Central Sierra Audubon Society

Sierra Squawker

www.centralsierraaudubon.org March - 2018

THE FUTURE OF CSAS

We are approaching the time when, in June, we will elect a new Board of Officers for the succeeding two years, and this year we are losing four current Officers who have put in their time. So we have to replace those officers, but I want to take a particular strategy - that is, I don't look for replacements out of need or in desperation just to fill slots. Rather, I'm actually interested in newcomers who will find this connection to be fulfilling for themselves and therefore compelling.

So, what I'd like to suggest to you is that you might consider being active in CSAS in ways that are fulfilling for you and that, almost as a byproduct, support CSAS. Perhaps you, as a CSAS member who doesn't want to be an Officer, could do one thing throughout the year; just one thing that might make a difference. Here are some ideas:

- Ken Smith our Field Trip Chairperson is moving to Borrego Springs and has necessarily resigned after several years of deep and successful commitment. CSAS has 10 active months in the year and just imagine if 30 people said that they'd lead just one field trip per year – that would mean 3 per month to add to our existing regular monthly trips to GCSD and Indigeny. Your role would be simply to select a location and route. We will ensure that a competent birder joins you so that you're not responsible for bird identification.
- Many of you have children or grandchildren at school – would you be willing, say once a year, to take them on a birding field trip or a particularly interesting public meeting so that they are introduced to a different way of seeing life beyond virtual reality? If enough people did that just once a year, think of the potential.
- You parents/grandparents also know teachers and educators – could you investigate the possibilities of CSAS giving a bird presentation at that school just once? Children are our future and will deeply appreciate wildlife.
- Would your community group like to have a CSAS bird presentation once per year? I've found that these groups (such as gardening clubs) are hungry for interesting presentations and birds exquisitely fit that need.
- If you're a backyard feeder birder, would you be willing to give me a monthly review of your sightings for the Squawker – not just which birds, but their behaviors too?
- If you're a bird photographer (better still, videographer) and would like to get your masterpieces in the public arena (otherwise, why bother - photos sitting on a computer are essentially useless), I'd be willing to help you organize them, construct a presentation, find audiences and even be beside you as you present to give you confidence.

If I may return to the question of Officers, these are the roles that will be open in June: VP Conservation, Treasurer, Field Trip Chair, and Secretary. The last three roles are probably pretty understandable, but the Conservation role has many possibilities that I don't have space here to discuss. If you're interested conceptually in conservation but want it manageable, please call me and we'll see if we can find a role that would fulfill you.

Finally, a word on the logistics of our monthly Board meetings. We currently meet at 3pm for two hours in the Starbucks conference room in Sonora on the same day as our public meeting in the library – the 3rd Wednesday. Obviously for working people or those in far off Calaveras County, that's a problem and reduces the talented people available to us. I have some solutions in mind; in the first place I'm checking out teleconferencing technologies so that physical attendance isn't always necessary. Another possibility is to move the meeting place around, perhaps alternating monthly between Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties. A variation on that may be to hold board meetings on a weekend day so that working people and students might be able to participate. The point is that if you are interested in being an Officer, but meeting logistics would be a problem, then let's talk about the possibilities to see what solution might work for you.

You can call any of us on the Nominating Committee to discuss possibilities without duress:

- Kit DeGear (925)822-5215
- Barry Boulton (209)596-0612
- Ralph Retherford (209)532-6123

SONORA PUBLIC MEETING

Activities at New Melones Lake

Presented by Bureau of Reclamation Staff

The public tends to be unaware of the full scope of activities performed by Federal agencies and I'm sure that is true of the work on-going at New Melones Lake. Through Eagle & Osprey counts, I've got to know many of the staff and have been impressed at what they do and how they do it. We are indeed fortunate to have them working constructively on environmental issues that we care about, and, tonight, we will get to learn more about them and their philosophy.

Sandra Patania is New Melones Lake's Natural Resource Specialist, with more than 26 years of experience in recreation and resource management. Sandra has served as the Natural Resource Specialist for New Melones Lake from December 2011 until now. She has served as acting Supervisory Chief Park Ranger and Concessions Specialist, directing the Recreation Management Program and administering the Marina Concession contract as well as filling in as Acting Resource Manager.

Photos by Pat Sanders, USBR

Patricia (Pat) Sanders is the Natural Resource Ranger/Tech at New Melones Lake. With a degree in biology, she performs the full scope of natural resource duties including hazard tree management, wildlife enhancement projects, eagle, osprey and bat surveys, invasive species reduction and aquatic species surveys. Back in 1995, Pat and Harold Sanders worked with Al Bergeron (President of the Central Sierra Audubon Society) in the osprey project that occurred at New Melones Lake where rising lake levels threatened many nesting ospreys - a story for another time!

Eric "Ric" Johnson has been a Park Ranger at New Melones since 2011. Before New Melones, he was with Plumas Eureka SP, Hearst Simeon SHM, Henry Cowell Redwoods SP, Big Basin SP, Calaveras SP, and Columbia SP. He has loved oarks, wildlife and California history since hildhood, and obtained a BS in Forestry/Environental Interpretation from Oregon State University in 1984.

WHEN? Wednesday, March 21 at 6.30pm

WHERE? County Library, Sonora

CALAVERAS PUBLIC MEETING

THE SCIENCE IN NATURE

Presented by Nancy Muleady-Mecham, Ph. D

A look at the science of nature; how does water get to the top of a tree; how do animals stay warm; where did the gold in the mother lode come from; how do deer know when to grow their antlers & how do we see the natural world? These and other processes of the natural world will be explored.

