I remember as a little boy the envy that I held for birds who could fly; I wanted to do that too. So, one early morning before anybody else was up and about, I went outside the house in our sleepy little English countryside village and tried the big experiment. I ran and ran while flapping my arms, all to no avail of course, to my great disappointment. The only consolation was that I was experimenting at ground level rather than trying to glide or fly off the thatched roof of the attached 19th century school which I often climbed on to my Mother’s horror. A little later I read the ancient Greek myth of Daedalus the creator of the Labyrinth at Knossos who escaped imprisonment with his son Icarus by using feathers and wax to create wings for the pair; unfortunately, Icarus flew too high where the sun’s rays melted the wax and he fell to his death while Daedalus survived. Human desire to fly evidently preceded me by some considerable time!

Well, I thought of these things as I reviewed this photo that I shot of a passing Sandhill Crane in which the profile of the wings shows so well the classic aerofoil shape that is used to demonstrate the lifting capabilities of an aircraft wing. We can see the up-curve at the front of the wing that speeds up the air flowing over that upper surface to create a partial vacuum resulting in up-lift. We also see how birds use wing-tip feathers to make minor, subtle corrections in flight.

Of course, the other end of a flight involves landing, another complex affair. In a sense, we can think of a bird on landing as performing a controlled stall which they must control to perfection. I’ve watched Northern Flickers approaching their nesting cavity at what appears to me to be a too-high speed but they do it perfectly every time; too fast and they’ll damage themselves, too slow and they fall and have to correct. Water birds seem to have an easier time especially if, like the American Pelican, they have webbed feet that allows an elegant glide-and-slide landing. I’m always fascinated to watch bird landing techniques.

Barry Boulton

UPCOMING 2016/2017 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

December 14: Groveland CBC
  Steven Umland (209)352-6985

December 17: Sonora CBC
  Steven Umland (209)352-6985

January 1, 2017: Calaveras CBC
  Barry Boulton (209)596-0612

January 18, 2017: Gavin Emmons and Alacia Welch
  Condors at Pinnacles NP

February 15, 2017: Tori Seher
  Birds of Alcatraz
FIELD TRIP REPORT

Nov. 5 - String of Pearls, Knights Ferry
Seven of us bided in perfect weather from Knight’s Ferry to the parks along the river. Altogether we counted fifty one species. The highlight were two Green Herons at the second pond in the county park off River Road in Oakdale. After some apparently aggressive interaction, both birds held motionless at the edge of the reeds. Perfect stillness, some catlike stealth, sudden lightning movement and a crayfish is speared, then swallowed in one gulp. We all ended at the pond on Green River Road, splitting hairs, or feathers, attempting to identify ducks at great distance.

Paolo Maffei

SIGHTINGS

Nov. 14
Had my FOS Hooded Mergansers at the Lake today. Lots of Coots, a couple of Double-crested Cormorants, and some new looking Mallards (they have been conspicuously absent as of late). The Bald Eagle pair are still keeping an eye on all the goings on.

Steven Umland, Phoenix Lake

Nov. 20
Saw three FOS Hooded Mergansers at Lakemont, elevation 4,000ft. Up to 12 total on Nov. 22.

John Sutake, Arnold

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Dec. 7 & Jan. 5 - GCSD 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. The property encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water storage ponds.

On the Nov 2nd walk 30 species were seen. We saw two American Pipits which are seen rarely here. Bufflehead have returned for the winter. Lincoln’s Sparrow and Western Meadowlark were also good sightings on this walk.

Paolo Maffei

American Pipit - Barry Boulton

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Again this year we shall be running 3 CBCs, and we encourage you to sign up as follows:

Groveland CBC, December 14, 2016
Steven Umland (209)352-6985 or stevenum71@gmail.com
Jeanne Ridgley at jeanneridgley1@sbcglobal.net

Sonora CBC, December 17, 2016
Steven Umland (209)352-6985 or stevenum71@gmail.com

Calaveras CBC, January 1, 2017
Barry Boulton (209)596-0612 or rbarryboulton@gmail.com
RED HILLS ROMP

Fourteen 5th and 6th grade Chinese Camp Elementary Science Academy students and 5 adults enjoyed a morning of birding in the Red Hills on November 16th. A cold dawn warmed up gradually to reveal 12 species. The semiannual Red Hills Romp has collected data both spring and fall for 6 years now. This particular one was graced by sightings of Wrentit, Northern Flicker, Lesser Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, Spotted and CA Towhee, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Merlin, Red-tailed Hawk, Oak Titmouse, Western (now California) Scrub Jay, and Ruby-crowned Kinglet. A gift of Front Porch Communications, our student binoculars were well used as we scanned shrubs, trees, grasslands, and skies!

