

Central Sierra Audubon Society

# Sierra Squawker



[www.centralsierraaudubon.org](http://www.centralsierraaudubon.org)

November - 2017

**Sonora Public Program - November 15th at 7pm**

**"MOTHER LODE WILDLIFE CARE"**

**Presented by Laura Murphy**

Join Laura Murphy, Operations Director at Mother Lode Wildlife Care, to hear about her work in wildlife rehabilitation. She started feeding baby birds at the Wildlife Center of Silicon Valley in May of 1995. She quickly progressed to a Day Captain, handling whatever came through the door. Laura then started doing home care, first ducklings, then squirrels, raccoons, rabbits, opossums, songbirds, and even a bobcat that she raised from birth and released at 9 months of age. Over the next ten years she volunteered for three additional local wildlife centers and cared for all manner of creatures at home.



*Photo: Helen Engledow*

In 2005, Laura and her husband moved out to Tuolumne shortly before Nina Huff/Resnick retired from Rose Wolf Wildlife. She became the Operations Director there until Nina's return in 2010. During and since that time Laura has acquired the necessary State and Federal permits that allowed her to open and start Mother Lode Wildlife Care where she specializes in birds, squirrels, but also cares for bats and other small mammals, caring up to 250 animals each year!

Join us at 7 PM on Wednesday, November 15th, in the Tuolumne County Library on Greenley Road in Sonora to enjoy this presentation. Refreshments will be available.

For further information, please call Kit DeGear at (925) 822-5215 or Email [kdegear@gmail.com](mailto:kdegear@gmail.com)

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## SONORA UPCOMING 2017 - 18 PUBLIC PROGRAMS

December CBCs Groveland CBC...Dec. 14  
Sonora CBC.....Dec. 16  
Calaveras CBC....Dec. 30

January 17 Rich Cimino  
Birds of Belize

February 21, 2018 Christy Sherr  
Birds and Montane Chaparral

March 21, 2018 TBD

## **ARNOLD Public Program - November 16th at 6pm**

# **"Fascinating Bird Behaviors"**

**Presented by Barry Boulton**

**B**irds display amusing, amazing and quite fascinating behaviors if you spend time patiently watching them (very difficult in these frenetic modern times!). Surprisingly, given that they are descendents of dinosaurs, they behave just like humans in so many ways which is why we can so readily relate to them. To watch a chick begging for food, a mother caring for her stressed youngster, a father bringing home the fish, adults displaying to attract a mate, or a family feeding together allows us to relate to and understand them more deeply.

**I**n this video presentation and discussion, you will see a variety of these and other behaviors and will learn what they mean and how they evolved.



*Female Osprey headed towards the nest  
to care for her young*



*Williamson's Sapsucker (male)  
arriving at the cavity to feed  
4 - 6 hungry youngsters*



*Great Egret male displaying,  
hopng to attract a mate*



*Western Bluebird family feeding in a cooperative way.  
Related adults help feed the youngsters as they learn  
how to fend for themselves.*

Barry Boulton is President of Central Sierra Audubon, and spends his retirement time mostly keeping out of mischief by spending time with birds while shooting video and photos so as to show their intimate stories.

**WHEN:** Thursday, November 16th

**WHERE:** Bistro Espresso in Arnold (adjacent to Big Trees Market)

**TIME:** 6pm - 7pm

*No host refreshments will be available at Bistro Espresso - coffee, beer, wine and light snacks.*

## UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

### **Nov. 1 - GCSD**

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 November 1. The property encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water storage ponds.

Five warbler species were seen on the Bird Walk on Oct 4, Orange-crowned, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Gray, Wilson's and MacGillivray's Warbler.

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.

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

**Jeanne Ridgley 962-7598.**

### **Nov. 26 - Indigeny Reserve**

Please join me for our regular monthly walk on the 4th Sunday of the month through the beautiful grounds at Indigeny. Besides the Apple orchards, there are, large Oaks, some Pines, streamside thickets and a grape vineyard that provide some great habitats for birds. There were seven of us on our October 22nd. visit which was a great raptor day with 2 Red-tailed, 2 Red-shouldered and 1 Cooper's Hawk. Other highlights included Red-breasted Sapsucker, Lincoln's Sparrow, Cedar Waxwing, Hermit Thrush and then hearing the Virginia Rail grunt call! In all, we saw 42 species.

As always, bring your binoculars and/or scopes, wear muted colors and include a hat, sunscreen and water. The walk will last 2-3 hrs. Children are welcome! Meet in the parking lot at 8:00 AM. Rain will cancel the trip. (Follow the 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 that says "Apple Valley Ranches." A quick left turn onto Summers Lane leads you to Indigeny.)

