



SONORA PUBLIC MEETING

Working with Wildlife at New Melones

Presented by Pat Sanders

As birdwatchers and nature lovers, we spend a lot of time outdoors looking at and enjoying birds, their beauty, their behaviors and their interactions with each other. We get excited when we see a new or unusual species and share our experience, and yet we must still keep our distance so as not to cause disturbance or stress. But, when you're working with injured wildlife, you have that close, one-on-one, personal connection where you feel deeply and viscerally its pain, its fear and its hopes of escape, and you get to experience (mostly) its exhilarating release back to freedom. And, of course, you build up a bounty of fascinating stories with which to regale Audubon members, and that's what Pat Sanders will bring to us with her passion and love for wildlife showing through.



*A severely dehydrated fawn
Photo - Pat Sanders*

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.

*An Osprey chick that was able to be
returned to its nest at Tuttle town
Photo - Pat Sanders*



Wednesday, March 20 at 6:30 pm
At the County Library, Sonora (Greenley Rd)

CALAVERAS PUBLIC MEETING

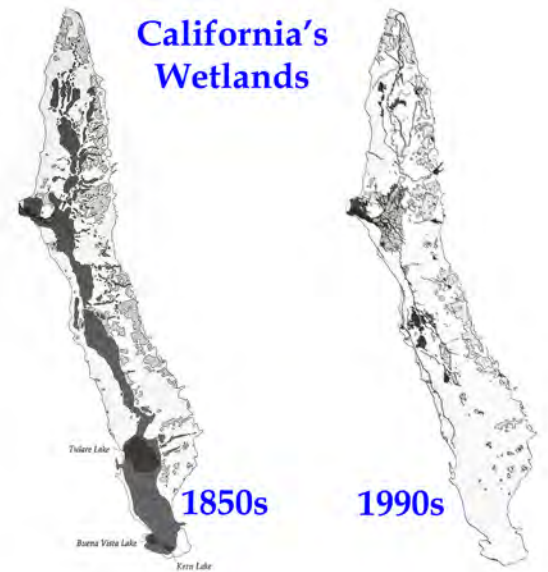
A Short History of California's Wetlands and Birds

Presented by Barry Boulton, CSAS President

The many migratory bird species that over-winter in California's Central Valley exhibit a myriad of fascinating and unique behaviors, cultures, and survival methods, but they all have one thing in common, a critical need for the habitats and water provided in the Valley's wetlands. But, as we know, water is a scarce commodity in this State, and we can expect more efforts to divert water from wetlands habitats for agricultural and development purposes. In fact, a bill, HR23, was introduced in Congress in 2017 (fortunately not passed) that would have done exactly that.

Given likely future political attempts to take water from our relatively small refuge habitats, it behooves us to understand the fascinating history behind the use and distribution of water in the Central Valley wetlands, so I will intertwine history and bird behaviors in the wetlands.

In fact, this presentation will be a sort of "taster" for a more in-depth program that Professor Phil Garone of California State University, Stanislaus, Sal Salerno, President of Stanislaus Audubon, and myself will present at the State Theater in Modesto on April 7th which I invite you to attend (see flyer in this newsletter).



Snow Geese flocking at Merced NWR. Photo Barry Bouton



Thursday, March 21 at 6:00 pm

(Gate & doors open at 5:30pm)

At Murphys Diggins Clubhouse, Tom Bell Road, Murphys.

From Angels Camp, turn right at the only traffic lights in Murphys.
The Diggins entry gate (open) and clubhouse are straight ahead.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Ironstone, Murphys - Feb. 23

This field trip, so ably led by Sal Salerno, President of Stanislaus Audubon Society, was fairly short in birds with a total of 30 species seen or heard. However, the pond had some interesting birds - Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead and Common Merganser, while the highlight was a Red-breasted Sapsucker busily working the trees by the pond. Also in evidence were 12 Western Bluebirds and a Hermit Thrush that we saw on the January trip.

Barry Boulton

Indigeny - Feb. 24

Ten of us braved the chilly start to the day, including a few locals along with others from Strawberry, Twain Harte, Groveland and Bear Valley. A rather quiet beginning (perhaps a bit cold for the birds too!) but eventually we were able to hear and see a good variety of our feathered friends. 28 species were seen and highlights included, some particularly beautiful Western Bluebirds, some great views of a couple of Hermit Thrushes and a huge flock of at least 100 Band-tailed Pigeons that came in to roost nearby.