Following in the footsteps of Alexander von Humboldt who first interpreted the natural world through scienctific understanding and processes, Nancy will take us deep into the processes of understanding the natural world through the scientific process that has made such incredible steps forward since renaissance times.

Doc Nancy is an Adjunct Professor of biology at Northern Arizona University and Columbia College, Sonora as well as a Visiting Lecturer for the University of Virginia Semester At Sea Program where she taught biology around the world. Doc Nancy was selected by the United States as a Fulbright Scholar and traveled to the Russian Federation teach at Gorno-Altaisk State University in southwest Siberia and to conduct research in remote protected areas.

Nancy is a retired United States National Park Ranger and lives in the Sierra Nevada with her family. When not working on her research on Giant Sequoias she loves to backpack. She has completed solo hikes of the John Muir and High Sierra Trails through the Sierra Nevada, hiked through the Alps on The Haute Route from Chamonix to Zermatt, and is a Pacific Crest Trail section hiker. She is the author of several books.

WHEN? Thursday, March 29 at 6pm

WHERE? Bistro Espresso, Arnold

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Sat. Feb. 10 - SALT SPRING VALLEY

Ten of us met up at Copperopolis Pond for a great day Birding Salt Springs Valley. We started at 9:00 AM and finished up around 3:30PM. Over the course of the day we saw 49 species. Highlights included Say's Phoebes, Phainopeplas, Wilson's Snipes, Lewis's Woodpeckers, Ferruginous Hawks, an immature Bald Eagle, 2 juvenile Black-crowned Night Herons, American White Pelicans and on our way out, those in the DeGear car, spotted a pair of White-tailed Kites!

Salt Springs Valley, elevation 1,066 feet - Kit DeGear

Tues/Wed Feb. 26/27 - Merced NWR

A group of CSAS birders visited the NWR to see the sunset fly-in and sunrise fly-out. With a recent count of over 16,000 Sandhill Cranes at the refuge, we expected lots of activity.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Wednesday, Mar. 7 - 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 March 7. The property encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water storage ponds.

On the February 7 bird walk we saw 32 species. The highlights were Brown Creeper and Purple Finch.

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

Saturday, March 17 – Wards Ferry Road

We will take a bird walk along Wards Ferry Road and through our ranch and our neighbor's 400 acre ranch known as the Kiriluk ranch which overlooks Turnback Creek. That creek flows into the Tuolumne River. This is a repeat of an outing held over the last five years ago.

Bring a bag lunch. Refreshments will be provided at the barn. The walk starts at 8:30 a.m. at 15589 Wards Ferry Road which is approximately 5 miles southerly from its intersection with Tuolumne Road and is about 1/4 miles southerly of the intersection with Yosemite Road.

Tom Parrington

Mar. 25 - Indigeny Reserve

Please join me as we bird through the beautiful grounds at Indigeny. Besides the apple orchards, there are large oaks, some pines, stream-side thickets and a marshy area with reeds that provide some great habitats for birds. As always, bring your binoculars and/or scopes, wear muted colors and you may wish to 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

Saturday, May 12 - Rim Fire Update

Birding the Rim Fire Snag Forest and Chaparral: Nature's Nurseries!

Mixed intensity fires like the Rim Fire of 2013 create some of the most productive and critical habitats for California birds and wildlife, comparable or better than even late-succession or "old growth" forest. Large, dense patches of standing dead trees and lush chaparral stands are preferred by a host of plants, insects, mammals, and keystone species such as Black-backed Woodpeckers. Surprisingly, that includes even many of our most threatened and endangered species such as spotted owls and pacific fishers. Come explore the northern side of the Rim Fire and find out more about why so many wildlife species benefit from forest conditions enhanced by mixed intensity fire.

Meet 7:00 a.m. at Starbucks Junction Center, Sonora, to drive to Long Barn and into Rim Fire, birding several locations and returning to Sonora by 3:00 p.m. Bring lunch, water, sun protection, wear sturdy shoes and layers.

Trip leader: Christy Sherr, Coordinator for the John Muir Project of the Earth Island Institute.

Presenter Bio

Christy Sherr is a retired National and State Park Ranger, currently working as a field biologist and Education Coordinator for the John Muir Project of the Earth Island Institute. She is a past president of the Sierra Foothills Audubon Chapter, and enjoyed watching her twelve year old daughter get excited about birds while walking in a burned forest!
christysherr@johnmuirproject.org

PERSONAL REQUEST

As many of you know, my personal birding focus is on capturing bird behaviors in high definition video, converting those clips into video stories, and then presenting them to the public. My overall purpose is to get the general public to see that birds are not just pretty pictures on calendars, but that they are real living creatures with their own personalities and cultures, deserving of preservation just as much as we humans. Only if we get the public to understand that can we possibly halt and reverse the current trend to extinction for so many birds.

I have a particular wish right now with which perhaps you can somehelp me. As some of you will know, there are birds that cooperate to survive, and one of those is the Acorn Woodpecker where several generations help feed and protect the new generation. Another species that does much the same is the beautiful Western Bluebird. I happen to have some equisite footage of Bluebirds cooperating to feed the new young, but what I'm looking for is an Acorn Woodpecker's nest where the young are being fed. Given the season that we're approaching, that will happen soon. I would like to find an Acorn Woodpecker's cavity that contains an active pair of adults raising their young that I can video from a distance so as to not disturb them. For these things, I use a camera with a very long lens (800mm), mount it on a tripod, and control it with my cellphone to reduce stress on the birds.

If you can help me with such a cavity in your garden, or one nearby that you can show me, I'd be very grateful - and the birds will gain from the publicity.

Thank you,
Barry Boulton. (209)596-0612

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.centralsierraaudubon.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