Pamela Blair, Scholarship Chair

UNUSUAL AMERICAN DIPPER BEHAVIOR

Nov. 24, I was pleased to see on the lake at Hunter Dam on Highway 4 near Avery 24 Buffleheads, 12 Common Goldeneyes (females only) and 5 Hooded Mergansers (again, only females) when, near the creek inlet, I spotted an American Dipper sitting on the calm waters of the lake busily foraging for insects. We normally think of the Dipper as foraging mostly under the surface of fast-moving streams feeding on insects and particularly their larvae, beetles and dragonflies and occasionally small fish and, indeed, this is typical breeding behavior. However, out of the breeding season, they may also forage in estuaries, lakeshores and ponds, so what I saw was unusual, but certainly not unique.

John Sutake, Arnold

LAST-MINUTE SIGHTING

After last night’s heavy rain (Nov. 26), Six Bit Creek is flowing. As a result, saw a Ferruginous Hawk fly through the gulch.

Charlotte Ginn, Red Hills, Chinese Camp

STANISLAUS AUDUBON FIELD TRIP

December 3. Eastern Stanislaus County

Eastern Stanislaus County at this time of the year is a world-class area for raptor watching. We will have a decent chance of seeing many of the following: Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Ferrugi-nous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Osprey, Northern Harrier, Kestrel, Merlin, and Prairie Falcon. And that’s just the raptors! We’ll see lots of other species as well. Meet at the Stanislaus County parking lot, 1500 I Street at 7:15 a.m.

Trip leader Dave Froba, 521-7265, froba@comcast.net.

WINTER BIRD FESTIVALS

The 18th Annual Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway
CHICO, CA
January 25 – 29, 2017
www.snowgoosefestival.org

Program details and registration will be available in December. Sign up for notification emails at: www.snowgoosefestival.org

San Diego Bird Festival
February 23-26, 2017
Marina Village Conference Center
Mission Bay, San Diego, CA

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Kenn & Kimberly Kaufman

field trips / workshops / optics displays pelagic birding / family events hundreds of bird species viewed each year

www.sandiegoaudubon.org
SAN DIEGO AUDUBON SOCIETY
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 Starbucks Conference Room at Tuolumne Road, off Mono Way, 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.centralsierraaudubon.org/join-us/

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John Turner, Website  (209)852-2348
Steven Umland, Sightings, Sonora CBC  (209)352-6985
Barry Boulton, Calaveras CBC  (209)596-0612

Movie 1: Inhabit
Inhabit explores the many environmental and agricultural issues facing us today and examines solutions that are being applied using the ecological design process called ‘Permaculture’. Permaculture is a design lens that uses the principles found in ecosystems to help shift our impact from destructive to regenerative. Focused mostly on the Northeastern and Midwestern regions of the United States, Inhabit provides an intimate look at permaculture peoples and practices ranging from rural, suburban, and urban landscapes.

Movie 2: A Quest for Meaning
Two childhood friends travel the world to meet some of the greatest thinkers of our time. This incredible voyage, full of moments of doubt and moments of joy, will lead them to question the very beliefs that have shaped Western civilization. This film captures the change in human consciousness currently happening all over the planet, and the desire to live in harmony with oneself and the world.

Movie 3: Nature RX
This award-winning comedy series is about a struggle affecting many of us today. Set in the world of a spoofed prescription drug commercial, Nature Rx offers a hearty dose of laughs and the outdoors - two timeless prescriptions for whatever ails you. Side effects may include confidence, authenticity, remembering you have a body, and being in a good mood for no apparent reason.www.nature-rx.org

Movie 4: Singletrack High
At the age of 16, many American kids trade in two wheels for four. Trusty steeds that once gave them freedom to explore on weekends now collect dust in the garage. For a growing number of high school students in Northern California, however, two wheels don’t get dusty, they get dirty. Their lives continue to revolve around weekend rides, but now those rides have a finish line. These are the student athletes of the NorCal High School Cycling League. This is Singletrack High.