



PUBLIC PRESENTATION

In-person at Sonora Library and via Zoom

Wednesday, May 18, at 7pm

Lahontan Cutthroat Trout: a Comeback Story by Tom Hahn

One of the most tragic biodiversity losses in the history of California has been the disappearance of virtually all of the native migratory salmonids. Most of us are familiar with the loss of native runs of wild Chinook Salmon and Steelhead Trout, but many have never heard of one of the most spectacular migratory fish ever to grace these waters. Lahontan Cutthroat trout, native to the Truckee and Walker River drainages, historically rivaled Chinook in size (40 or more pounds!), and were abundant enough in the Truckee River to support a commercial fishery during the building of the railroad in the 1860s. The Derby Dam, completed in 1905 on the Truckee River, put an end to their spawning migrations from feeding grounds in Pyramid Lake up to the Lake Tahoe region. This eventually spelled the end of the Pyramid Lake / Truckee River Lahontan giants, declared extinct by the 1940s.

But the recent discovery of a population of Pyramid Lake transplants in a creek in eastern Nevada, determined to be genetically close to the original Pyramid Lake fish, provided hatchery brood stock, and after years of careful efforts by the Paiute Tribe stocking the lake with fingerlings, the big fish are back. They even have been attempting to resume migrations up the Truckee River. With dam removals (such as the spectacularly successful one on the Elwha River in Washington) and other mitigation options becoming increasingly feasible, perhaps we may yet see something approaching a full recovery of one of the most spectacular natural migratory fish populations in the West.

Tom Hahn is on the biology faculty at UC Davis where he studies behavior and physiology of a variety of birds, especially reproduction and migration of crossbills and other nomadic finches, but also vocal behavior of a variety of songbirds such as White-crowned Sparrows and Cassin's Finches.

*Lahontan Cutthroat
Trout
Photo by Lyle Hahn*



The April 20 presentation by **Rich Cimino** entitled "Neo-tropical Birds that Forage with Swarming Army Ants" is on-line at: <https://youtu.be/-6miyw9bgv8>

Note: all prior CSAS Zoom presentation URLs are shown on our website home page at www.centralsierraaudubon.org

MAY FIELD TRIPS

Note: our website (<https://centralsierraaudubon.org/>) contains maps for each field trip and will also indicate cancellations due to weather or other reason, so, if in doubt, check it out!

Tuesday, May 3 - West Side Trail

Come join Jean Dakota and the CSAS Audubon group on Tuesday, May 3, for a West Side Rail Trail walk along this old railroad trail for GREAT VIEWS of the mountains and the Tuolumne River below, and hawks and falcons above. This time of year we are certain to hear the distinctive sound of the Wrentit and perhaps see some Blue-gray Gnat-catchers, too. Last year this walk yielded 28 species (heard and seen) and lots of WILDFLOWERS. In August of 2019 we spotted a Pygmy Owl along this trail.

Meet in the parking lot at 9:00 a.m. The walk will last from 2-3 hours and cover 2-3 miles (we do not walk fast). It is an old rail-road grade and so fairly level. Muted clothing, hat, sunscreen and water are advised. Ticks may be around this year, so be prepared with bug repellent. Please note that there are NO public restrooms nearby.

From Sonora take Tuolumne Rd. out all the way to the city of Tuolumne until Tuolumne Road ends at Carter Street. (Do Not Turn at the traffic lights at the intersection of Tuolumne Rd. N. and Cherry Valley Blvd. N.) At the end of Tuolumne Road, turn left on Carter St. and go 0.3 miles; turn right on Buchanan Road. Continue for 0.5 mile and you will see the parking lot on the left just past the intersection of Buchanan and Miramonte Roads. The trailhead and kiosk are down the stairs.

Jean Dakota, (415) 454-8313

Wednesday, May 4 - Groveland Community Services District (GCSD)

I hope you will join us to explore this very rich environment. The property encompasses an area of more than 200 acres of oak, alpine and willow habitat with three storage ponds with a rich variety of birds. On our last visit in March we saw 41 species. We were treated to not only Wood Ducks but a nice viewing of a Great Horned Owl. This month should yield a variety of swallows, Bullock's Oriole and Black-headed Grosbeaks.

Meet the group in the GCSD parking lot at 8:00 AM. Bring binoculars and a birding guide if you have one. The walk will last about two-three hours.

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

Thursday, May 12 - Wards Ferry Road Walk

We will take our annual 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 before covid. Bring a bag lunch. Refreshments will be provided at the barn.

The walk starts at 8:00 a.m. by the barn at 15589 Wards Ferry Road which is approximately 5 miles southerly from its intersection with Tuolumne Road, and about 1/4 miles southerly of the intersection with Yosemite Road.

