



CHIRP—N—CHATTER

The Newsletter of the Wintu Audubon Society
Chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Shasta
and eastern portions of Trinity County, California

November / December 2009

WINTU A.S. CHAPTER MEETINGS ARE ON THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM in the theatre of the Turtle Bay Exploration Park, 840 Auditorium Drive, Redding.

BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM in the Turtle Bay Exploration Park classroom adjacent to the visitor center. All members are urged to attend to contribute information and new ideas.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

November 10, 2009: Jay & Terri Thesken present "Avian and Other Wildlife of the Galapagos and Machu Picchu"

December 8, 2009: Marilyn Woodhouse presents "Clearcut Nation"

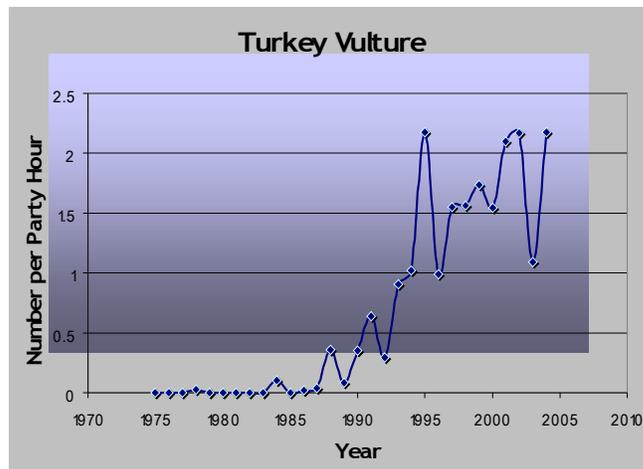
It's Christmas Bird Count Time

It's that time of year again when we participate in the annual Christmas Bird Count (CBC) sponsored by the National Audubon Society. All the birds within a fixed 15-mile diameter circle are counted. The count must be conducted between December 15 and January 5. The Wintu Audubon Society conducts three counts--- Redding, Fall River,

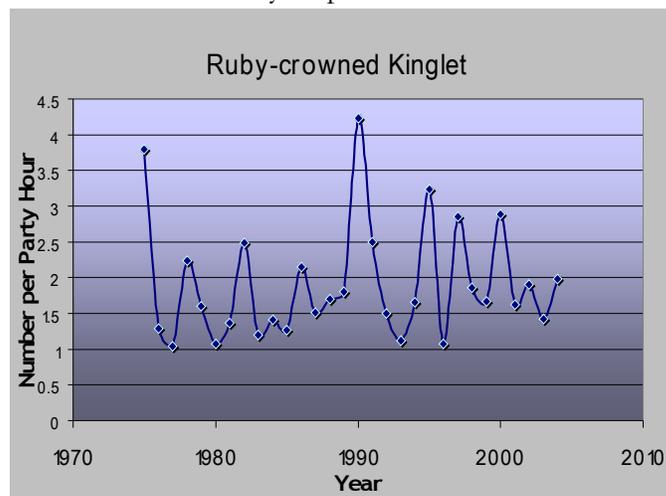
and Anderson (see specifics under December Activities on page 2 and 3). The present Redding CBC began in 1975, the same year that the Chapter was formed. Even though species numbers fluctuate widely from year to year, over the 33 years of the Redding CBC definite population trends are evident for many species.

Here are several examples of trends:

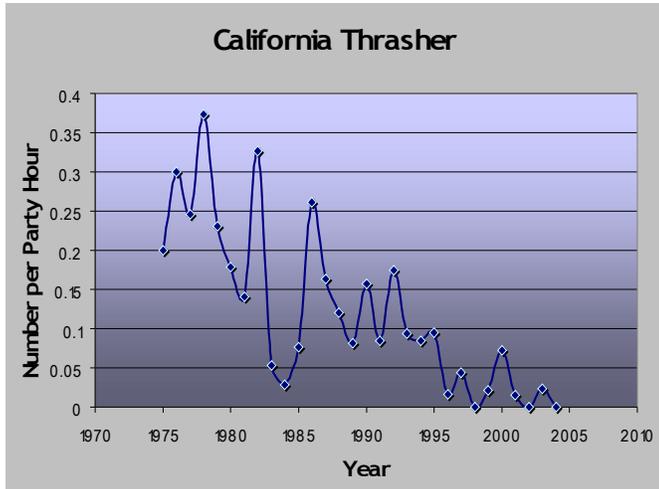
Turkey Vulture numbers increased dramatically when they began wintering north of Red Bluff beginning in 1988.



