



ANNUAL POTLUCK - JUNE 18

CSAS Annual Meeting, Elections & 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 it is our time to 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, perhaps 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 Millspaugh**; Secretary, **Tom Harrington**. Maybe you'd like to nominate yourself, or simply offer some form of assistance that you would enjoy doing, such as leading an occasional birding field trip, or building a bird box, or socializing with us at a bird box sales event - or perhaps be a presenter at one of our monthly public meetings. Anyway, come along to enjoy the camaraderie and meet our scholarship recipients - plus the excellent food.

But, lest you think it will be nothing but hard work and food, I hasten to add that a former CSAS Board member, biologist and dynamic speaker, **Christine Meyers** (who was rather uncharitably stolen from our very midst by the U.S. Forest Service to whom she is now firmly shackled) will give us an insight into **Conservation Educational Interpretive Programs on the Stanislaus National Forest** which is her current occupation and passion. Her other passion is a recent daughter, appropriately named **Kestrel**, who will accompany her to our potluck, undoubtedly inspiring many "oohs" and "ahs".

And then, for those of us who are impaired in terms of attention span, especially while eating, I will be showing several short video sequences of birds in action. For instance, an unusually bold **Sora** foraging among the reeds and mud at Sacramento NWR, an adult **American Dipper** foraging (while bobbing up and down of course) in the Middle Fork of the Stanislaus River along Camp Nine Road followed by a **juvenile Dipper** very unhappily and reluctantly being weaned by its parents, a **Bald Eagle** also along Camp 9 Road enjoying a Kokanee Salmon for lunch, **Sandhill Cranes** landing at sunset at Merced NWR and hooting **Great Horned Owls** at the same Merced NWR. I find that by watching how birds perform their daily activities I gain a deeper understanding of what it's like to be a bird, and also, I notice the many similarities with us humans. The young Dipper being weaned off its parental dependency shows great parallels with our children - Christine Meyers to take note!



Sora foraging at Sacramento NWR

Join us **Wednesday, June 18th** (5.00pm set-up, 5.45pm dining) in the **Jamestown Community Hall** at 8250 Main St., Jamestown to enjoy these various gastronomical, vocational and intellectual delicacies. Products and publications on a wide range of birding topics will be on display and on sale as usual so bring your wallets and purses along with those healthy appetites!

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

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

June 4th & July 2nd, 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 48 species were seen during April, including **Wilson's Warblers** and **Lark Sparrows**. Now, **Black-headed Grosbeaks**, **Ash-throated Flycatchers** and **Western Kingbirds** have returned. On both dates, meet the group in the GCSD parking lot at 8:00am. Rain will cancel the trip. The walk will last about 2 - 3 hours.

If you have any questions, call **Jeanne at 962-7598**.

.....

CSAS FIELD TRIP REPORTS & SIGHTINGS

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

This Saturday morning event was given by Nancy Eileen Muleady-Mecham at Calaveras Big Trees State Park. In attendance was a mix of CBTA docents and CSAS members. Nancy was there to assist us in becoming 'interpreters'. I've been on 'interpretive trails' and on 'interpretive walks', but never really understood what that meant. By the end of Nancy's fascinating lecture....I finally do understand.

She definitely helped in heightening my observational skills. Bird watching is not just about watching; it's also about listening. She instructed us on observing bird behaviors, and how important that is in the proper identification of birds. We were directed to closely look at the immediate environment in which we are birding because it will affect identification.

Nancy is a wonderful speaker and her birding knowledge is amazing. I was in awe and so appreciated the opportunity to attend; really wished it had lasted all day.

Amy Monsen, Murphys

.....

May 10th, Tri-color Blackbird Field Trip

Ninety-eight percent of all known Tricolored Blackbird nesting sites are in California. For many people, this is a life list bird essentially found in our backyard. We had planned 5 stops - including three known Tricolored Blackbird sites. We observed a few **Tricolored Blackbirds** at each known site: at the Hwy 108-120 junction, on Rock River Road just east of the Brooks Horse Ranch, and at the Clay Pits at the Tuolumne/Stanislaus county line. The birds were not as active as in the recent past. This is to be expected because once they are on the nest, the colonies are very quiet.