Kit DeGear

Editor's Note.

It's interesting that Western Bluebirds were at Indigeny, while about a week earlier they were abundant off Tuolumne Road near Wards Ferry Road, and at Ironstone Winery and yet, at the same time, a flock of Mountain Bluebirds was observed at Lake Yosemite near UC Merced at an elevation of 253 ft. Since Mountain Bluebirds are normally higher elevation birds, this flock must have moved down in elevation due to lack of food and perhaps water whereas the Western Bluebirds can still find them and don't need to move downhill.

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIPS

March 6 (Wednesday) - GCSD

The first Wednesday of the month Bird Walk at Groveland Community Services property at 18966 Ferretti Road, Groveland will be led by Jeanne Ridgley on March 6, 2019. The property encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, pine and willow habitat with three water storage ponds.

The February 6 Bird Walk was cancelled due to snow.

Access for birders here is limited. Birders must be accompanied by an authorized birder.

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

March 16 (Saturday) - Salt Springs Valley

Salt Spring Valley is primarily an auto tour, although we will stop at certain vantage points where we expect to see several species. This valley has different habitats - water, open rangelands and oak forests plus a stand of eucalyptus that, all-in-all, offer many species.

Meet at 8:30am opposite the pond about 1/4 mile along Rock Creek Road off highway 4 near Copperopolis. Bring water, lunch **and** radios (for convoying) if you have them. Lunch (and restrooms) at the resort (\$10 per car). End around 2pm - but if you need to depart earlier, we'll get to the resort around 11:30am. Rain will cancel the trip.

Paolo Maffei (209)532-8426

March 23 (Saturday) - Ironstone Winery, Murphys

The Ironstone Winery in Murphys has a rich habitat comprising many oaks of various ages and sizes, wetlands and pond, open lawns and vines where we will see many species,

We'll meet in the lower parking lot at 9:00am and our walk will last 2 - 3 hours. Rain will cancel the trip. From highway 4 at Murphys take Main Street and turn left at Scott Street until you bear left where Scott Street ends to become 6 Mile Road. From here the formal entrance to Ironstone is just one mile on the right (don't take what looks like an entrance halfway on the right as it's simply a working gate). Just inside the Ironstone entrance, bear left and park on the left side.

Kit DeGear (925)822-5215

March 24 (Sunday) - 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**

(Field Trip Chair)

SIGHTINGS & OBSERVATIONS

Feb. 5

Greg took these shots of a **Sooty Fox Sparrow** on our deck today when we had 11 inches of snow.

Jean Dakota

Editor's Note

As Beedy & Pandolfino say in their book *Birds of the Sierra Nevada* "Depending on your point of view, taxonomy of Fox Sparrows can be fascinating or bewildering, with at least 18 sub-species recognized". However, only 4 sub-species spend time here in the Sierra and the Sooty is one of them. The others are "Red", "Slate-colored" and Thick-billed" Fox Sparrows. The Sooty commonly over-winters here in riparian and wetland thickets and chapparal mainly in the Foothill zone, and so this one was high, probably at its altitude limit.



Photo - Greg Robbins

Feb. 12

Ferruginous Hawk flew up from ground attracting our attention and then flew across La Grange Rd. It was easily identified as we have seen several this winter in these settings, particularly on Rock River Rd., Sims Rd/Hwy. 49, Willms Rd. It's been a good year generally for Ferruginous Hawk sightings.

John Turner

Feb. 26

We saw this lovely female common Merganser today at the Willow Springs pond (2,900 ft to 3,000 ft elevation). She was alone, we did not see a mate.



Photo - Greg Robbins

All of the Canada geese seem to have left. Only one pair of the lesser Scaups were present along with seven Coots and several pair of Mallards (the Coots and Mallards have been on the pond all winter). The Cormorant that we saw on Friday, Feb 22 was not at the pond today. But a lovely Great Egret was hanging around, so it was an eventful bird walk. I don't usually think of the Great Egret having wispy/willow-like feathers like the Snowy, but this one sure did.