Ruby-crowned Kinglet numbers have remained constant over the 33-year period.



Contrast that with a steady decline in California Thrashers probably due to habitat loss.



The CBCs are held from dawn to dusk, rain or shine. Novice birders will be teamed up with experienced birders. It's a great way to learn the local birds and make a useful contribution to this exercise in "citizen science". If you don't wish to participate in the field, come to a compilation and find out what's been seen near your own back yard.

November Activities

Field Trips

Local Weekday Bird Walk – Lema Ranch, Tuesday, November 10 @ 8:00 am

We are returning to Lema Ranch for a weekday outing for those who can get away and have over-subscribed weekends. Lema Ranch, an oasis of open space in Redding, is an excellent place for an autumn bird walk. The ponds, orchards, and fields of the McConnell Foundation Headquarters provide an abundance of birds. We will look for American Bittern, American Kestrel, Lewis's Woodpecker, American Pipit, and a variety of ducks. This will be a 2-3 hour walk. We will meet at the North Parking Lot, off of Hemingway Street. Hemingway Street is across from Mountain View School on Shasta View Drive. Linda Aldrich will be your leader. Lema Ranch has recently added fine public restrooms, and their paved trails make this a very pleasant and rewarding bird walk.

Second Saturday Bird Walk---November 14 @ 8:00 am

This open-to-the-general-public outing will be at Turtle Bay and Kutras Lake. We will assemble in the parking area behind the monolith at Turtle Bay. A great cross section of waders, raptors, waterfowl,

gulls, and other birds can be seen close up with usually a surprise of two on this half day walk. Connie Word will lead.

Fall River Valley—November 21 @ 7:30 am

Always a high species number destination, the Fall River area is a great place to see wintering raptors, various waterbirds and Sandhill Cranes. Meet your leader Bob Yutzy at the Redding Convention Center. Be ready for a full day with a lunch and water. Dress in layers of clothes for changing weather. East-county participants can join the group at either the Park and Ride at the intersection of Hwy. 299 and 89 at 8:00 or the Fall River Vista at 9:00. Rarities are possible!

General Meeting

Tuesday, November 10 @ 7:00 pm

Avian and Other Wildlife of the Galapagos and Machu Picchu

Jay and Terri Thesken, members of the Shasta Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, will present a slideshow of avian and other wildlife encountered on their recent trip to the Galapagos Islands of Ecuador and the Cuzco/Machu Picchu area of Peru. Waved Albatross, Blue-footed Boobies, Nazca Boobies, Frigate Birds and other interesting birds, plus reptiles, mammals and plants will be included.

December Activities

Field Trips

Second Saturday Bird Walk---December 12 @ 8:00 am

Meet your leader Bill Oliver at the parking lot behind the Monolith at Turtle Bay for this half-day trip. Beginners and experienced birders alike will enjoy seeing winter waterfowl on the ponds and river as well as riparian species such as Yellow-rumped Warblers and Spotted Towhees. Bald Eagles and both egrets are resident.

Fall River Christmas Bird Count—Saturday, December 19 @ 7:00 am

Participants will meet at the Fall River Hotel in Fall River Mills for a family-style breakfast and assignments. From Redding, take Hwy. 299E for approximately 75 miles. After crossing the Fall River, take the second right and look for the hotel on the right. Every year, some birders spend the night at this quaint hotel (Phone: 530-336-5550) and avoid the early morning drive. **Eastern Shasta County birders are especially invited to participate.** After the

count, dinner and compilation will be Redding at a location to be announced. RSVP to Bob Yutzy (boby@c-zone.net) so the hotel can be given the number they will be serving for breakfast.

Anderson Christmas Bird Count—Saturday, December 26 @ 7:00 am

This will be our second year for this count after a very successful trial run and last years official start. The count features much public land with ample opportunities for walking. Meet at the amphitheatre parking lot in Anderson River Park for assignments. Rob Santry will be the organizer.

