

Central Sierra Audubon Society

Sierra Squawker



www.centralsierraaudubon.org

March - 2015

PUBLIC PROGRAM - APRIL 15

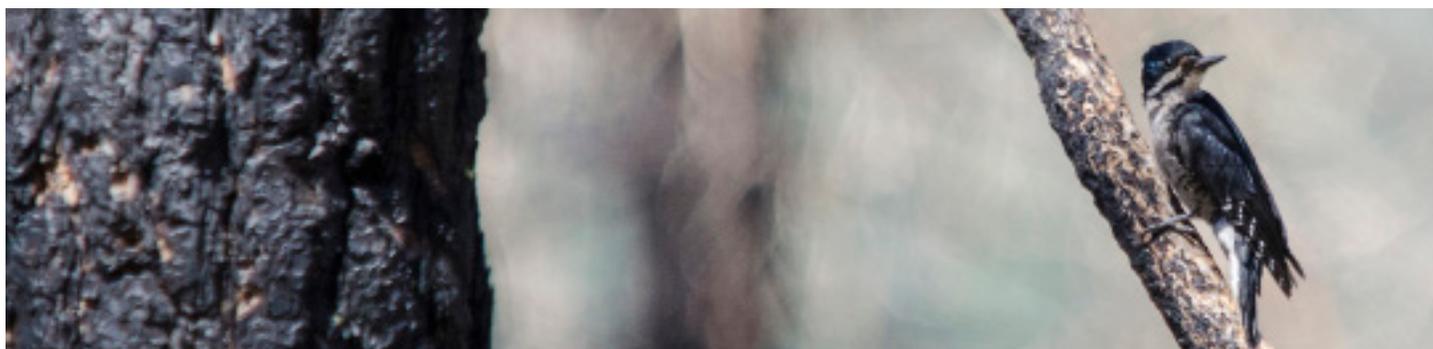
Black-backed Woodpeckers and Forest Fires

Animals Like Their Forest Well Done!

Presented by Christy Sherr

Christy Sherr will discuss how mixed-intensity fire promotes biodiversity and ecological health in our conifer forests, especially a habitat created by high-intensity fire called “complex early seral forest”, which is the rarest, most bio-diverse, and most threatened of all forest habitat types in the Sierra Nevada. Snag forests created by high-intensity fires like the recent Rim and King fires, are even more biologically rich and diverse than green old-growth forests. Many declining bird species depend upon this habitat, yet there are no meaningful protections for it.

We will also get an up close and personal look at the rare and unique black-backed woodpecker, and explore why this particular bird is so important to the survival and nesting success of many other bird and mammal species.



Black-backed Woodpecker (fem) foraging for wood-boring beetles after major jeffrey pine fire in Mono County - Barry Boulton

Christy Sherr is a retired National and State Park Ranger, now working as an Outdoor Educator for the “Field Guides”, and serving as the Education Coordinator for the John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute. She is also a Field Biologist currently participating in a multi-year nest density study of the black-backed woodpecker and loves the special beauty and dynamic biodiversity found in recently burned forests.

Join us at **7 PM, April 15th** in the Tuolumne County Library on Greenley Road in Sonora to enjoy Christy’s presentation. The public is always welcome at our monthly programs and refreshments are served after the program. Products and publications on a wide range of birding topics are on display and on sale at each meeting.

Upcoming 2015 Public Programs

May 20: Tom Hahn, Red Crossbills

Jul/August: Summer break

June 17: Annual meeting & potluck

September 16: Barry Boulton, Bird Behavior (video)

YOSEMITE STANISLAUS SOLUTIONS COLLABORATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Central Sierra Audubon Society (CSAS) has joined with a diverse coalition of local stakeholders to form an independent group called the Yosemite Stanislaus Solutions (YSS) collaborative to take action and work together to conserve the area's environmental resources. The group is comprised of environmental groups, forest-products companies, ranchers, community businesses, tribal representatives and county, state and federal agencies. The CSAS Board supported protection for the spotted owls and great gray owls, careful protection of water resources, and removing dead trees and those not expected to survive for safety reasons and for fuel reduction.

A summary of YSS accomplishments since January 2014 is as follows:

L launched a fully independent, diverse group striving to achieve restoration and sustained landscape health in the Rim Fire area and other areas in need. This included a Charter which documented the organizational structure, protocols and standing rules, and designation of a fiscal agent so the YSS could seek, accept, and track funds. Check out the website at <http://yosemitestanislausolutions.com/>

Provided media and political support for the approval of an environmentally sound middle ground, Rim Fire recovery salvage logging plan. The Forest Supervisor proposed a compromise decision which had no habitat disturbing actions on about 83% of the Rim Fire area. It retains 10-20 tons of dead wood/acre to benefit spotted owls, great gray owls and northern goshawks, which struck a balance between critical fuel reduction and immediate habitat needs of some species and included no new permanent roads. The YSS support also helped turn back legal challenges to the salvage logging plan.

