

Central Sierra Audubon Society

Sierra Squawker



www.centralsierraaudubon.org

October - 2024

PUBLIC PROGRAM

This presentation will be on Zoom **and** viewable in the library, so join us there if you can - refreshments provided.

Wednesday, October 16, at 7:00pm

"Under the Surface with Bird Bones and Skeletons"

Presented by David Lukas

Birds are exquisitely designed creatures of the air, but have you ever thought about how the underlying structure of a bird's bones and skeletons help birds move and fly? Flight is not just a matter of flapping your wings harder, it actually requires many special adaptations and compromises that impact all aspects of a bird's life.

In this fascinating presentation we will learn about some of the adaptations we can observe when we look at a bird's skull, beak, eyes, wings, legs, and feet. Many of these features are hidden by feathers, yet they uniquely shape every aspect of what we see when we watch birds. Expect to come away with a new understanding and appreciation for the hidden mechanics of how birds eat, sleep, and move, along with an understanding of how feathers interact with a bird's skeletal structure.



Sclerotic ring

David Lukas is well-known naturalist and author based in the Methow Valley. He has written seven books and contributed chapters to another forty books on a tremendous range of nature topics. He has also led thousands of natural history tours, classes, workshops, and presentations. David's most recent project is producing a weekly nature newsletter at www.lukasguides.com

Zoom url:

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/86535914213?pwd=6zX5cqysaTBNJjkjes0scYQkDaoyh7.1>

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://centralsierraudubon.org/field-trips/>



OCTOBER 2024 FIELD TRIPS

October 3 & 10 (Thursdays) - Calaveras Big Trees State Park

Join me in one of California's premier state parks - Calaveras Big Trees. Hikes are gentle with very little elevation gain, and last two to four hours. Meet me at the Visitor's Center at the North Grove at 9:30am.

Bruce McClenahan

October 27 (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. On our recent trip, four of us met to enjoy birding on the first day of fall, when even the parking lot provided a nice variety of birds which included a Tri-colored Blackbird. Highlights included a Great Blue Heron flyover to and from the lake, Orange Crowned Warbler and, most exciting, a Red-napped Sapsucker! See all 37 species we viewed at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S196135123>

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

October 24 (Thursday) - Merced NWR

We will still make our annual visit here in January but fall can offer some nice sightings, too. The Sandhill Cranes usually arrive in mid-September and the Snow/Ross's Geese will probably have arrived too. (See a recent eBird checklist from the NWR on Sept. 20 at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S195526810> - there will be more species and larger numbers at the end of October). We will meet at Barrow's at 10:30am to carpool/caravan, or meet at the first platform at noon. We will make a brief stop at Dawson Lake on our way down along J59. Bring a lunch which we can enjoy among the sounds of the many birds. We will leave in the late afternoon but will return well before dark.

Please RSVP to Kit DeGear: Call/text #925-822-5215 or email kdegear@gmail.com

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September Visit Report

Tulloch Dam Road/2 Mile Bar - September 16

Eight of us gathered at Barrow's donning a little outerwear for the brisk morning. A welcome change from our ridiculously hot summer! Tulloch Rd. yielded 31 species. 3 of us were fortunate to observe a Lesser Nighthawk cruise over a portion of the big pond by the highway to suddenly drop into the dry grass. Other highlights included Vaux's and White-throated Swift, an Eared Grebe and the beautiful view of the water spilling over Goodwin Dam. An additional, 4 species were added to our list at 2 Mile Bar where the Loggerhead Shrike and the Rock Wren put in a welcome appearance. Thus giving us a total of 35 species for the day. See the full list at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S195417927> & <https://ebird.org/checklist/S195418337>

Kit DeGear - Trip Leader



Big Trees State Park Observations

Story and photos by Alan Beymer

Thursdays with Bruce

Conventional wisdom says if you want a quick, thorough bird experience at Calaveras Big Trees, hang out at the North Grove Meadow. Park docent - and CSAS Conservation Chairperson - Bruce h took this a step further this summer with his Thursday morning North Grove bird walks. I accompanied Bruce a couple of times, then retraced the walk on my own with camera and tripod and gratifying results. The very good news for birders is that Bruce is continuing his bird walks on Thursday mornings on Oct. 3 and 10 at 9:30 am - but then ending for the season, so these are your last chances!

Here are a few of the birds which came within telephoto range: Black Phoebe, Yellow-throated Warbler, Lincoln's Sparrow, White-headed Woodpecker, Junco, Lesser Goldfinch, Mountain Chickadee, Red-breasted Sapsucker.



