



Annual Potluck & Election of Officers: Invitation from the President-elect

Greetings Bird Lovers, as the 2017 - 2018 President-elect for CSAS, I wish to invite you to join us at our Annual Meeting potluck on Wednesday, June 14th, at 5:30 pm in Sonora (details below). As you can imagine, I have an agenda – but it's neither to ask for money or for you to join the Board of CSAS (though I'd be very happy if you did!). No, rather than those things, I'm interested in hearing your thoughts and ideas about how we, CSAS, can be more relevant to the birds, to you and to the larger community.

Let me give you some relevant background. CSAS was formed in the late-1970s and since that time we've benefited from the participation of many excellent avian enthusiasts who kept and still keep the Chapter ticking so to speak. In fact, they were so inspiring that CSAS was the fortunate recipient of a bequest by the late Edye Dingman so that we currently have a substantial reserve in our bank account. At the same time, our active members are growing older while we have few young people ready to take their/our places. So the irony is that while we have sufficient resources to do a lot of good for our feathered friends, we're lacking the people and energy to move forward constructively at the time that many birds are increasingly under threat of extinction.

It seems clear to me that we need to be reaching out at least to younger age groups such as high schools and junior colleges in our region and perhaps working, business and other community groups. At the potluck I'd like to engage you in a discussion on your ideas about how we can reach out to the community, and I'm particularly interested in your contacts with suitable groups. I will be very happy to visit groups – including small home meetings – to talk about birds using videos and photos to interest and inspire them with the world of birds. Actually, I'd really like to inspire a few students to set their sights on avian research because there's so much still to be learned about birds that directly supports their sustainability.

At the potluck we will also acknowledge and celebrate the Officers who are retiring this year. **Tom Parrington** has been an excellent President for the last couple of years, putting more robust structures into place - as you might expect of a Legal Eagle! **David Harden** has been our Programs Chair for around three years (having been President before that) and after organizing a string of spectacular speakers at our monthly meetings he must retire because he's found some more big rocks that are begging to be climbed. **Pamela Blair** has performed brilliantly so many times with elementary school children as Education Chair but she, too, needs a break - probably to keep David in line! Then, quite amazingly, **Anthea Neilson** has been our Hospitality Chair for 17 years, providing those deliciously too-tempting goodies at our monthly public meetings - she will be missed!

Another welcome celebration will be that of **Kit DeGear** taking over from David as Programs Chair - a tough act to follow, but David has offered to provide ideas and contacts to Kit to ease the transition.

Join us at **5:30 PM, June 14th** in the **Tuolumne County Ambulance Building, 18440 Striker Ct, Sonora, CA 95370** to enjoy this evening. This meeting is a potluck so if you're able to join us, please bring a dish to share.

Hoping to share potluck with you on the 14th,

Barry Boulton, President-elect

SIGHTINGS & BEHAVIORS

April 25 – Lambert Lake

Made my first visit to Lambert Lake today. It was a productive morning. FOS Wilson's Warbler, Bullock's Oriole, Wood Duck, and Warbling Vireo. There were a couple of Great-tailed Grackles hanging about. What a lovely setting.

Steven Umland

April 26 – Chinese Camp

I was given a tip that Lazuli Buntings were in my area, so was on alert yesterday for them and was delighted to see one in my yard. I hadn't seen any the last few years, so it was a real treat. Also, was gifted with 6 Cedar Waxing at my Mulberry tree. They and the Phainopepla come every spring as the fruit ripens.

Charlotte Ginn, Red Hills

May 2 – Cherry Lake Road

Western Wood-Pewee was first of the season here at Cherry Lake Road. Mountain Quail was heard only. Bell's Sparrow, Lark Sparrow and Downy Woodpecker were also good sightings.

Jeanne Ridgley, Groveland

May 2 – Indigeny Reserve

A pleasant late afternoon stroll at Indigeny. Highlight was my first of season sighting of the Western Tanager.

Indigeny Reserve, elevation 2400 feet, Kit DeGear, Sonora

May 3 – Confidence Trail

This morning (in lieu of the extra driving to Groveland, sorry to miss your walk Jeanne!) I walked out the Confidence Trail. Highlights were 2 Western Tanagers, at least 2 Olive-sided Flycatchers, Cassin's Vireo, Wilson's Warbler and a Hermit Warbler. The Black-headed Grosbeak could be heard almost everywhere!