Our original route was Hwy 108-120 junction, then to J-59 to Green Springs Rd to Rock River Rd, picking up Milnes Rd to Hwy 108 by Knights Ferry. I had received information of a colony on Sonora Rd about 9 miles from Knights Ferry Rd. After missing the Sonora Road turn-off from Orange Blossom Rd., we doubled back and found the proper road. We

thought we had found the small pond location and after spending some time and seeing **Red-Winged Blackbirds** and quite a few very active **Northern Mockingbirds**, but no Tricoloreds, we decided to end the trip and went our separate ways.

Eve and I continued to explore west on Sonora Road, expecting to arrive at the junction of Sonora Rd & Milton Rd in 1.3 miles per the instructions we received. Four miles later we arrived at 28 Mile Rd - a dirt road heading south. Jack mentioned if we passed this road we had gone a little bit too far. So, a U-turn and shortly we came upon a smaller pond on the north side of the road with a **Tri-colored Blackbird** displaying as we arrived. We glassed (binoculars) the area and located the large colony (some 2000 birds) in a long row of Himalayan Blackberry thickets some 75 yards away following the creek in a NW direction. They were very active but staying very close to the blackberries. I imagine they would be quite a sight to see during the pre-nesting and after fledgling, when flying en mass and feeding.

We saw **Long-billed Dowitchers** and a **Common Moorhen** (renamed **Common Gallinule** since 2011) on the Milnes Rd. pond between the Milnes Ranch and the junction with Rock River Road. We discovered several new (for us) ponds on Sonora Rd. with a **Black-necked Stilt**, sighting another **Long-billed Dowitcher**, a pair of **Cinnamon Teal**, and a **Loggerhead Shrike**. Overall, we tallied a total of 28 species and introduced birders to "Birding Locally" areas with exciting topography they had never visited.

Ken Smith

Owl Outing, April 12th

It seems that most people wanted to stay indoors this night. At 8pm I left Perko's with three charges in tow. Our first stop was on Algerine Rd. just east of the Stent Cutoff, where 20 minutes of calling resulted in us thinking we might have heard a couple of **Western Screech-owls**. We were just not sure. The lovely night kept us enthralled with its brilliant stars. Having had our fill of imagining success we pushed on about 4 miles up the road.

We ended up about ¼ mile west of the twist road intersection. We were successful in attracting a couple of Screech-owls soon after we arrived. The star at this stop, however, turned out to be a **Great-horned Owl** that provided us with 4 flyovers! We never could find any of these with our flashlights, but just chatting with them kept us busy.

Our final stop brought us about 2 miles west of the junction with Wards Ferry Rd. We immediately lured in a Screech-owl and heard two Great-horned Owls in the distance. While we were reveling in our success, the "fingernails on the chalkboard" screech of a **Barn Owl** assaulted our ears making the end of the trip even better!

Steven Umland

MAY SIGHTINGS

This afternoon (5/21) John Muir Laws, along with Chinese Camp school teacher Sherrie Betz and her students, and CSAS Education Chair Pamela Blair were in the BLM Red Hills area of Tuolumne County on a science hike when they heard and spotted a **Yellow-breasted Chat** in the willows where Six-bit Ranch Road crosses Six-bit Creek.

Maureen Kelley and myself have seen a **Chat** at that location in the Red Hills a number of times in the past. Sometimes the bird will come out of the shrubs and land on a tree limb briefly so you can get a good look.

Ken Brunges, Columbia CA

Showing up in Greeley Hill I had **Western Tanagers, Yellow Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers** and **Wilson's Warblers**. Also seen two weeks ago were **Chipping Sparrows** and **Bullock's Orioles**.

Guy Van Cleave

John Sutake observed a very protective female **Wood Duck** with 9 foraging youngsters on Meadowmont Pond in Arnold. Also in attendance were two males, although whether they were erstwhile mates or the two that she reared last year is the big question that we can't answer without DNA testing. John also observed a **Hammond's Flycatcher** near White Pines Lake perched about 50 feet above ground singing for several minutes.

.....

EDUCATION & SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

Pamela Blair, Education Chairperson, is pleased to announce that scholarship awards have been made by CSAS to **Clan-cy McConnell**, Junior at UC Davis and to **Greg Jerman**, attending the University of Oregon on-line.

.....