Tom Parrington

Thursday, May 19 - Confidence Trail with Tom Hahn

Please join Tom Hahn, our May presenter (previous evening - see front page of this newsletter) who will once again lead us on what was an annual bird walk before covid! This is always a particularly great outing with many Spring migrants to hear and see! Meet at 8:00 a.m. at the trailhead at Confidence/South Fork Rd. just north of Middle Camp Rd

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

Sunday, May 29 - Indigeny Reserve

The weather on our recent April 24 visit was beautiful - which was just as well because the birds made us work overtime to find the 37 species we observed! While we heard the Bullock's Oriole several times, and the Torch Lilies were in bloom in the parking lot which they like to feed on, the Oriole remained hidden from view high up in the treetops. We did finally get to see a pair of Black-headed Grosbeaks. We, also, enjoyed viewing 6 goslings with an adult pair of Canada Geese down by the lake and some Ash-throated Flycatchers. Here's the full species list on eBird: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S107951579>

On this visit we should have more Orioles, Grosbeaks, other flycatchers and I hope some warblers and vireos, too.

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

APRIL FIELD TRIP REPORTS

April 3 - Ironstone Vineyards

It was so nice to return to Ironstone, such a beautiful site. It was a lovely day which matched our lovely bird sightings. Nice views of some Wood Ducks, a first sighting for one of our participants, and great looks at some Lincoln Sparrows, too. Ralph Baker, from Riverbank, offered his expertise as well. We learned an easy way to distinguish the Audubon's Yellow-rumped Warbler, which has a Yellow throat, from the Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warbler, which has a white throat. Here's the full species list on eBird: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S106241705> Love these outings where we can all be exposed to new birds and information!

I hope we can return in the fall.

Kit DeGear

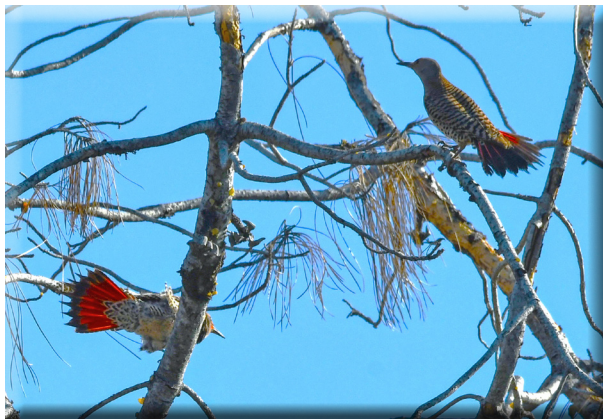


Wood Ducks & Lincoln's Sparrow by George Dondero

April 9 - Red Hills Ecology Walk

A quite large group assembled at Red Hills to enjoy birds, plants, endangered Red Hills Minnows - and a beautiful California Striped Racer. The birding highlight was undoubtedly a scrap - courting or territorial - between three Northern Flickers among the stately Gray Pines. Here's the full species list on eBird: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S106631254>

Barry Boulton



*Photos
by
Darcy
Zimmerman*



April 27 - Spotted Owl Field Trip

A small group of CSAS activists had the pleasure of visiting forestlands near Tuolumne City with biologist Matt Andrews to view a pair of breeding California Spotted Owls – and we were well rewarded with close-up, personal views!

Both male and female owls showed little hesitation in swooping down to grab their dinners – mice that Matt thoughtfully brought along. He found the nest a month ago and eggs were probably laid a week or two before that so, although the nest is about 50' up in the tree and they're not yet visible, the young have already hatched.

This was one of those special occasions that will live with us as we remember these gorgeous birds. Thanks to Matt for sharing it with us.



Jean Dakota



Spotted Owl photos by Greg Robbins

April 29 - Pelican Trail, San Joaquin NWR

After an hour and a half drive from Sonora, four of us arrived outside Modesto at the San Joaquin River NWR to explore the Pelican Nature Trail Area. I was pleased to still see quite a lot of water and waterfowl since my trip in March. A variety of sandpipers - "peeps" - kept us busy with our ID skills, and I always enjoy seeing Cinnamon and Blue-winged Teals as well as the several White-faced Ibis. The Marsh Wrens were quite vocal and active (and, out-of-sight!), but the Sora were quiet today. It was very windy and I think that had an effect on the birds to stay hunkered down. However, the Swainson's Hawks, our highlight of the day, were enjoying the wind and thermals! At one point we saw a couple circling each other, not surprising given that they breed here. Several Western Kingbirds were active in the grasslands.



