



PUBLIC PROGRAM

Chanda will present in-person at the Sonora Library where you can meet her and enjoy her program. As usual, the program will be shown live on Zoom, so you can join with us in whichever manner suits you. Use the Zoom link below to log-in from home.

Wednesday, September 20, at 7pm

Hawk-talk with a Falconer

Presented by Chanda Tucker



Join us on September 20th to learn about the ancient sport of falconry with Chanda, a master falconer with 14 years of experience flying birds of prey.

Aside from flying a variety of birds of prey on wild game, she was also hired to utilize ancient and modern falconry training methods to haze seagulls off of a landfill.

She also has experience rescuing birds of prey and sharing her love for these majestic animals.

Tonight's Zoom link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85365950065>

Incoming CSAS President's Message

As the newly elected President of our local Central Sierra Audubon chapter, first I want to express my appreciation for the dedication and innovations that Barry Boulton, our President for the past seven years, has brought to our chapter. Fortunately, he has agreed to continue as editor of the Squawker and to maintain our website. With his technical expertise and knowledge of Zoom, he has allowed our chapter to survive Covid and resume in person meetings as well as present our monthly programs via Zoom when the County library video and sound system is working properly.

(continued on p.2)

I previously served two years as President and agreed to serve another year as caretaker for our chapter until a younger and more energetic member can take my place. I am also continuing in my role as Conservation Director following local planning and development issues that adversely affect our unique foothills habitat as well as State and National actions that could do the same.

As is the case with many local organizations, trying to attract and excite new members is an uphill battle, especially as our existing membership ages. Technology is claimed by some to be an answer. Our chapter has tried to expand community outreach by having its website, a Facebook account, and even our own QR code to connect those interested to our website.

Our current Board is very active in planning outings, programs, selecting scholarship recipients, and participating with other groups in presenting bird and other conservation issues to our local community. These efforts include expanded activities in Calaveras County. My efforts as President will be to continue and strengthen our chapter working with our excellent Board members.

Tom Parrington

SUMMER FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Wards Ferry Road, June 15

Our annual walk (postponed from May) started at the barn about 8:15am with 5 of us walking southerly on Wards Ferry Road to the intersection with Algerine/Wards Ferry and back to the barn for a break, then out through our pastures to the Kiriluk/Kellog ranch and the overlook for Turnback Creek and down into the Tuolumne River Canyon.

Birds were heard more than seen but the list included: Lark Sparrow, California Towhee, California Quail, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Finch, House Sparrow, Western Wood-Pewee, Brown-headed Cowbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Mourning Dove, Lesser Goldfinch, and Black Phoebe. A final sighting was a pair of Red-tailed Hawks sitting together in a dead oak tree on the westerly side of Wards Ferry.

Tom Parrington

SEPTEMBER 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 at: <https://centralsierraaudubon.org/field-trips/>



September 24 (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

EXPLORING NEVADA THIS SUMMER

by Barry Boulton

Nevada is a State that few people seem to appreciate and/or visit (apart, of course, from skiing and gambling at Tahoe!) which, in these crowded post-covid times, might be a big oversight. National Parks are notoriously crowded - but not Great Basin NP. Moreover, the campsites are cosily intimate, surrounded by trees and shrubs, the toilets are spotless, and in late July, no crowds - and even open campsites at the last minute! A dream come true. In addition, the little town of Baker right at the park entrance boasts excellent quality food at the Sugar, Salt and Malt Restaurant, way better than anything you'll find in the Yosemite tourist places; actually worth eating!

I visited Great Basin NP with two primary goals in mind (having previously visited the Lehman Caves), the first was to hike to the Ancient Bristlecones up at 10,000 ft. elevation. The hike is only 2.7 miles round trip, but the rock-strewn path and elevation made it a non-trivial hike. However, those gorgeous trees were well worth the hike, particularly as the interpretive signs are the best that I've ever seen in a national park.