Redding Christmas Bird Count—Saturday, January, 2 @ 7:00 am

Assignments will be given in front of the main entrance to the Redding Convention Center. Dinner and compilation will be announced. For further information contact Bill Oliver at 530-941-7741 or wwoliver9@gmail.com.

Please Note: Wintu Audubon Society assumes no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending society-sponsored activities and will not be held liable for accidents. You attend at your own risk. A responsible adult must accompany minors on all outings. Rain cancels all activities.

General Meeting

Tuesday, December 8 @ 7:00 pm

Clearcut Nation

Marilyn Woodhouse, the Sierra Club's Save the Sierra campaign organizer, will present an illustrate talk on this controversial harvesting practice. As a resident of a town near Mt. Lassen, Marilyn has witnessed this practice first-hand.

Trip Reports

Mid-Week Outing—Lema Ranch—September 15

Four birders met at Lema Ranch for the first week-day Wintu outing. We saw 30 species under nearly clear skies and mild temperatures. The "best" birds were a Say's Phoebe and two small flocks of Lewis' Woodpeckers flying overhead. There were quantities of Yellow Warblers and Western Bluebirds and a good supply of Common Moorhens. Migratory geese and ducks had not arrived, although there were a couple of "mystery" ducks, possibly scaup or Ring-

necked Ducks. Linda Aldrich, trip leader.

Lewiston Lake—September 26

(The following report was written by a new member. I think it shows some of the reasons we have field trips. They don't have to be all about rarities and unusual species, they can, and should be about enjoying the natural world with a group of like-minded people whether we're experts or not. George Horn, President)

Hi members, you missed a feast for the eyes and soul if you didn't get to go on the bird outing to Lewiston. I'm a new member who loves nature outings and all the walks I've been on so far were great. But this one topped them. What a thrill to also see a large black bear by the Lewiston Fish Hatchery, with not only a half dozen perching vultures close by, but an immature Bald Eagle perched in a tree. Same area! There were 3 flying and perching Great Blue Herons, several types of mergansers, Double-crested Cormorants, an Osprey circling above, and a fish ladder and pond filled with large salmon. Add to this the beauty and serenity of Lewiston Lake, a mixed breed lone goose by our lunch area, Cedar Wax-wings and a chipmunk by the boat launch and a doe with small twin fauns walking between our cars. Maybe we were blessed by Sister Alice who walked with us that day.

Just an observation by fellow birder and nature enthusiast Vonnie Riley.

Return of the Salmon Festival

This annual festival at the Coleman National Fish Hatchery, held this year on October 17, continues to be the premier event to showcase all the environmental organizations in the north state. Wintu Audubon was there again. Our staff, including Red Modeen, was busy answering questions and handing out information.



A popular attraction was Alika Horn showing young birders how to make a California Quail call.



Comings & Goings

Birds to look for and places to find them in November and December

By Bob Yutzky

Probably more rare and unusual birds are discovered during these two months of the year than any other months. This is especially true given that Christmas Bird Count scouting and counting occur then. The bottom line here is to search for the unusual bird among the similar common ones and be ready to go when a goody is found that you might want to see.

Where do we look for our best birds this time of year? The best places year after year are Fall River and McArthur, Millville Plains, Whiskeytown Lake, Kutas Lake, Lema Ranch, McCumber Lake and East Turtle Bay. Our hottest new spot is the longspur hangout on top of the bluff at Leopard Lane off Dersch Road. Search for the Horned Lark flocks and then look around the edges of the group and in the furrows of the fields nearby for Lapland and Chestnut-collared Longspurs. November is the best month for Longspurs and numbers taper off as the fall and winter progress.

Don't forget to keep an eye on your feeders as all the usual winter suspects keep coming in. Some lucky feeder watchers get rewarded with Pygmy Nuthatch, Purple Finch, and rarely, White-throated Sparrow (one has already been at a local feeder), Harris's Sparrow, Cassin's Finch or Evening Grosbeak.