**Kit DeGear (925) 822-5215 or [kdegear@gmail.com](mailto:kdegear@gmail.com)**

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## SIGHTINGS & BEHAVIORS

### **Oct. 1**

This past week, there have been several FOS sightings at our home down here in the lower southwestern corner of Tuolumne County. We have seen White-Crowned and Golden-Crowned Sparrows, Spotted Towhees, a Say's Phoebe, and a Northern Flicker.

Mid-week was probably the last migrant Rufous Hummingbird. We haven't seen a Black-Chinned Hummingbird for over a week. We continue to have at least a dozen Anna's Hummingbirds. Also seen are many Turkey Vultures passing through on their journey south.

**John Turner, Lake Don Pedro area, Tuolumne County**

### **Oct. 11**

Late this afternoon, when stepping outside, I heard many very upset birds flying into and around one of our nearest blue oak trees. With most of the leaves having dropped, I could pinpoint the location they were focusing on. The Northern Pygmy Owl then suddenly dropped out of the tree in a shallow arc and flew across the street. It was a great happenstance event.

**John Turner, Lake Don Pedro area, Tuolumne County**

### **Oct. 12**

Walked down to the shore area of Phoenix Lake today. Starting to get some more interesting waterfowl. Along with the fairly recent arrival of American Coots, Pied-billed Grebes (well, they're not that interesting) and the occasional Great Egret, I did get to see 8 Ring-necked Ducks and an American Wigeon fly in. Red-shouldered Hawks have been showing up pretty regularly, too. No sign yet of our Bald Eagle pair that usually over-winter here.

**Kit DeGear, Phoenix Lake, elev. 2400 ft. Sonora**

### **Oct. 23**

While out walking with a neighbor at Phoenix Lake Reservoir I thought I spotted a Ruddy Duck and a couple of American Wigeons at the lake. I returned later with my binoculars to check things out. I didn't see the Wigeons but the Ruddy Duck was still there and down at the end of Lori Lane near the reeds were a couple of Ring-necked Ducks and a Wood Duck! A Great Blue Heron also made a first appearance for the season.

**Kit DeGear, Phoenix Lake, elev. 2400 ft. Sonora**

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## MORRO BAY FIELD TRIP REPORT - OCT. 28/29

**Bird photos & narrative - Ken Smith**

Through much of the visit we were met with chilly coastal fog which challenged our viewing of birds. Still we saw many significant species that will bring us back to visit again.

At the Elfin Forest on Saturday, 17 birders along with various docents birded the Forest, where we joined docents Yolanda Waddell (History), Vikki Johnsen (Native Plants), Ben Rasmusson (Elevations & Geology), and Jessica Griffith (Birding by Ear) plus two other state park docents. We enjoyed a very informative tour covering history, vegetation, geology, significance of the elevation changes of the ancient sand dune, and the identification birds by their songs of the unique Elfin Forest. Among the 18 bird species observed today were Hutton's Vireo, and by ear - White and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Ruby-crowned-Kinglets, California Quail, Bushtits, and several Wrentits calling to each other. The special treat was to walk under canopy of the Elfin Oaks which was like a special Temple to Nature.

That afternoon we visited the Morro Bay State Museum with Museum guide and director Rouvaishyana, for a discussion of the importance of Morro Bay to birds of the Pacific Flyway and the marine life of the estuary. The tour of the museum, with special emphasis on the behind the scenes, showed us the library and storage of specimens ranging from rocks, flora, fauna & fossils, a Minke Whale skeleton, the skull of a Gray Whale, to the mandibles (including all the teeth) of a juvenile Sperm Whale. We were able to feel the luxurious fur pelt of a California Sea Otter said to have as many as five hundred thousand hairs per square inch. We observed 9 species of birds including Brown Pelicans and Pelagic Cormorants, as well as a Harbor Seal.

The following morning we met at Morro Rock with Bob & Robbi Revel for a discussion of the history, geology of the volcanic plug, and birds of Morro Bay. It was still foggy and cold but much better visibility than yesterday. We were amazed to hear that as much as a third of Morro Rock had been dynamited to harvest the granite for building breakwaters and jetties since 1880 to the 1960s. Along with the California Sea Otter, we saw 30 bird species including Common Loon, Pelagic, Double-crested & Brant's Cormorants, Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird\*, Wandering Tattler\*, Black & Ruddy Turnstones, Heermann's, Ring-billed & Western Gulls - and TWO PEREGRINE FALCONS - YEAH! \*These two birds were new to Eve & I. There was heavy surf with waves crashing over the breakwater where an annual Halloween surfing event was taking place with the surfers all in costume, including a surfing mermaid!

We had several participants who were new to birding. It was great fun to help them and to let them know the importance of an extra set of inexperienced eyes seeing a bird and exclaiming "What's That?", thus alerting others to the possibility of a new bird for the day. We invited them all to join us for the CBCs.



