

Sierra Squawker



www.centralsierraaudubon.org

March - 2023

PUBLIC PROGRAM

We will meet and socialize in-person at Sonora Library while Martha will be on Zoom, so you can join with us in whichever manner that suits you.
(see the Zoom link below)

Wednesday, March 15, at 7pm

Tracking Avian Dispersal with Drone-based Telemetry

Presented by Martha Zillig

Movement is one of the main ways birds respond to environmental change. Understanding why birds move on short vs. long timescales (i.e. a single breeding season compared to a migration event) may give us clues about how populations will respond to climate change. My research aims to investigate elevational movement of birds in the Great Basin, where many species seem to be shifting their distributions upslope.

Martha Zillig is currently a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Montana where she studies white-tailed deer biology using camera traps. She completed her PhD at the University of California, Davis, where she studied bird communities in the Great Basin, USA. She is interested in how we can incorporate technology into wildlife biology, and how that research can inform our understanding of adaptive capacity to climate change.



Zoom link will be: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88681758471>

The February 15 presentation by Dan Airola on the "Yellow-billed Magpie Population Status and Ecology in the Sacramento Region" is now on-line at: <https://youtu.be/VMYSwiQvCbs>

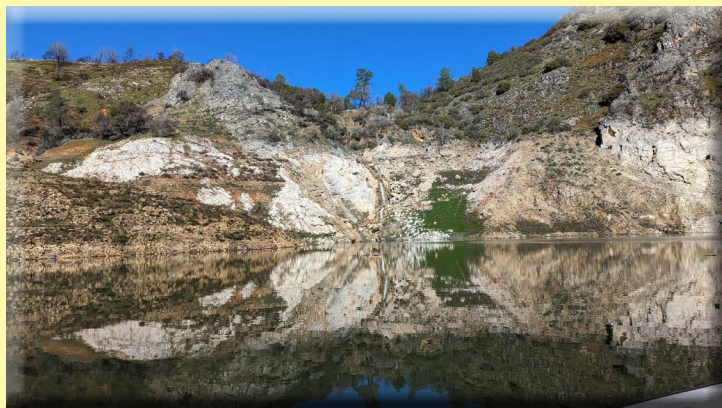
All CSAS Zoom presentation URLs are shown on our website at <http://centralsierraaudubon.org/>

New Melones Eagle Count 1-24-2023

Several CSAS members participated once again in the annual Eagle Count at New Melones. The primary goal is to count the number of eagles, identifying adults and juveniles, plus counting all other species too. This annual count provides the Bureau of Reclamation naturalists trend data over time which is important in understanding conservation needs for these elegant giants. Here's the report written by Ranger Pat Sanders who coordinated the count.

The 28th Annual Eagle Survey at New Melones Lake commenced on January 24, 2023. The day dawned clear and cold with a temperature in the 30's at 0800 hours. Eleven participants boarded 2 boats and each boat was assigned two sections of the lake to complete. One boat experienced engine issues so was unable to complete the last section. The other boat then took on the last section which brought them in very late at nearly sunset.

Nineteen Bald Eagles were observed, 15 were adults and 4 were immature. Thirty-one different species of birds were identified on the survey which greatly suggests a very healthy ecosystem. The Peregrine Falcon was observed in the southern most part of the lake and numerous Lewis' Woodpeckers were observed in the northwestern section. These woodpeckers are not common visitors to New Melones Lake, so it was a surprise and a delight to find them. **Pat Sanders, Ranger, Bureau of Reclamation**



Clockwise from top left: Two Lewis' Woodpeckers by Pat Sanders; Bald Eagle by Barry Boulton; Peregrine Falcon by Alan Pratt; waterfall by Barry Boulton. Center - Great Blue Heron by Barry Boulton

FEBRUARY FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Salt Springs Valley, Feb. 11



While the sun was shining in nearby areas it seemed the six of us were often under clouds and a cold wind. Still many birds came out for our enjoyment. We had unusually high sightings of Lewis's Woodpeckers and Loggerhead Shrikes. We did get to see a Ferruginous Hawk which was a target bird for the day. There were huge flocks of American Robins and Western Bluebirds. An added treat were Mountain Bluebirds among the Westerns and Tricolored Blackbirds intermixed with a group of European Starlings. The reservoir was extremely high spilling over the area where we would normally walk out to the dam. We had a nice lunch in the campground which provided a little more shelter from the wind. Close to 40 species were seen. All agreed it was a great day!

Report by Kit DeGear



Photos by Darcy Zimmerman

Merced NWR, Feb. 16



Eight of us met up at the first platform to view the incredible waterfowl and other nearby birds. This year we were greeted with Ross's and Greater White-fronted Geese just a stone's throw away. The Sandhill Cranes were also unusually close. Common Yellowthroat were easily seen as well. Another star attraction was a pair of Blue-winged Teal not often observed here. Other highlights along the auto tour included a female Vermilion Flycatcher, Tundra Swan, Wilson's Snipe and American Pipit. And of course the nesting Great Horned Owls. 43 species were observed. The Refuge never disappoints!

Report by Kit Degear



Photos from top left:

Bill Bowie at the first overlook by Evan Watson.

Sunset fly-in by Kit DeGear.