Coordinated with Forest Service staff and the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to fund a \$40,000 study to assess the health of or need for restoration for springs and wetlands within the Rim Fire area. As a result about 60 springs were inventoried, with some restoration treatments recommended.

Provided support for a foundation to give \$20,000 to the Plumas Corporation to assess 80 meadows in the Rim Fire area. As a result the Forest Service has built upon that study and is hiring the Plumas Corporation to design and implement actual restoration treatments at some of the meadows.

Accepted \$12,000 for Rim Fire restoration efforts from a Groveland couple from their sale of Rim Fire T shirts. As a result YSS secured a matching grant to help fund a project coordinator to coordinate volunteer opportunities for restoration projects.

Provided strong support for a new, science-based reforestation approach in the Rim Fire area. This is in progress as the Forest Service has not finalized any specific reforestation plan. I will provide updates on this as it progresses.

Walt Kruse, VP Conservation

“Lower String of Pearls”, Oakdale Field Trip Report

On March 21 several CSAS members visited the Oakdale Recreation Area where we were met by local birding maestro Sal Salerno who gave us a good tour so that we observed around 60 bird species. Some highlights included three Purple Finches, one highly sought Common Gallinule (previously named Common Moorhen), a surprising Golden Eagle, a female Great-tailed Grackle and a small flock of Band-tailed Pigeons.

For me, the three Lewis's Woodpeckers that we saw at Orange Blossom was the best of all. Named in honor of Meriwether Lewis of the 1805 Lewis & Clark Expedition, it is an uncommon or even rare bird in this region. It's quite unusual for a woodpecker in that during the summer months it eats mostly insects and although it does forage on tree trunks in true woodpecker fashion, it catches them more often by aerial manoeuvres rather like a flycatcher. In wintertime it chops up acorns and seeds and caches them rather like the Acorn Woodpecker, but unlike the Acorn, it doesn't excavate holes to store the food, but uses only existing crevices. Aggressive encounters between Lewis's and Acorn Woodpeckers over stored food have been known to occur.



Lewis's Woodpecker - Barry Boulton

Aggressive encounters between Lewis's and Acorn Woodpeckers over stored food have been known to occur.

RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS



Photo - Dennis Wiebe

March 1

An early Anna's Hummingbird nest with 2 eggs.

Dennis Wiebe, Vallecito, elevation 1,700 ft.

March 5

I am currently in Hawaii and thought you might like to have my sightings.

On Maui I observed a Brown Booby flying and diving for fish. Also lots of Common Mynas, Zebra Doves, Black-necked Stilts, a Wandering Tattler, Sanderling, Hawaiian Coot, and a Black-crowned Night Heron.

On Kauai I saw the Red-footed Booby, Laysan Albatross, Red-tailed and White-tailed Tropicbirds, Nene (Hawaiian Goose), Erckel's Francolin, Pacific Golden Plover, Spotted Doves, Red-crested Cardinals, Cattle Egrets, and Red Junglefowl.

Sharon Volponi, Groveland

March 13

We've had a wonderful winter with our feathered visitors. In addition to our regulars, we have regularly hosted one of each of the following: Northern Mockingbird, Fox Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Band-tailed Pigeon. Some years we have many band-tails and warblers, but this year it was not to be. However, we have had a pair of Hairy Woodpeckers visit regularly. Fun stuff!

Jenny Souza, Standard Township, elevation 2,200 ft.

March 16

Hello Birders

On our way to L.A. passed Dawson Pond on J59 just south of Hwy 132. Several hundred American Widgons scattered about the pond and on the shore. Also 12 Cinnamon Teal, 12 Mallards, 5 Hooded Mergansers, Common Merganser female, 2 pair Buffleheads, 8 Greater Yellowlegs, 4 Killdeer, 2 Black-necked Stilts, 3 Snowy Egrets, 2 Great Egrets, 5 White Pelicans, 2 Tundra Swans, a Kingfisher, 2 Osprey (1 on nest atop High Tension Tower just south of the lake - easy to see), Red-tailed Hawk, 4 Turkey Vultures, 15 Canada Geese.

Ken and Eve Smith

March 20

The male Bullocks Orioles have arrived in Chinese Camp! And today, March 30th, the first male Black-headed Grosbeak appeared at my feeder.