Jean Dakota

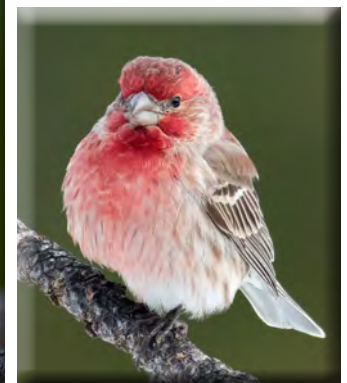
Editor's Note:

Yes, the Great Egret does indeed grow plumes on its back during the breeding season like the Snowy. However, while the Snowy also grows plumes from its crown, the Great does not. The other thing to note is that in both species, both sexes grow plumes which tells us that both the male and female make sexual selection choices.



Photo - Greg Robbins

Photos by Dave Douglass around Pine Mountain Lake



From top left clockwise:
Golden-crowned Sparrow
Very wet Red-tailed Hawk
Male House Finch
Wet Red-shouldered Hawk
Female House Finch

CENTRAL SIERRA AUDUBON 2019 SCHOLARSHIP

Central Sierra Audubon Society is offering up to \$5,000 in scholarships in 2019 to students pursuing degrees in Natural or Environmental Sciences. Applicants must be of at least junior standing in college to be considered. Preference will be given to alumni of a high school in either Calaveras or Tuolumne County or those who have attended Columbia College. The Edey Dingman scholarships are offered to students pursuing an undergraduate or graduate degree. Application deadline for 2019 is March 20. Application forms and guidelines are available on the CSAS web site at www.centralsierraaudubon.org



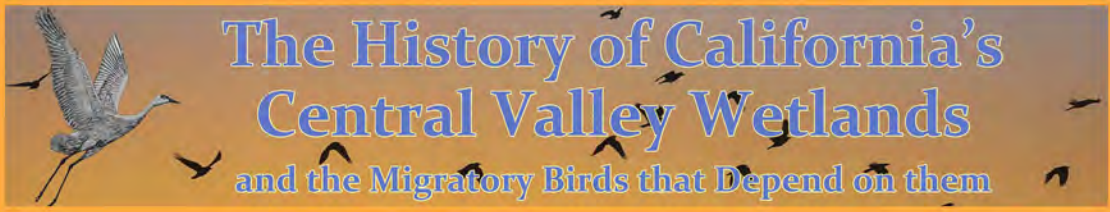
Completed application packets will include an application form, copy of college transcripts, two letters of recommendation, and a one-page personal essay. Completed application packets must be received by US Mail on or before March 20, 2019. After the scholarship committee reviews the applications, eligible candidates will be invited for an interview with the committee. Scholarship winners are eligible for a second year scholarship, but must reapply and will be considered along with other applicants.

Caitlyn Rich was chosen last spring to be the 2018 recipient of a \$4,000 Edey Dingman scholarship awarded by CSAS. She is attending UC Santa Cruz with a major in ecology and evolutionary biology. A graduate of Summerville High School, Caitlyn's goal is to pursue a career in wildlife conservation by using ecological genetics to research ways species diversify and adapt their given traits to climate change.

In a recent update Caitlyn reported that during the fall quarter she completed the California Ecology and Conservation field course that allowed her to travel across California for seven weeks to different UC reserves. Throughout this time she engaged in seven field research projects at Blue Oak Ranch, Angelo, Rancho Marino and Anza-Borrego Reserves. Among the projects were determining blue oak recruitment rates, salamander habitat preference, how great egret behavior patterns alter with habitat type and abiotic factors, and the effects of predation risk on rodent foraging behavior. She plans to graduate in the coming year and pursue ecology biology in graduate school.

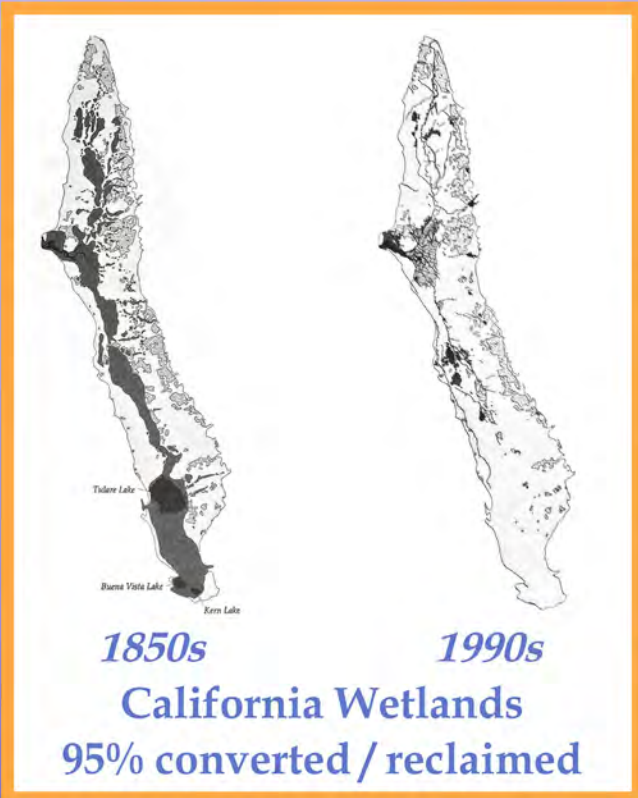
Funding the scholarships is a bequest by a former CSAS member, Edey Dingman. To assist in funding the scholarships, the society accepts donations, holds birdhouse sales in the spring and fall and sells books and other related material at its monthly meetings. The birdhouse sales are combined with the Native Plant Society sale.

