

Sierra Squawker



PUBLIC PROGRAM - APRIL 20th at 7pm

“AN ENCOUNTER WITH GALEN CLARK”

Presented by Pete Devine

Various visitors to Yosemite in the past couple of years have been surprised to bump into Yosemite's original ranger, Galen Clark. Though he passed away in 1910, Mr. Clark started to re-appear during the park's sesquicentennial anniversary, sharing tales of Yosemite's early days and how the area's protection came about.

The first European American to discover the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias in 1856, and a tireless advocate for protection of the grove and of Yosemite, he was appointed by the State of California as the “Park Guardian” in 1866 following President Lincoln’s signing of the Yosemite Grant Act on June 30, 1864. Galen Clark's long Yosemite career included awful hardships and tragedy, but he persevered with a noble mission to protect this unique place.



Pete Devine grew up playing outdoors in New England and he connected with the West on family camping trips. He finished his biology degree in Colorado and went to work as an interpretive naturalist, national park ranger, river guide on the Colorado River, a teacher on Cape Cod, an outdoor educator in the mountains of Chile and an archaeologist in New Zealand. He has biked around Iceland, backpacked the Alps, birded Costa Rica, and led trips to China’s national parks. Pete has been working in Yosemite for 25 years, where he has directed the education programs for the nonprofits Yosemite Institute (now NatureBridge) and Yosemite Conservancy. He has hiked, skied and cycled throughout the park in every season. He’s become a celebrated expert on Yosemite’s history and natural history, with specialties in studying the park’s glaciers, John Muir and Steller’s Jays. You may have seen him in several ‘Yosemite Nature Notes’ videos, including the [frazil ice episode](#).

Join us at **7 PM, April 20th** in the **Tuolumne County Library on Greenley Road in Sonora** to enjoy Pete’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 2016 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

May 18, 2016: **Tom Hahn** “The White-crowned Sparrow”

June 15, 2016: Annual Meeting & Potluck

The potluck will include a video presentation on “Birds and their Behaviors at Merced Wildlife Refuge”.
Video by Barry Boulton

CITIZEN SCIENCE - eBIRD

Spring is here and the great avian migration has begun. Our wintering birds became restless and are already well on their northward journey to breed. Altitudinal wanderers will also start moving “up the hill” to reclaim their nesting territories from the receding snow-line. Wouldn't it be great to have a real time tool to witness this seasonal redistributing of our avian fauna?

Welcome to **eBird!** eBird is an online database that stores the sightings of tens of thousands of birders in the field. Everyone from the expert and trained to most of the rest of us who love to watch birds on our local lakes and in our forests can contribute to this vast storehouse of knowledge. For example, in May 2015, more than 9.5 million bird observations from around the world were logged into eBird. This is an enormous amount of data that is available to EVERYONE.

It is so easy to use. You register at the site ebird.org, and then you can start entering your sightings. eBird will then keep track of your data for you. It will display your data in whatever form you ask. Want to know what your Life List is? Easy! It is displayed when you log in. Want to know what your list is for Pima County in Arizona? It is just a couple of clicks away. If you are traveling to Humboldt County and want to see what has been seen recently, and its location, the information is there. You can find all the “hotspots” of whatever region you are traveling to.

There are two basic types of data entry. When you arrive home from birding, you log onto your account and hit the Submit Observation tab. After a few short questions about where you were and how long you birded for, you transfer your sightings from your notes into the database. If you have a smartphone, you can perform your data gathering and submission to eBird while out in the field. Download the eBird app from your app store, sign in, and away you go.

A rigorous checking procedure is built into eBird. Before your data is actually entered, it is compared to “thresholds” that are already assigned to the area you are birding. For example, I saw an American White Pelican on Phoenix Lake. When I tried to submit my list, I was asked to corroborate my pelican sighting. It was a rare bird for the Lake so I had to provide a written description. Another year, I reported more than 250 American Coots on Phoenix Lake. That was an unusually high number apparently so it too was flagged and I had to write it up before eBird would accept my list.

With millions of data points to draw from, you can watch spring migration on maps generated by whatever parameters you type in. It can help you plan a trip to wherever you might like to go by providing you with up to the minute data. Use eBird and make all your observations count!

