

Sierra Squawker



PUBLIC PROGRAM - NOVEMBER 18

“Andrew Jackson Grayson, Audubon of the West”

Presented by Salvatore Salerno

Andrew Jackson Grayson, Audubon of the West - The founder of the town of Grayson in Stanislaus County was also a self-taught ornithologist and bird artist known in the 19th century as the “**Audubon of the West**”. Grayson created an impressive body of work, despite great personal hardships, that was finally published more than a century after his untimely death. Grayson’s remarkable story and art are featured in this program, which includes an ongoing effort to purchase a set of “Birds of the Pacific Slope” for the Stanislaus County library.



Military Macaws
Photo courtesy Mills College

Salvatore Salerno is the President of Stanislaus Audubon Society. He writes a monthly column on birds and birders for Valley Habitat, the joint publication of the Audubon chapter and Sierra Club. Sal is also a poet whose latest work is *Inkboat*.

Join us at 7 PM, **November 18th** in the Tuolumne County Library on Greenley Road in Sonora to enjoy Sal’s fascinating account of Andrew Jackson Grayson’s story.

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.

For further information, please call **David Harden** at (209)533-1668 or email dharden@sonnet.com

Upcoming 2015 - 2016 Public Programs

Dec 16: Groveland CBC

Jan 20, 2016: **John Harris** “Sierra Mammals”

Dec 19: Sonora CBC

Feb 17, 2016: **Richard Anderson** “Birds of Midway Is”

Jan 2, 2016: Calaveras CBC

Mar 16, 2016: **Tonya Nilsson** “South Georgia Island”

Apr 20, 2016: **Pete Devine** as Galen Clark

STATUS OF THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE

You are probably aware that the Greater Sage-grouse is in deep trouble for a number of reasons, almost exclusively due to human activities in their sage-brush environment.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has been considering Federal listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for the past ten years, consulting with many people and organizations, including the Audubon Society and scientists.



Finally, on September 22, the F&WS announced that the bird would **NOT** be listed under the ESA. The Audubon Society issued a press release supporting that decision - which may seem strange to many of us. The stated rationale is that *“The possibility of a listing had sparked fears of huge economic losses in the sage-grouse’s expansive habitat out West, as it would have restricted energy development, livestock grazing, and residential construction. States and federal agencies that control public lands have scrambled to create updated sage-grouse recovery plans in order to avert a listing. And many conservationists worried that a formal listing could undermine the serious—and pioneering—voluntary efforts taken to protect the bird’s sagebrush habitat in recent years.”*

For more details, you can view the Audubon announcement at:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/unprecedented-conservation-efforts-keep-greater-sage-grouse-endangered-species>

There’s also an embedded video in which Sally Jewel, Secretary of the Interior, presents their case for not formally listing the bird; this short video also shows some excellent video clips of birds and mammals of the sage-brush country, and so is well worth viewing (it’s quite short).

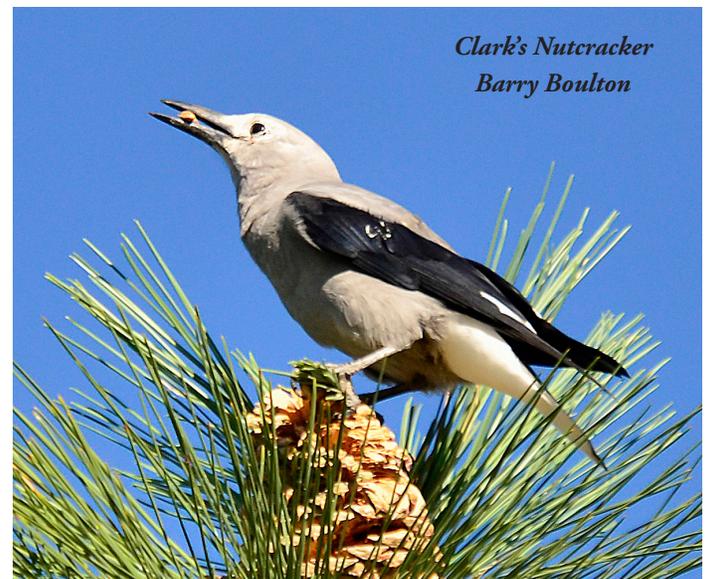
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RECENT BIRD SIGHTINGS

September 21

I had a Northern Pygmy-Owl vocalize at dusk at Camp Jack Hazard on Monday. It started at 19:30 with a staccato series then went into single toots. It vocalized throughout the evening as it meandered east. [Editor’s note: you can hear its call at http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Northern_Pygmy-Owl/sounds] There was a reliable American Dipper at Columns of The Giants geologic site. I also saw a male White-headed Woodpecker, White-crowned Sparrow, Mountain Quails, and **Clark’s Nutcrackers** on the basalt cliffs. There was a Nutcracker at Sand Flat Campground and Chestnut-backed Chickadees. At Eureka Valley Campground there were 3 American Dippers together, more chickadees and some type of duck flying at the tree line at dusk.