Membership Drive

Join or Renew and be entered into a Book Drawing

A big "Thank You" to everyone who completed their annual membership. We appreciate your promptness, loyalty and help funding our webpage, programs and monthly presentations to the membership. For those of you who might have missed your renewal or lost it in the daily shuffle, it's not too late. And as an added incentive if you renew your membership or join CSAS in the next thirty days, you will be entered into a drawing to win a copy of "A Wing and a Prayer". The Membership Form is below, just click, print and put it in the mail. Thank You in Advance, and good luck to you in the drawing.

A captivating drama from the frontlines of the race to save birds set against the devastating loss of one third of the avian population.



Three years ago, headlines delivered shocking news: nearly three billion birds in North America have vanished over the past fifty years. No species has been spared, from the most delicate jeweled hummingbirds to scrappy black crows, from a rainbow of warblers to common birds such as owls and sparrows.

Click for the membership form: <https://centralsierraudubon.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Membership-Form.docx>

Old Friends and a Story

Editor's note. Many of you will remember our previous Field Trip Chair, Ken Smith, and his wife Eve, who moved down to Southern California a few years back. Well, this year they have had the good fortune to see two unusual birds (that is, in S. California). This is Ken's story.

A Yellow-headed Caracara dining at Popeyes, city of Lomita. This bird has been here for a couple of years. Recently sighted by a birder who realized this was an exotic species and spread the word. Audubon commented that is believed to have transported here by ship to L.A. harbor.

It has habitually been see around 9:a.m. and again at 4:00 p.m. when the grocery store behind Popeyes puts some chicken out for it. The Caracara is defending his prize from crows who are patiently waiting for a chance snatch a bite.



We also were able to see the Snowy Owl in nearby Cypress on 1/1/23. A great way to start the new year. The sighting created quite a stir in the area with hundreds of people gathering in the neighborhood and the busy adjacent highway. The Cypress Police suspended the No Parking signs and were graciously tending traffic and the crowds. Audubon stated it probably came by ship as well.

A couple of accidentals to add to our list. We miss everyone at CSAS!

Ken & Eve

CONSERVATION CORNER

Climate Change – Can Birds Adapt and Evolve Fast Enough?



*Brown Pelican at
Monterey Bay
Photo by Barry Boulton*

Brown Pelicans had a tough summer; hundreds were found dead along the western shores and over 900 emaciated birds were taken to rehab centers along the west coast. The culprit wasn't avian flu or Domoic Acid from toxic microscopic algae blooms; the cause of the die off was starvation. Most of the birds that came in to care centers were one-half their normal body weight. The root cause is still being researched, (too much competition for food, less availability of food, poor ocean visibility of food) but a real possibility is that fish are deeper under the surface due to warmer sea surface temperatures and pelicans cannot dive deep enough to feed.

As the Brown Pelican's dilemma illuminates, what will be the ramifications of global climate change on birds? Migratory birds will have the most difficult time adjusting to climate change due to the timing of their departures to and from their wintering grounds. It is believed that the majority of migratory birds base their departure times on the number of daylight hours. However, the majority of their food supply (bugs and seeds) is driven by temperature. As temperatures warm the timing between the two will change, and this phenological mismatch may become an insurmountable obstacle to survival for some birds. Non-migratory birds will either stay where they are and make adjustments or follow the food supplies to higher elevations (until they run out of room) or higher latitudes. In any event, there are a lot of unknowns. Learn more at the link below.

<https://www.audubon.org/climate/survivalbydegrees>

Bruce McClenahan, Conservation Chair

Central Sierra Audubon Society - CSAS

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

Public Presentations: We now conduct our monthly in-person presentations in the Sonoma 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 Gail Witzlsteiner (209)586-4025

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

Gail Witzlsteiner, President	(209)586-4025
Tom Parrington, Past-President	(209)928-3835
Ralph Retherford, VP Programs	(209)770-6124
Jean Dakota, Secretary	(209)591-9952
Siobhan Hill, Treasurer	(209) 743-2863
Kit DeGear, Field Trips	(925)822-5215
Jan Jorn-Baird, Publicity	(209)532-1106
Bruce McClenahan, VP Conservation	(209)323-0739

CSAS Committee Chairs

Education & Scholarship - OPEN	
Website - Barry Boulton	(209)596-0612
Newsletter Editor - Barry Boulton	(209)596-0612
Membership - Bruce McClenahan	(209)323-0739
YSS delegate - Walt Kruse	(707)548-1829
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Bird Box Sales - OPEN	