Here's a great example where you can see dynamically the value of eBird. Cornell used thousands of eBird observations on 118 bird species over time to show their movements as they migrated back and forth. Oddly enough, Cornell named it [Mesmerizing Migration: Watch 118 Bird Species Migrate Across a Map of the Western Hemisphere](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/mesmerizing-migration-watch-118-bird-species-migrate-across-a-map-of-the-western-hemisphere/?utm_source=Cornell%20Lab%20eNews&utm_campaign=791d17d813-Cornell_Lab_eNews_2016_02_11&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-791d17d813-277553317) but it's actually only the Americas! Anyway, here's the URL and I highly recommend that you view it:

https://www.allaboutbirds.org/mesmerizing-migration-watch-118-bird-species-migrate-across-a-map-of-the-western-hemisphere/?utm_source=Cornell%20Lab%20eNews&utm_campaign=791d17d813-Cornell_Lab_eNews_2016_02_11&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-791d17d813-277553317

For more information on eBird, contact Steven Umland at (209)352-6985

SPRING MIGRANTS TO LOOK FOR



Ospreys that breed in northern California may spend winter along the southern California coasts, or even further down into coastal Mexico and Central America. A bonded pair of Ospreys returns each year to the same nest, with the female arriving a few days ahead of the male. The trip lasts just a few days in spring, but takes longer in the fall journey. This pair is now resident again on a utility pole alongside Tulloch Lake.



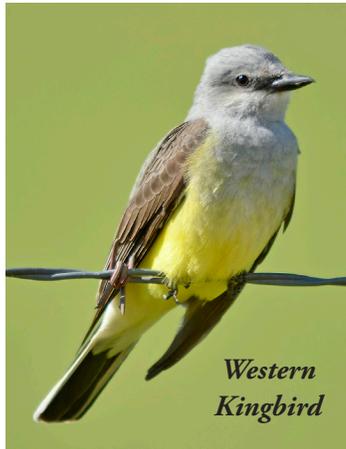
The Orioles (Bullock's on left, Hooded on right) arrive here in March - in fact, John Turner saw first of season Bullock's on March 11 which was about 2 weeks earlier than usual at his location at La Grange near Lake Don Pedro.

UPCOMING CSAS FIELD TRIPS

The Hooded Oriole overwinters in Baja California and south coastal Mexico, whereas the Bullock's may go further down to northern Central America. Both species build a hanging nest, but the Hooded generally attaches the nest to the frond of a palm tree, while the Bullock's hangs it from a deciduous tree such as a sycamore, cottonwood, willows or deciduous oak as you see here.



Bullock's Oriole nest



Western Kingbird

The Western Kingbird is another denizen of southern Mexico and Central America over winter, but migrates here in the spring to breed in our lower elevation grasslands.

The "altitudinal migrants" to which Steven referred that go up higher in the Sierra to breed include the Spotted Towhee, White-

crowned Sparrow and Dark-eyed Junco, so you may well see them passing by one day and gone the next.

Most of the ducks that you see in the winter have gone now, except for the ubiquitous Mallard, the Common Merganser and the occasional Ruddy Duck; they've all gone way north to breed.

Some birds combine northward migration while some proportion go higher up in the Sierra to breed. Two such species are the Say's Phoebe which breeds mostly in Alaska and the Yukon, and the Ruby-crowned Kinglet which has a much larger breeding range across most of Canada and Alaska and parts of the northern U.S.



Say's Phoebe

We shouldn't forget that now is the time to look for Swallows - Cliff and Barn being common, with Tree and Violet-green being somewhat less abundant.

April 6: GCS D Wednesday Walk

The first Wednesday of the month Bird Walk at the Groveland Community Services property at 18966 Ferretti Road, Groveland will be led by Jeanne Ridgley on April 6. The property encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water storage ponds.

On the March 2 Bird Walk we saw 32 species. The highlight was 11 Wood Ducks swimming on the large pond in front of the three Wood Duck boxes.

Meet the group in the GCS D parking lot at 8:00am. Bring binoculars and a birding field guide if you have one. Rain will cancel the trip. The walk will last about two-three hours.