The best birds to look for away from your feeders are Red-breasted Merganser, Red-necked Grebe (one is already in at Kutas Lake) Surf and White-winged

Scoter, Long Tailed Duck, Tree and Harris's Sparrow, Northern Shrike, Pacific Loon, Greater Scaup and for the hard core birders – a gull goody or two. White-fronted and Snow Geese are already in the basin country. Snow Geese should always be checked for the rarer Ross's Goose and the even rarer blue-phase Snow Goose. One of these days we should get a very rare blue-phase Ross's Goose in the county. Tundra Swans should be searched for the rare and very difficult to ID Trumpeter Swan. Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks should be arriving in good numbers any day now, mostly in the Fall River valley, and a few will be on the Millville Plains along with Prairie Falcon and possibly a Golden Eagle. Remember to search through the dark Red-tailed Hawks for the rare dark phase Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks as we often get one or two of these.

Again this time of year I will encourage you and your family or friends to visit one of our incredible local wildlife refuges - Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, Tule Lake and Klamath National Wildlife Refuge, and Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge. These are at their best between November and February. Please do this at least once to appreciate the spectacular area we live in. Seeing thousands, and sometimes millions, of Snow, Ross, Canada, and White-fronted Geese, as well as Tundra Swans, is truly an exhilarating experience. If you can be there near dusk or dawn – you will never forget the indelible images and magnificent sounds of these birds.

Please share your sightings (or lack of sightings for rarer birds) with Shasta Birders and, if you can, try to get in on at least one of our local Christmas Bird Counts in Anderson, Redding or Fall River Mills.

Name That Bird

This bird has adapted to life in the chaparral and rarely moves more than a few miles from its birthplace. Flights are seldom more than 40 ft., but it can flit through the brush faster than a man can run. It is a great example of togetherness. Pairs mate for life, share the duties of nest building, incubating, caring for the young and, in the off-breeding season, forage together, perch during the day and rest on the same perch during the day and roost together at night. Constant companionship is the rule for their entire life.

Edwin R. Pickett, *Birds of Central California* 1972

Vote for Audubon California's 2009 Bird of the Year

In an effort to raise awareness about bird conservation in California, Audubon California this year will recognize its first Bird of the Year. And while their Board of Directors has selected six finalists for the award, you the public will have the final say. Vote on line at [www: ca.audubon.org](http://www.ca.audubon.org) for the California Condor, Brown Pelican, Peregrine Falcon, Acorn Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Magpie, Western Snowy Plover, or another bird of your choice.

2009-2010 OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS & DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

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VICE-PRESIDENT--Esther Cox 474-4379
TREASURER--Nola Wade 547-5627
RECORDING SECTY--Rose Powder (562) 221-2641
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY--Beatrice Currie
243-3955

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NEWSLETTER--Bill Oliver 941-7741
WEBMASTER--Larry Jordan 472-3131
MEMBERSHIP--*Vacant*
PUBLICITY--*Vacant*

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Ken Bachman, John Coon, Mike Damoth, Connie Word, Bob Yutzy

Volunteers Needed

We have two vacant committee chairs—Membership and Publicity. If you have a computer and just a bit of extra time, you could fill a critically important function for Wintu Audubon. Please see your President , George Horn or Newsletter Editor , Bill Oliver for details.

The Northern California Council Meeting of Audubon Chapters

Larry Jordan and I represented Wintu at the Northern California Council Meeting of Audubon Chapters hosted by Peregrine Chapter in Ukiah on October 24th.

It was a great opportunity to let Audubon California and the other Northern California chapters know what we've accomplished this year and to hear what they've been up to.

Both Larry and I gave reports on Wintu's activities which were very well received.

Larry spoke about his work as webmaster on the Wintu website and about the proposed Burrowing Owl nesting conservation project he is directing in our region.

My report on our precedent-setting work on the Hatchet Ridge Wind project mitigation requirements and our role in defeating the ill-conceived TANC power line project generated a lot of discussion, and I emphasized our willingness to serve as a resource to other chapters facing similar development projects in their communities. To that end, Audubon California's Garry George will be adding our response letter to the TANC notice of preparation to our documents relating to the Hatchet Ridge Wind project that he's already posted on Audubon California's website. These documents will help others trying to wade through the long and often confusing CEQA public review process and to help them advocate for better environmental planning and mitigations in proposed energy projects.

It was a great opportunity to network and to get ideas from others on ways to approach community outreach, education and conservation and to catch up with old friends.

- Claudia Lyons Yerion
Conservation Chair



Attendees at the Northern California Council Meeting in Ukiah on October 24. Photo by Scott Huber