Further information may be obtained from Augusta Parrington at 209-928-3835



The History of California's Central Valley Wetlands

and the Migratory Birds that Depend on them



Sunday, April 7th

Doors open at 1:30pm;
Presentation starts at 2pm.

Presenters

Philip Garone, Chair of History at
California State University, Stanislaus

Sal Salerno, President of Stanislaus
Audubon Society

Barry Boulton, President of Central
Sierra Audubon Society

Tickets \$10 (Admission charge waived
for Stanislaus State students with
a current ID at the door).



Our Sponsors:






The State Theatre - 1307 J Street, Modesto, CA - (209) 527-4967

Central Sierra Audubon Moving On

Elections Coming Up in June!

Almost every non-profit experiences the annual problem of maintaining or replacing some of its Officers, and CSAS certainly fits that profile. The current Board has served in various capacities anything from two to ten years, and we will need at least two new officers this coming year.

Of course, the other problem that such organizations face is that of encouraging younger people and people from minority groups to become active and find value in the organization; CSAS certainly has that problem too. We have run many school programs over the last few years, but that sadly hasn't resulted in younger people becoming active, either in running the chapter or even participating in field trips. Indeed, we've even found it difficult to give money away to students through our scholarships because only one or two apply every year! One wonders why?

I'm also amazed and even confused about another aspect of students missing in action so to speak. That is, you need a rich resume these days that goes beyond just academic accomplishments (unless you're really exceptional in those), and it seems to me that a resume that shows experience of some responsibility in an organization such as an Audubon chapter must be more useful than a stint in, say, Starbucks or McDonalds etc. Imagine a student's resume that speaks to running our website and social media - wouldn't that be in a different league of resumes than those showing the aforesaid fast-food places or selling scout cookies outside the local supermarket?

Well, anyway, CSAS will hold elections at our annual meeting on June 19, and I invite you to consider participating with us for a while and, perhaps even more importantly, introducing students to the same thought so as to enhance their future prospects. The Nominating Committee members whom you should contact are:

Kit DeGear: (925)822-5215 or kdegear@gmail.com

and

Barry Boulton: (209)596-0612 or rbarryboulton@gmail.com

Barry Boulton

Central Sierra Audubon Society - CSAS

(Chapter of the National Audubon Society)

P.O. Box 3047, Sonora, CA 95370

General Meetings: Third Wednesday at 6:30pm (except July, August, and December), in the Tuolumne Public Library on Greenley Road, Sonora.

Board Meetings: Please call Barry Boulton (209)596-0612.

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
Ralph Retherford, VP Programs	(209)770-6124
Jean Dakota, Secretary	(209)591-9952
Linda Millspaugh, Treasurer	(209)586-9557
Kit DeGear, Field Trips	(925)822-5215
Pattie Henderson, Membership	(209)586-2169
Jan Jorn-Baird, Publicity	(209)532-1106
Gail Witzlsteiner, Education	(209)586-4025
Barry Boulton, Newsletter Editor	(209)596-0612

Your CSAS Committees

Ron & Barbara McDow, Bird Box Trail	(650)391-5277
Tom Harrington, Book/Bird Box Sales	(209)694-8564
Augusta Parrington, Scholarship	(209)928-3835
Barry Boulton, Website Manager	(209)596-0612
Walt Kruse, YSS delegate	(707)548-1829
Chris Laddish, Calaveras County Contact	(209)728-3871
Steven Umland, Sightings/eBird	(209)352-6985