Jeanne Ridgley (209)962-7598

April 9: Salt Springs Valley RESCHEDULE

Jan and Rick Baird will lead an outing to Salt Springs Valley area. On previous outings to this area we have seen meadowlarks, eagles, falcons, various types of hawks and many other species. We will have lunch in the picnic area at Salt Springs Valley Reservoir and probably walk out onto the dam. Salt Springs Valley Resort has a nice picnic area and restrooms. There is a \$10 per car charge for day use, so we will try to carpool as much as possible.

The Bairds will meet interested persons by Perko's in Sonora at 8:00am to carpool, or meet other participants at the pond on Rock Creek Road, just off Highway 4 at Copperopolis at about 8:30am. Bring a lunch, water, binoculars, field guides, spotting scopes if available and wear layered clothing to accommodate the weather.

Rick and Jan at 532-1106 or janjornbaird@gmail.com

April 23: East Sonora Bird Walk

Tom Parrington will lead a walk along Fitch Ranch Road off of Yosemite Road. This area is through pastures, oaks, past a pond and seasonal stream where the usual foothill birds can be seen including Acorn Woodpeckers, Red-tailed Hawks and Sparrows. This will be a walking tour on a gravel road of about 2 miles.

Those interested can meet to carpool at Perko's at 8:30am or go directly to the start at 16901 Yosemite Road by 9:00am where there will be a limited area for parking. Carpools are encouraged. Bring lunch, water, binoculars, field guides, scopes if available. Rain cancels.

Tom Parrington 928-3835 or eattep@sbcglobal.net

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APRIL 16: BIRD BOX SALE

On Saturday April 16 CSAS will join the California Native Plant Society in San Andreas for our annual sale of bird boxes, books and other birding articles. CSAS Members will be on hand to offer advice on the siting of bird boxes, 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) at 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: 10:00am - 1:00pm, and if anybody wishes to come and assist for all or part of that time, call **Tom Harrington at (209)694-8564**.

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PINE SISKIN DEATHS IN CALIFORNIA

This winter has produced a significant number of dead Pine Siskins which died of salmonellosis, a disease caused by salmonella bacteria that is usually fatal within 24 hours of infection. Salmonellosis in Pine Siskins is almost exclusively reported from locations with bird feeders that attract increased numbers of birds who become infected with salmonella bacteria when they ingest food, water, or come into contact with objects (e.g. bird feeders, perches) contaminated with feces from infected birds.

This is an infection pathway that also applies to avian pox, a disease that John Turner in his earlier birding years experienced with House Finches. His solution, based on recommendations by Cornell is to regularly and thoroughly clean feeders and bird baths, a technique that has eradicated the pox at his location. You completely immerse and soak for 10 minutes the feeder or bath in a 5%

chlorine-water solution which is about 2 tablespoonfuls of chlorine in a bucket of water. After soaking them, wash carefully to get rid of the chlorine and then thoroughly air dry.

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SIGHTINGS & BEHAVIORS

First-of-Season Sightings (Useful data for eBird)

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher (an unusual sighting)

March 20: Jane Escola, Hathaway Pines.

March 27: Jeanne Ridgley, east of Groveland.

Rufous Hummingbird

March 26: Ken Smith, Chinese Camp.

March 28: Kit DeGear, near Phoenix Lake. (There was an Anna's hovering around a bush they like in my yard. The Rufous showed up and there was a minor kerfluffle).

Bullock's Oriole

March 11: John Turner, Lake Don Pedro

March 29: Jeanne Ridgley at GCSD, Groveland

March 15

We have a breeding pair of Red-shouldered Hawks in our lot in Murphys. The female called and he responded whereupon they copulated several times - which is a common raptor behavior. It remains to be seen if they will reuse the nest they were in 3 years ago, but perhaps not because one year a Great Horned Owl took it and they have not used it since.

Dave Olson, Murphys

March 25

Snow Goose (90 or so) - high up skein of birds obviously migrating from the Central Valley. I was first drawn to their call. Without binoculars I was able to see the white bodies with black on the wings. They were headed north in several "V's" and lines which constantly were being mixed.

Steven Umland near Phoenix Lake

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/

YOUR AUDUBON BOARD

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Barry Boulton, Newsletter Editor (209)596-0612

rbarryboulton@gmail.com

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

Tom Harrington, Book Sales (209)694-8564

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Pamela Blair, Scholarship (209)533-1668