcome us when we stopped at the old Salt Springs Valley one room schoolhouse. In the valley we also saw **Loggerhead Shrike, Rock Wren** and **Western Kingbirds** as well as a nice stand of Royal Larkspur at the Tower Ranch.



Photo: Ailene Garrido

Then it was on to a marsh at Copperopolis where we closely observed **Tricolored Blackbirds** and Fryingpan Poppies on the old mine tailings. Our last stop of the day was at the Orvis Ranch where we closely observed some vernal pools and their unique plants as well as a large flock of **Tricolored Blackbirds, Horned Larks, Lark Sparrow** and **Savannah Sparrow**. The total bird species for the day was 28 with no exact count kept of the flowering plants. Spring did come this year to the western Calaveras foothills although it was a bit early.

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Steve Stocking & Ailene Garrido
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FOS - FIRST of SEASON SIGHTINGS

April 2: European Wigeon seen at Phoenix Lake by Steve Rose. "Red head with golden crown. Black silvery back and pinkish orange breast. Bluish bill with a black tip. In the company of a group of American Wigeon."

April 4: first **Western Kingbirds** seen at Chinese Camp by Charlotte Ginn.

April 6th: Five male **Yellow-rumped Warblers** and one **Townsend's Warbler** migrating through about one month early. Sighted by John Sutake at his home in Arnold.

April 7: This morning we saw our first male, female and first-year **Black-headed Grosbeaks** separately on our feeders. Later a male was singing his beautiful melodic song in a nearby tree. Seen by John Turner; elevation 1075', blue-oak savanna near Lake Don Pedro.

April 10: This morning I heard the wonderful croaky call of an **Ash-throated Flycatcher**. It did take me a while to finally see the little guy, but I can say "Heard and seen!" John Turner.

April 11: White Pelicans seen by Steve Stocking at Salt Springs Reservoir, and by Charlotte Ginn near Lake Don Pedro. Probably on their way to breed at either Pyramid Lake near Reno or at the Great Salt Lake, Utah.

BIRD FRIENDLY COFFEE

As reported by John Sterling at our February Program, growing most coffee involves the destruction of forest and bird habitat. Only some coffee plantations in Latin America grow Arabia coffee in shaded areas so as to retain forests *and* bird habitat. Such coffees are sold with the Smithsonian **Bird Friendly** label and are sometimes labeled as triple certified, namely organic, fair traded, and bird friendly. In checking locations for coffee sold with the Bird Friendly label as reported under the Smithsonian website for California, only Whole Foods and a Cooperative in Sacramento were listed.

However, our own Nature's Whole Food Depot in Standard, California carries Café Ibis coffee that is available in both regular and decaffeinated. Although the regular is \$14.95 per pound it is available. The address is 19073 Standard Road located between Mono Way and Tuolumne Road.

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EDUCATION & SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

Pamela Blair will teach one class at Michelson Elementary on Forest Ecology.

Last year's scholarship recipients were late in applying for Round 2 and there are 3 qualified new candidates which the committee will interview on April 19. The CSAS Board decided at its last meeting to increase the scholarships this year from \$2,000 to \$3,000.

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JOIN THE CSAS_Birds Listserve!

You will be informed of the most recent sightings and encouraged to post your own sightings. You can ask question and exchange information on birds and birding knowledge. This list is easy to join: just send an email to **csasbird@gmail.com** and request to join CSAS_Birds Listserve. 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**.

Central Sierra Audubon Society - CSAS

Chapter of the National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3047
Sonora, CA 95370

www.centralsierraaudubon.org

General Meetings: Third Wednesday at 7pm (except July and August), in the Tuolumne Public Library on Greenley Road, Sonora.

Board Meetings: First Wednesday at 6pm (Sept. through May) in the Jamestown Community Hall.

Membership of National Audubon & CSAS

If you are not already a member, we would be honored to have you join us. You can join as a full member of National Audubon Society which includes dues for CSAS membership or, 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

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