Charlotte Ginn, Red Hills, Chinese Camp

CSAS FIELD TRIPS

April 1 & May 6 GCS D Walks

The first Wednesday of the month Bird Walk at the Groveland Community Services property at 18966 Ferretti Road, Groveland, is led by Jeanne Ridgley. The property encompasses more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water storage ponds. On the March 4 walk 28 species were seen. Highlight was a Lincoln's Sparrow. A mountain lion was seen briefly on the far shore of the large sewer pond before it went uphill and disappeared into the brush.

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

April 11 Indigeny Reserve - Sonora

Pamela Blair and David Harden will lead a bird walk at Indigeny Reserve. Meet in the parking lot at 8 AM. Follow signs from the intersection of Greenley and Lyons/Bald Mountain Roads in Sonora. After a few miles on Lyons/Bald Mountain Road, turn right onto Apple Hill Drive where there is a large sign on a log that says "Apple Valley Ranches." A quick left turn onto Summers Lane leads to Indigeny.

Trip Leaders: Pamela or David at (209)533-1668

April 18 Tri-colored 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. Be sure you have plenty of gas for this trip. 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. 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. We'll be back in Sonora by 2.30pm.

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

Opportunity Knocks!

Each year we, CSAS, must renew or reconfirm our Board of Directors and that time has come around once more. The positions to be filled are President, First VP, Second VP, Secretary and Treasurer. If you are interested in serving, please contact our nominating Committee members Walt Kruse, Linda Millspough and Dan Unger.

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Highway 120 Clean-up

The next Adopt-a-Highway cleanup will be on Friday, April 17. Meet at Perko's at 7:00am to carpool to the Lake Don Pedro vista parking lot, or meet at the vista point at 7.30am. We will return to Perko's by 10am.

Tom Harrington

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UPCOMING EVENTS

April 11 Bird Box Sales in San Andreas

On Saturday April 11 CSAS will join the California Native Plant Society in San Andreas for our annual sale of bird boxes, books and other birding articles. Members will be on hand to offer advice on the siting of bird boxes and on bird feeders and suitable foods, so if you have any questions related to birding, come and ask the experts!

Location: Calaveras County Water District (CCWD), 120 Toma Court in San Andreas. From Hwy 49 at the north end of San Andreas, turn south onto Pool Station Road, left on George Reed Court to Toma Court.

Time: 9am - 1pm, and if anybody wishes to assist for all or part of that time, call Tom Harrington - (209)694-8564.

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April 12th at 3pm in Modesto

Nature Close to Home A BIRDING DOUBLE FEATURE

Join Stanislaus Audubon and fellow birders for a special two-film event featuring films, speakers and information. The afternoon kicks off with *Wings Over Our Counties*, a film by local filmmaker and birder, David Froba, featuring spectacular wildlife seen within 40 miles of Modesto.

The second film, *Birders: The Central Park Effect*, captures the extraordinary array of wild birds that grace Manhattan's Central Park.

Come and marvel at the often unseen wildlife that resides among us, hear speakers, and find out where the top spots are for locating birds and wildlife in our area.

Location: The State Theatre, 1307 J Street, Modesto.

Tickets: \$10. (209)527-4697 or log onto www.thestate.org

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June 19 - 21

Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua

For the 14th year the Mono Lake Committee will be organizing and operating this birding festival around the town of Lee Vining which offers field trips with very accomplished leaders, along with workshops and nighttime birding events.

There will be several CSAS members participating, so you might consider joining us and making it a party too!

Registration opens at 6.30am on tax morning - April 15th, and you need to be on-line at 6.30am *sharp!*
Program details at: http://www.birdchautauqua.org/shsch_15.html

Registration details at: <http://www.birdchautauqua.org/registration15.htm>

Central Sierra Audubon Society - CSAS

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

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

Board Meetings: Third Wednesday at 3pm (Sept. - May) at the Blood Bank Conference Room behind Rite Aid on Greenley Road, Sonora.

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.centralsierraudubon.org

YOUR AUDUBON BOARD

Tom Parrington, President	928-3835
Walt Kruse, VP Conservation	(707)548-1829
David Harden, VP Programs	533-1668
Tom Harrington, Secretary	694-8564
Linda Millspough, 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

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YOUR AUDUBON COMMITTEES

Ron & Barbara McDow, Bird Box Trail	(650)391-5277
Tom Harrington, Book Sales	694-8564
Anthea Neilson, Hospitality	533-0360
Pamela Blair, Scholarship	533-1668