Kit DeGear, Sonora

May 4 - Confidence-South Fork Road

Had a great day on the "trail". FOS birds included Olive-sided and Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Cassin's and Warbling Vireo, and Western Tanager. 5 warblers and a second delightful encounter with Chestnut-backed Chickadee! Great weather and talkative birds. Fabulous.

Steven Umland

May 8 – Red Hills Road & Sims Road

Made an early morning drive up first Rock River Rd and then Red Hills Rd and then on Sims Rd. For the most part it was the usual selection of Western Kingbirds, Horned Larks, Mourning Doves and Bullock's Orioles. However, right at the intersection of Sims Rd and Red Hills Rd there was a very vocal Yellow-breasted Chat. It was calling at 6:30 when I first got there and again at 1:00 on the way back.

Jim Gain, Modesto

May 9 – Cherry Lake Road

Highlights were Olive-sided Flycatcher, Nashville Warbler and Lazuli Bunting.

Jeanne Ridgley, Groveland

May 12 - Pinecrest

This morning I saw a pair of gray birds on a wire outside the kitchen window at my cabin at Pinecrest. They turned out to be Townsend's Solitaires, a species with which I'm not too familiar having seen them only a few times.



Story & photo - Ellen Reintjes

May 20 – Cherry Lake Road

Highlights were Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Chipping Sparrow.

Jeanne Ridgley, Groveland

May 23 - Groveland

Two male Mountain Quail have been here for a week. Lovely to have them around. Not particularly jumpy, but I try to stay inside while they are foraging. Their whoop adds to the Spring chorus.



Story & photo - Carol Rosalind

May 28 – Red Hills, Chinese Camp

Had an interesting sighting today. Woke up to a bird call I had never heard before. Then, as I went out on my patio, a quail, very dark red jumped up on the fence, then ran up the driveway. Imagine my surprise! After researching, I figure it is an escaped Tennessee quail, a mutation of the bobwhite.

Charlotte Ginn

May 30

BARN OWL UPDATE - JOHN TURNER

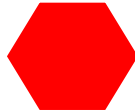
Out of the original 10 eggs, we think that 7 hatched and brought forth fledglings, but the runt just drowned in our swimming pool so we have about 6 youngsters here for the time being. They still depend to some extent on their parents and a couple of nights ago I heard one hissing as it begged from a parent.

They will become independent of their parents in mid-late summer and then they will disperse in different directions to find their own territories; it may take until early winter to find a resting place that will become their breeding grounds in the next year.

John Turner, La Grange

Here's an on-line video showing a biologist working with Barn Owls in Napa Valley to control rodents. It is quite interesting to see how docile they are when handled - but that's probably carefully learned technique!

*Click to connect
to the internet.*



FIELD TRIP REPORTS

May 18 - Confidence Trail, Sonora

Fifteen birders joined our speaker, Tom Hahn of UC Davis for a morning's visit to the Confidence Trail near Sonora, seeing a total of 40 species.

Ron McDow

May 21 – Indigeny Reserve, Apple Valley area near Phoenix Lake, elevation 2400 ft.

There were 22 of us for the Sunday morning walk out at Indigeny Reserve. Highlights of the day included Bullock's Oriole, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Black-headed Grosbeak, a Yellow Warbler and some baby Wild Turkeys! A couple of final sightings at the picnic area provided the extra birds to hit 41 species for the day. As a first time trip leader, it was wonderful to have so many expert birders along to share their knowledge and insights. A great time was had by all.

Kit DeGear

Kudos and a "WELL DONE!" to Kit DeGear for her first outing as a volunteer field trip leader. We look forward to joining her next field trip. In her comments, Kit hit on the key for potential volunteers to think about and I quote *"As a first time trip leader, it was wonderful to have so many expert birders along to share their knowledge and insights. A great time was had by all."*

Ken Smith, Field Trip Chair

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

June 7 & July 5 - GCSD Wednesday Walk

These first Wednesday of the month Bird Walks at the Groveland Community Services property at 18966 Ferretti Road, Groveland will be led by Jeanne Ridgley.

On the May 3 Bird Walk 35 species were seen including Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, Western Kingbird and a female Wood Duck with eleven ducklings.

Birders who wish to bird at GCSD must be accompanied by an authorized birder and have signed an Agreement and Release from Liability Form.

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.

Jeanne Ridgley (209)962-7598

CSERC JUNE/JULY PROJECTS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Restoration & maintenance projects with CSERC are always enjoyable, interesting and very worthwhile. You work and socialize with a group of like-minded people of all ages and backgrounds while making improvements on our public lands.