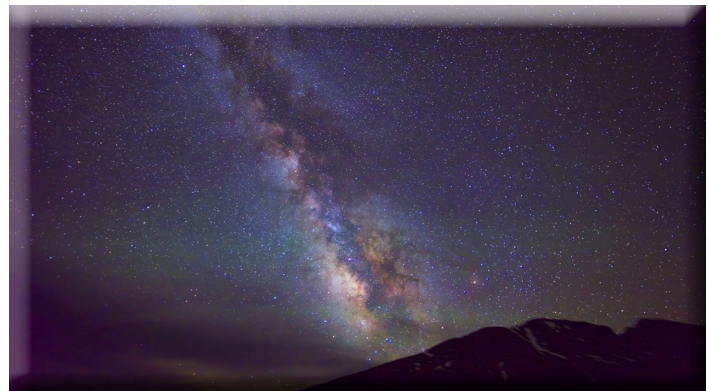
My pleasure in observing those magnificent trees was increased as I started back down; suddenly I heard a short drumming sequence: a woodpecker, but where and which species? Off the trail and somewhat downhill I saw movement on a snag. Although I had camera and lens more suited to macro shots than long-distance, it still was able to help me watch a pair of skittish woodpeckers chasing each other round the tree trunk rather like a pair of squirrels.

But what were they? The golden crowns told me, Black-backed Woodpeckers, still a-courting which seemed to me to be late in the season. However, Cornell says they lay eggs from April through July, so they could still meet the seasonal needs apparently. We tend to think of this species as one that follows wildfires because of the beetle infestations that follow those fires, but it has become recognized lately that they are not wildfire-obligates, that they do inhabit areas not recently fired. So it was here where there are no signs of recent wildfires. As you can imagine, I was delighted to see them and to observe their sweet courting behavior.



My other primary goal was to shoot the Milky Way through those very clear skies up at 10,000 ft., which is why I was there at new moon for those dark skies. My first night was a bust because until midnight I was regaled with a magnificent thunderstorm with orange lightning streaks, and thunder that really shook the ground. Actually, this thunderstorm and I crossed Nevada in close company all the way from Mono Lake, so we ended up as companions for my good fortune because it was truly spectacular.

The next night gave me what I desired - clear skies and very little cloud cover. I spent a couple of hours up at the Mather Overlook which - can you believe this - I had all to myself! As I indicated earlier, you don't have to deal with crowds at National Parks if you choose well - and Great Basin National Park is a great choice. It is well-known as a place for dark sky photography and so, as you can see, the Milky Way was impressively visible. For more information see <https://www.greatbasinpark.com/stargazing>



I also visited Battle Mountain in Nevada to find a very nice wetlands at Lewis Canyon where my sunrise excursion showed several species, including Avocets in their gorgeous breeding plumage, Yellow-headed Blackbirds and Long-billed Curlew. The Avocets interested me because I've mostly seen them foraging in the muddy shallows of the Palo Alto Baylands with their signature sweeping-bill style, while here I observed them pecking and stabbing for food in this marshland ecosystem.

A really nice surprise was to see Pronghorn Antelopes in this location - as you know, they co-evolved with cheetahs here in the Americas and so it's the fastest animal on the continent. In my morning survey I met the local sheriff who happens to own a ranch adjacent to the marshes; he said that there are something like 150 pronghorns in the locality. Actually, I observed pronghorns in a few places across Nevada (including along the so-called Extra-Terrestrial Highway) so, although not plentiful, they're not uncommonly seen.

This young pronghorn was in a bit of a panic because it was separated from its mother (judging by their obvious mutual concern for the separation) by a fence and was having trouble getting back together with her. I had assumed that given their high speed, pronghorns would have excellent jumping capabilities but, on the contrary, they are poor jumpers. The sheriff told me that since they have poor jumping capabilities, they have to squeeze under the fences. This one was stressed by my appearance on the scene and was having trouble in finding a place to squeeze under, so I quickly departed.



[When It's Okay \(or Not\) to Feed Birds](#)

This important question naturally arises quite often, and here's recent advice from National Audubon:

https://www.audubon.org/news/when-its-okay-or-not-feed-birds?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-x-engagement_feed-birds&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_feedbirds&utm_content=

Central Sierra Audubon Society - CSAS

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

Public Presentations: We now conduct our 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

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Tom Parrington, President, Conservation | (209)928-3835 |
| Barry Boulton, Past-President | (209)596-0612 |
| Ralph Retherford, VP Programs | (209)770-6124 |
| Jean Dakota, Secretary | (209)591-9952 |
| Linda Millspough, 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 |
| Phyllis Ashmead, At-large | (209)768-2672 |

CSAS Committee Chairs

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Bird Box Trail - Gail Witzlsteiner | (209)586-4025 |
| 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 |
| Special Projects - Bruce McClenahan | (209)323-0739 |