BIRD HOUSE SALE

Many thanks to the builders and sellers/promoters who helped with the April 26 Bird House Sale. The new venue at Calaveras County Water District worked very well and although it was a cloudy and windy day, the rain didn't appear. Bird/bat boxes and feeders netted \$370.00 and books/t-shirts netted \$132.00.

Thanks also to the California Native Plant Society, Foothills Chapter, for inviting us to join them for this sale. For those who missed this sale, we will join the Master Gardeners at Cassina High in Sonora on June 8 from 10am to 4:30pm, to again offer our merchandise for sale. At this event, you can learn about gray water recycling and rain water capture, as well as tour the demonstration garden. Donations of bird houses, etc. will be gladly accepted. Proceeds from these sales support our scholarship program.

Tom Harrington

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY

The next highway cleanup will be on June 13. This two-mile stretch of Hwy 49/120 near the Lake Don Pedro vista parking area takes only about 1.5 hours to clean, with two teams each covering 1 mile. We will depart from Perko's at 7am and return by 9:30am.

Tom Harrington

.....

RIM FIRE RECOVERY AND BIRDS

CSAS has participated in a collaborative group known as Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions which includes Forest Service representatives, logging interests, non-profit conservation groups such as the Tuolumne Group of the Sierra Club, and the Central Sierra Environmental Research Center. CSAS and the public have been asked by the Forest Service (FS) to review 2 distinct projects: (1) removal of hazard trees by roads and public facilities and (2) a wider reaching project reducing fuels for safety and future forest resiliency where feasible.

The CSAS Board made initial comments and supported project one (hazard trees) with the caveat of minimizing removal of damaged but green trees and minimizing stream drafting. The Board has made initial comments on project two and will review the EIS when released. We have had inquiries regarding the forest protection for the **Black-backed Woodpecker** (BBWP). After initial public comment, alternatives are being worked on by the FS which would increase areas set aside for them as well as minimizing road construction. Also, the FS added about 3K acres of recovery treatment for deer range, and reduced some salvage areas for various research associated with Spotted Owl (which is also BBWP habitat).

The CSAS Board has adopted the following positions:

- * Support removing a portion of burned trees not expected to survive, for safety and reducing fuels for future forest resiliency; many acres of burned trees will remain after either of the alternatives;
- * Protect the known activity centers for Spotted and Great Gray Owls and Northern Goshawk;
- * Avoid impacts to species which are candidates or are proposed for Federal listing, or their habitats;
- * Return forest to this area which is critical to sustain wildlife populations and connectivity of habitat for wildlife movement and expansion;
- * Minimize new road construction;
- * Maintain high diversity within each treatment area;
- * Unless a tree is a hazard, damaged but green trees should be left unless there's a substantial number of green trees in the immediate vicinity so it has a chance to recover, persist and seed the area with viable seeds; and
- * Minimize drafting of water due to the stress on the streams from drought.

Tom Parrington, V.P.Conservation

SUMMER TRIP TO CENTRAL BAJA

Retired biologist Guy Van Cleave has been leading a summer trip to central Baja for over 30 years. The marine and desert areas around the township of Bahia de Los Angeles abound with wildlife, spectacular plants and stunning vistas. Several species of whales are regularly encountered at close quarters including bow-riding dolphins. Colorful reef fishes and invertebrates and the chance to swim with the world's largest fish, not to mention the birds (Both instructors are accomplished birders and the trip provides the opportunity to see many new species and a couple of endemics) round out the wildlife experience. Guy and the co-instructor, Greg Meyer, run this trip as a Field Biology Class through Glendale College, using the college's new field station at the



Magnificent Frigatebird



Blue Whale Flukes

water's edge. The dates are August 1-16 and the cost is \$850 which includes chartered bus travel to Baja, meals and almost daily boat trips. Even weak swimmers become competent snorkelers in the warm buoyant waters. Many past participants consider this to be the trip/class of a lifetime.

You can check out the link below for information about Glendale College's Baja Program and view the photo gallery at: <http://www.glendale.edu/index.aspx?page=226>

If interested please contact: **Guy Van Cleave at: vancleaveg@yosemite.edu or (209)878-0529**

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

YOUR AUDUBON BOARD

David Harden, President	533-1668
Tom Parrington, VP Conservation	928-3835
Walt Kruse, VP Programs	(707)548-1829
Tom Harrington, Secretary	694-8564
Linda Millspaugh, Treasurer	586-9557
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 Editor	596-0612

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