Snow Geese by Dave Douglass

MARCH 2023 FIELD TRIPS

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

March 11 (Saturday) - String of Pearls, Oakdale

We will start the trip at the Oakdale Recreation Area on the Stanislaus River. On our last visit in March of 2022, we enjoyed a good showing of Wood Ducks and Phainopeplas while a Snowy Egret gave us a good look at his “golden slippers” - which made me wonder if those yellow feet help catch fish? Wilson’s Snipes seem to be occurring more frequently, and we watched one bury its long bill in the mud all the way to the hilt. The Horseshoe pond was graced by a swirling flight of a dozen Great Egrets, with one Snowy among them, and then we got a long, look at a male Nuttall’s Woodpecker. We can expect a very enjoyable and successful trip again this year.

Meet 8:30am at Barrow’s (previously Perko’s) in Sonora to carpool. This will be a 100 mile round trip from Sonora so have enough gas! Bring layered clothing in muted colors, binoculars and scopes and lunch. If you wish to meet at Oakdale, the recreation area is just off River Road in Oakdale. That is, turn right at the traffic lights in Oakdale and then turn left on River Road. The 2nd left, Liberinhi Ave, takes you to the parking lot where we’ll assemble at 9:30am

Trip leader: Paolo Maffei (209)532-8426

March 19 (Sunday) - Indigeny

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.

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. As always, bring your binoculars and/or scopes, wear muted colors and you may wish to include a hat, sunscreen and water.

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

CSAS Board Elections

The Central Sierra Audubon Society Board of Directors approved the appointment of the 2023 Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is formed for the purpose of recommending members to fill planned Board vacancies. This year’s Nominating Committee is chaired by Board Member Gail Witzlsteiner. She is joined by Vice President Ralph Retherford and community member Phyllis Ashmead.

Members are encouraged to suggest individuals who might be interested in serving on the Board, or consider serving themselves. Top of the positions to be filled are President, Membership Director and Education Director.

Please contact Gail Witzlsteiner at witoz@msn.com if you are interested or have further information.

Earth Day 2023 - Saturday April 22nd

I’m delighted to tell you that on this forthcoming Earth Day, CSAS will be participating in an Earth Day event at Salt Spring Valley Reservoir that will be hosted by the new managers at the resort near Copperopolis. We will have a table and display as well as leading bird walks and having books to sell. This will be an excellent opportunity to meet the public in Calaveras County and so if you’d like to come along to assist us, please contact Bruce McClenahan who will be planning and coordinating our activities. Bruce can be contacted at (209)323-0739 or bgmcclenahan@gmail.com

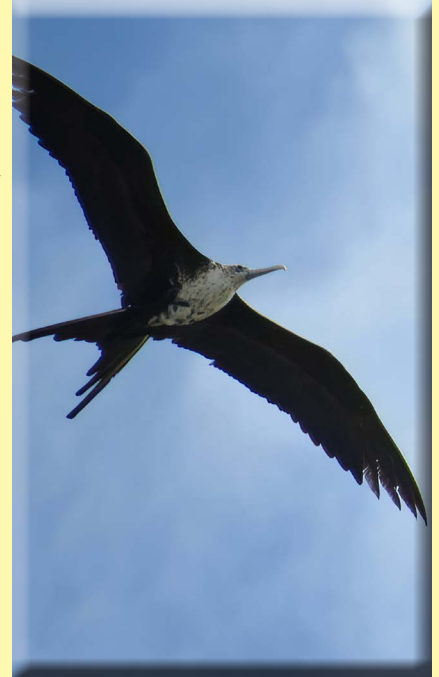
Some Birds of Baja California

CSAS member Karen Orso just visited Baja California where she saw, of course, some species that we don't normally get to enjoy here, and this is what she says:

During part of our time in Baja California Sur my friend and I stayed at Los Colibris Casitas, lodging just outside of Todos Santos which is on the Pacific Ocean side of the Cape. Los Colibris features a view of Playa La Poza and its large lagoon/estuary. About 50 to 70 Frigatebirds could often be seen soaring over the lagoon, then swooping down and skimming their beaks along the surface of the water. Were they drinking or feeding? Not sure.

Los Colibris Casitas is no doubt named in honor of the Cape area's endemic species, Xantus's Hummingbird, that lives in the beautiful gardens, enjoying the flowers in bloom and syrup feeders put out for their benefit. Crested Caracaras are common in Baja and easily seen from roads and highways. About 40% of their diet is carrion so roadkill draws them, as well as Turkey Vultures, to highway corridors.

Karen Orso



Photos by Karen from top right:

** Frigatebird*

** Crested Caracara and wary Turkey Vulture*

** Xantus's Hummingbird*



Central Sierra Audubon Society - CSAS

(Chapter of the National Audubon Society)

P.O. Box 3047, Sonora, CA 95370

Public Presentations: As of this month, April 2022, we will hold monthly in-person presentations 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 Millsbaugh, 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

Bird Box Trail - Gail Witzlsteiner	(209)586-4025
Book/Bird Box Sales - Jean Dakota	(209)591-9952
Scholarship - Gail Witzlsteiner	(209)586-4025
Website - Barry Boulton	(209)596-0612
Newsletter Editor - Barry Boulton	(209)596-0612
Education - Kit DeGear	(925)822-5215
YSS delegate - Walt Kruse	(707)548-1829