Photo by Barbara Salerno

We had a brief encounter with Sal Salerno, Stanislaus Audubon Chapter President and his wife, Barbara. Sal informed us that he had earlier seen a Bald Eagle and then a Golden Eagle being harassed by a Swainson's Hawk! Unfortunately, the eagles eluded us. Ann, a new participant in our adventures, saw the outing listed in My Motherlode and made the trek down. She was enjoying listening and viewing the sights and sounds of life at the refuge. Cyril Ashe and I completed all the loops, walking over 5 miles, and saw 44 species over the course of 4 hours. A long, tiring but rewarding day! The full species list is on eBird at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S108417975>

Kit DeGear, Field Trip Chair

Active Hummers at Pine Mountain Lake in April

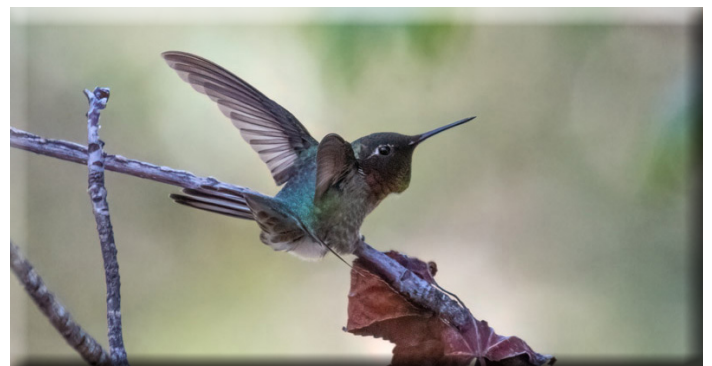
Narrative and photos by Dave Douglass

I've been chasing, and shooting hummingbirds for a while now but I've never experienced the good luck like I had this morning. It started with my noticing some "brown" on a hummingbird coming in for a drink in our nearby feeder as I was eating breakfast. THAT is the sure sign of a Rufous Hummingbird which does not show up here very much. I think they are extra cool looking (especially the males) so I jumped up, grabbed the hog-leg (camera plus very long lens), and went out for some hummer stalking.

First to show up was a female Anna's, then a male Rufous, then a little later what I took to be a male Anna's turned out to be a male Black-chinned which I have never seen here!

Notice the usually unseen feet on the Black-chinned. Did you know that hummingbirds can't walk with them? Only for perching. Just one of the amazing things about these little jewels...

Then along came a male Anna's that posed for a perched-in-a-tree shot. VERY fortuitous session!



Avian Flu & Bird Feeders

"A highly contagious strain of avian flu continues to move west across North America this spring — an unprecedented source of mortality for wild birds as well as millions of chickens and turkeys in poultry plants and farms. Lately, the virus has been detected in wild birds in Wyoming and Montana and in backyard poultry flocks in Idaho and Utah"

Source: BirdWatching

It seems possible that we might see another round of dying birds on our feeders and so we should be ready to take them down if we see dead birds. Please read this article if you have feeders installed: <https://www.birdwatchingdaily.com/news/conservation/avian-flu-update-what-to-know-about-feeder-birds-eagles-owls-and-more/>

The Wonder of Migration

National Audubon's latest magazine, *Audubon Spring 2022*, is devoted to a series of articles collectively named "The Wonder of Migration" which provides a lot of interesting information and stories well worth reading. To top that up, there's a website you might like to visit that makes it all more local – and surprising too.

Very briefly, **BirdCast** commenced in 1999/2000 as a collaboration between the EPA, the National Audubon Society, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Clemson University Radar Ornithology Laboratory, the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, and GeoMarine, Inc. The collaborative network is now larger and includes NASA and NOAA.

The basic concept and goal was to "provide real-time predictions of bird migrations: when they migrate, where they migrate, and how far they will be flying". Thus, "BirdCast develops and maintains tools that predict and monitor bird migration. These include forecast bird migration maps that predict where and when bird migration will occur, live bird migration maps that show where migration is occurring in real-time, and migration alerts to which one can subscribe to learn when bird migration will occur. Data from weather surveillance radar are essential for developing and maintaining these tools".

How is it relevant to us personally? If you log into this website page <https://dashboard.birdcast.info/region/US-CA-1009?night=2022-04-23> you will see how many birds were migrating over Calaveras County on the night of April 23, 2022. It also shows you the peak traffic and at what time it occurred. On the second-from-top ribbon you can select another specific night, and another location – so if you go to <https://dashboard.birdcast.info/region/US-CA-109?night=2022-04-23> you'll see the same data for Tuolumne County on the same night. Like me, you may be amazed at the numbers!

Barry Boulton

Central Sierra Audubon Society - CSAS

(Chapter of the National Audubon Society)
P.O. Box 3047, Sonora, CA 95370

Public Meetings: As of this month, April 2022, we will hold monthly in-person meetings in the Sonora Library as we did before covid, and simultaneously share them on Zoom so that you have flexibility in attendance. Monthly details shown in the Squawker and on our website at www.centralsierraaudubon.org

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 you may join solely 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 for local membership is available on the CSAS website at: www.centralsierraaudubon.org/join-us/

CSAS Officers

Barry Boulton, President	(209)596-0612
Tom Parrington, Conservation	(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
Gail Witzlsteiner, Director at Large	(209)586-4025
Jan Jorn-Baird, Publicity	(209)532-1106

CSAS Committee Chairs

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Book/Bird Box Sales - Jean Dakota	(209)591-9952
Scholarship - Gail Witzlsteiner	(209)586-4025
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