Xavier Sandoval, Modesto



Clark's Nutcracker
Barry Boulton

September 22

Last month I observed Mallards **diving** rather than simply “dabbling” on the surface at the pond below the May Lake parking lot on Tioga Pass, Yosemite N.P.

Today at Phoenix Lake, around 11:30 AM, I was observing a flock of a dozen Mallards. They were about forty feet away, when I saw a male and 3 females start deep diving. They did this for several minutes and then ceased this activity. I went on about my birding along the shore for twenty minutes or so and started to leave. As I passed these birds, they were **DIVING AGAIN**. I have been birding for more than forty years, in many environments as a State Park Ranger, and I had never observed or heard of Mallards diving until last month. They are considered dabblers. This is the second incident in about a month at a different location. Wow! (Ducks don’t read the field guides!)

Ken Smith, Chinese Camp

September 22

First-of-Season sightings for Northern Flickers, a Red-breasted Sapsucker, White-crowned Sparrows and a Sharp-shinned Hawk over the past two days.

October 3

I am continuing to see one female Western Tanager that hasn't yet migrated. Also, Lark Sparrows, 38 California Quail, and a few Spotted Towhees.

John Turner, 1075-ft., blue-oak savanna

September 24

Red-breasted Sapsucker returned to get his fall licks!

September 25

First-of-Season Yellow-rumped Warbler this morning. Also, Spotted Towhees are back too.

October 4

First **Golden-crowned Sparrows** today. After big thunderstorm last night lots of sightings in my yard. 11 Ravens and one Osprey flying overhead. Both a Loggerhead Shrike and Northern Mockingbird in the same area.

Charlotte Ginn, Red Hills, Chinese Camp

October 7

This morning I have had two visits from a **White-headed Woodpecker**. This is the first appearance in Groveland, according to Jeannie. Exciting day!

Carol Rosalind



White-headed Woodpecker - Carol Rosalind

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CSAS FIELD TRIPS

November 4th GCSD Walk

The first Wednesday of the month Bird Walk at the Groveland Community Services property at 18966 Ferretti Road, Groveland will be led by Carol Rosalind on November 4.

A Solitary Sandpiper and a **Red-necked Phalarope** were seen at the large pond in September. Wintering ducks will be returning in October. Phainopepla, a new species here was seen for 144 species since we started birding this property in 2007.



Red-necked Phalarope

Meet the group in the GCSD 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 Carol at 962-6018.

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November 7 - Confidence Road, Twain Harte

Linda Millsbaugh will lead a bird walk on the Lyons Dam Railroad Grade off of South Fork/Confidence Road, Twain Harte. Meet at 8:30 AM just north of Middle Camp Road on South Fork/Confidence where the railroad grade starts.

All CSAS trips are open to the public, and beginning birders, including children, are welcome. Bring drinking water snacks, binoculars/or spotting scopes, bird field guides if you have them and insect repellent and sunscreen. **NOTE:** Heavy rain cancels field trips. If in doubt, call the trip leader by one hour before the meeting time.

Trip Leader: Linda Millsbaugh (209-586-9557)

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EDITOR'S REQUEST - BIRD BEHAVIOR

As you have seen yourself, and in the experience of other birders, the arrival and departure times of many species, and their relative abundance, are changing for a variety of reasons, so your observations that are entered into databases such as eBird and CSASBirds indicate important trends.

However, **bird behaviors** as well as their demographics are changing and will continue to change. For instance, as Ken Smith notes here, he has observed Mallards, a dabbling duck, diving; this is highly unusual because the Mallard is a surface forager. There are several on-line observations about that behavior, but it seems to be a fairly recent and unusual development. It would be interesting if you notice unusual behaviors to mention them so that others may be aware and look for those behaviors too.

Another example is this fantastic shot by local photographer Peggy Sells of a male White-tailed Kite offering his mate a tasty morsel in mid-air. Although this is normal courting behavior, probably few of us have actually seen it happen, and so it's good to share the experience - even if we can't shoot a photo like this!

Barry Boulton

Additional Bird Sighting

October 7

This morning five birders joined me for the Bird Walk at the Groveland Community Services District. We saw 32 species. Highlights: First of Season: Eared Grebe, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco. Also, species not seen often: Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cedar Waxwing, Yellow-rumped Warbler and Band-tailed Pigeon.

Jeanne Ridgley, Groveland, CA



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

As you know by now (if you've been dutifully reading the Squawker!) we shall be running 3 CBCs this year, so please sign up as follows:

Groveland CBC, December 16, 2015

Steven Umland (209)352-6985 or stevenum71@gmail.com

Barry Boulton (209)596-0612 or rbarryboulton@gmail.com

Jeanne Ridgley at jeanneridgley1@sbcglobal.net

Sonora CBC, December 19, 2015

Steven Umland (209)352-6985 or stevenum71@gmail.com

Calaveras CBC, January 2, 2016

Barry Boulton (209)596-0612 or rbarryboulton@gmail.com

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/join-us/

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Barry Boulton, Newsletter Editor	(209)596-0612

rbarryboulton@gmail.com

YOUR AUDUBON COMMITTEES

Ron & Barbara McDow, Bird Box Trail (650)391-5277