*The group with Ken Smith, CSAS Field Trip Guy (kneeling) Photo: Yolanda Waddell*



*Black Oystercatcher*



*Western Gull*



*Surfbird (above) and  
Black Turnstone (below)*

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## JOIN OUR CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Yes, it's that time again - we need volunteers of **ALL** skill levels, to help with counting our winter feathered friends in our three local Christmas Bird Counts. The Groveland CBC will be held on Thursday, December 14th, followed by the Sonora Count on Saturday, Dec. 16th. We finish the Count season with the Calaveras Count on December 30th.



Each Count takes place within a 15-mile diameter circle. The count circle is broken up into sectors that are counted by teams of observers, each team being led by experienced birder. If you're new birder and not confident about identifying birds, it doesn't matter because that's the role of the team leader; you can provide "eyes on the ground" which is important because the first step is simply to see a bird – identification comes next. In any case, this is a thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying experience to spend the day outside looking for birds and generally socializing. All birds, seen or heard, are tallied by the group (well, chickens in the yard are left uncounted).

Please come and help in the largest Citizen Science event of the year – and the oldest too, having started on Christmas Day, 1900.

The **Sonora** CBC will end around 4pm sharing the results and a potluck at the Sonora ambulance building on Stryker Court.

The **Groveland** CBC will end up collecting results in a pizza place in Twain Harte, while the **Calaveras** CBC will end similarly in a pizza place in Murphys.

The compilers for the Counts request that you to sign up early so they can get everyone assigned to a group.

For both the **Groveland** and **Sonora** Counts, contact **Steven Umland** at (209)352-6985 or by email at [stevenum71@gmail.com](mailto:stevenum71@gmail.com)

For the **Calaveras** Count on December 30th, please contact **Keith** or **Sandra Maurer** (who have graciously agreed to take over the organizing this year) at (209)728-8979 or [kandsmaurer@goldrush.com](mailto:kandsmaurer@goldrush.com)

## BIRD HOUSE SALE REPORT

On a beautiful October day in Jamestown among our CNPS friends, the annual bird house sale netted \$505 that will go towards CSAS educational activities. Thanks to Ron McDow for building bird houses for the sale, and to Pattie Henderson, Jeanne Ridgley, Linda Millspaugh, Jean DeCota and Pamela Blair & David Harden who came along to assist, answer questions, and generally make this another festive occasion.

**Tom Harrington**

## BIRDING LOCATIONS IN TUOLUMNE & CALAVERAS

How would you know where to visit in our two counties if you wished to see birds? Well, one easy way is to first visit our website where you will find a section devoted to location suggestions. To make it easy, here's the page with locations described: <http://centralsierraudubon.org/birding-locations/>

Additionally, if you're interested in the birds of Big Trees State Park, scroll down to that section where, with a single click, you can download the list of possible birds at BTSP. The list was kindly created by Sal Salerno, President of Stanislaus Audubon, in conjunction with Park experts.

## HIGHWAY CLEAN-UP

Join us for another CSAS social activity - the next Adopt-a-Highway cleanup will be on Friday, November 17th. Meet at Perko's in Sonora at 7am to carpool to the Lake Don Pedro vista point where we start the pick-up. Or, meet us at the vista point at 7:30am. We will return to Perko's by 10am. Rain will cancel.

**Tom Harrington (209)694-8564**

## SIGHTINGS & BEHAVIORS

(continued from p. 3)

**Oct. 25**

Just spotted a fully mature (mostly white) Ferruginous Hawk hunting in the field behind my house. Spotted him because all the birds in the pasture took off. He landed in a bull pine then swept down to catch food – but I think he missed. Just after seeing the Ferruginous Hawk, I had a Lawrence's Goldfinch in my plum tree!

**Charlotte Ginn, Red Hills Chinese Camp.**

**Oct. 28**

The past two late-autumns and early winters we've had a Merlin that's learned to be present in the afternoon when we scatter seed for our covey of quail. Yesterday, as I was scattering seed a Quail flushed and immediately the Merlin took off in the Quail's direction. Quickly waving my arms above me, the falcon became distracted long enough to lose its target. It will have to wait until its next opportunity.

**John Turner, Lake Don Pedro area, Tuolumne County**



## **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, August, and December), 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.centralsierraudubon.org/join-us/](http://www.centralsierraudubon.org/join-us/)

### **Your CSAS Officers**

|                                  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Barry Boulton, President         | (209)596-0612 |
| Tom Parrington, Past President   | (209)928-3835 |
| Walt Kruse, VP Conservation      | (707)548-1829 |
| Kit DeGear, VP Programs          | (925)822-5215 |
| Jeanne Ridgley, Secretary        | (209)962-7598 |
| Linda Millspaugh, 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 |
| Pamela Blair, Scholarship           | (209)533-1668 |
| John Turner, Website                | (209)852-2348 |
| Steven Umland, Sightings/eBird      | (209)352-6985 |