Along the way, the CSERC staff will educate you on some of the issues and solutions that abound on public lands which gives you more insight into the complexities and nuances of the many public discussions between land managers and communities.

CSERC has several projects ready just for you!

* **Tuesday, June 13** - Leland's Gully & Fiddler's Meadow fence set-up (Summit Ranger District).

* **Saturday, June 24** - Crab Meadow fence rebuild (Summit Ranger District).

* **Weekday, June (or early July) TBD** - Shell Meadow vegetation trimming around fence line (Summit Ranger District).

* **Weekday, June (or early July) TBD** - Lake Moran fence set-up (Calaveras Ranger District).

For all of these projects, contact **Meg Layhee** of the CSERC staff (megl@cserc.org) or call the office (209)586-7440 to sign up for one of the projects or to get more info.

PHOTO CONTEST

I have an idea for a photo contest that isn't a contest - that is, there are only winners (no losers). What I'd like to do is to encourage photos that tell a story rather than just being a beautiful piece of art - for which birds are perfect subjects. But, what do I mean by "telling a story"? Well, here's an example that I think will illustrate the intention. In the April Squawker I used two photos from Carol Rosalind, one being an excellent portrait of a Cooper's Hawk showing off its plumage, while the other is of a petrified Band-tailed Pigeon perched on a wooden railing with the same Cooper's Hawk nearby. While the portrait doesn't imply a particular story although we could say much about it, the other demonstrates a pregnant situation between predator and prey with a very specific story that indeed ended badly for the pigeon.

In the same edition, Alan Beymer had 3 shots of an Osprey bringing sticks to its nest and arranging them - again, a specific story for the breeding season.

But, there are two parts to this "contest"; first, you shoot and provide the story-telling photos, and then I'll put them into a video adding a short description of each story plus an acknowledgment of each photographer. Then I'll upload to YouTube to make our joint effort widely available.

What I like about this is that you can do very well with any camera including your cellphone; that is, you don't need expensive equipment to get good stories. It takes time and patience; for example, if you have hummingbird feeders, your cellphone can capture a story very easily. And now that the breeding season is producing lots of young birds with voracious appetites, photos of hard-working parents delivering food are available. Additionally, if you wish to shoot video sequences, I can incorporate them too.

You might well ask what might be the ultimate purpose of this contest. My answer is that to make birds and their conservation relevant to ordinary citizens (and therefore to politicians) we need to do more than make birding lists and take photos. Humans are story-tellers and listeners and I'm convinced that we have to participate in that way to get the interest and influence that's required for bird conservation in face of the threats that they face. Think of the popularity of the BBC and National Geographic wildlife videos, and we can harness that interest at our local level.

For instance, I have a video sequence in which an adult Western Bluebird with a bill full of meal worms actually taps a fledgling on its back to tell it to turn round to take them! It's a moving clip that helps people to see the fullness of this bird's personality; it would be tragic to allow a living creature like that to be extinguished. When people see that they see not just a beautiful bird (which it is) but a living creature just like us with personality and similar rights to existence.

We need that understanding to be widespread in the population, and we can take steps in that direction; so that's my intention for this contest - actually a contest for us as individuals to be committed, patient and creative.

Details - email me your photos and brief story and I'll do the rest. End of this phase August 31, 2017

rbarryboulton@gmail.com

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In the May Squawker I wrote about Western & Clark's Grebes running on water (rushing) on Clear Lake. Since then I uploaded a short video to YouTube that you can view by clicking on this red button (internet connection required).



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 just off Mono Way/108.

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/

Your CSAS Officers

Tom Parrington, President	(209)928-3835
Walt Kruse, VP Conservation	(707)548-1829
David Harden, VP Programs	(209)533-1668
Jeanne Ridgley, Secretary	(209)962-7598
Linda Millsbaugh, Treasurer	(209)586-9557
Ken Smith, Field Trips	(949)922-1455
Pattie Henderson, Membership	(209)586-2169
Jan Jorn-Baird, Publicity	(209)532-1106
Barry Boulton, Newsletter Editor	(209)596-0612

Your CSAS Committees

Ron & Barbara McDow, Bird Box Trail	(650)391-5277
Tom Harrington, Book Sales	(209)694-8564
Anthea Neilson, Hospitality	(209)533-0360
Pamela Blair, Scholarship	(209)533-1668
John Turner, Website	(209)852-2348
Steven Umland, Sonora/Groveland CBCs	(209)352-6985