



CHIRP-N-CHATTER CALENDAR OF EVENTS

President: Bill Oliver

www.wintuadubon.org

Editor: Linda Aldrich

JANUARY ACTIVITIES

Board of Directors Meeting – Tuesday, January 6 @ 7:00 pm

Meet at the classroom at Turtle Bay. Chapter business will be discussed. All members are welcome.

Second Saturday Bird Walk – Saturday, January 10 @ 8:00 am

Meet your leader John Coon at the parking lot behind the Monolith at Turtle Bay for this half-day trip. Especially geared for beginners: winter waterfowl on the ponds and river are easy to find for those learning to use binoculars. Bald Eagles and both egrets are possible.

Chapter Meeting – Tuesday, January 13 @ 7:00 p.m.

Meet in the theater at Turtle Bay Museum. After a brief business meeting, get ready to enjoy one of the best birding films you will ever see. "Opposable Chums: Guts & Glory at the World Series of Birding" will be shown to the delight of anyone who has ever picked up a pair of binoculars, or someone who knows nothing about birding at all. Join Pete Dunne, David Sibley and Ken Kaufman along with 120 international teams of birders as they compete to see which team can identify the most bird species in a 24 hour period. This film will have you rolling in the aisles. Don't miss this rare opportunity to see how the "pros" attack this friendly birding competition!

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Outing – Saturday, January 17 @ 7:30 am

In sheer numbers and variety, it is hard to beat Sacramento NWR. Thousands and thousands of Snow Geese and Greater White-fronted Geese flutter up and glide down like a holiday display. Many species of shorebirds, ducks and upland birds are to be found there, too. Meet at the Redding Convention Center to carpool or arrive at the Refuge by 9:00 am. Dress for January weather and bring a lunch for this full-day trip. Bob Yutzky will be your leader.

Lema Ranch Outing – Saturday, January 31 @ 8:00 a.m.

Ponds, orchards, fields and oak woodlands provide habitats for an abundance of birds. Possibilities include American Kestrel, Western Bluebird (there is a bluebird trail here), Common Moorhen and Great-tailed Grackles. Meet at the North Parking Lot off of Hemingway Street, across Shasta View Drive from Mountain View School. Ken Bachman and Linda Aldrich will be your leaders for this half-day trip.

*****A note on our walks, outings, and field trips:** 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.

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

Board of Directors Meeting – Tuesday, February 3 @ 7:00 pm

Meet at the classroom at Turtle Bay. Chapter business will be discussed. All members are welcome.

Chapter Meeting – Tuesday, February 10 @ 7:00 pm

After a brief business meeting, there will be a program – presenter and topic to be announced. Visit our website www.wintuadubon.org or check messages on Shasta birders.

Second Saturday Bird Walk – Saturday, February 14 @ 8:00 am

This open-to-the-general-public outing will meet at Turtle Bay. Gather at the parking lot BEHIND the Monolith. Water birds such as Hooded Merganser, Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe, American Wigeon and American Coots are possible. John Coon will lead.

Battle Creek Wildlife Area Outing – Saturday, February 21 @ 8:00 a.m.

After being unbirdable due to an unsafe bridge and overgrowth of blackberry bushes, Battle Creek is back in action. With the leadership of Bill Oliver, we will look for Bald Eagle, Virginia Rail, and others on this half-day trip. Meet at the Redding Convention Center to carpool.

Llano Seco and Chico Wastewater Treatment Plant – Saturday, February 28 @ 7:30 a.m.

Meet at the Redding Convention Center to carpool. Since the Redding Wastewater Treatment Plant is off-limits to us due to construction, we'll enjoy the plethora of birds that kind of facility attracts by going to Chico. Llano Seco is in the Sacramento NWR series of refuges, so expect an abundance of waterfowl. George Horn will lead. Bring a lunch for this full day trip.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT **February 13-16, President's Day Weekend**

How to Participate: 1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes during February 13–16, 2009. Count birds at as many places and on as many days as you like—just keep a separate list of counts for each day and/or location. 2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at any one time, write it down. 3. Enter your results on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

TRIP REPORTS

Dog Island Trip, October 25 – Seven birders spent a pleasant morning and saw 28 species. The best bird was probably a single Fox Sparrow.

Fall River Trip, November 15 – Eighteen participants had a great day and saw a total of 96 species! The biggie was a female Williamson's Sapsucker at the Fall River Cemetery. Fall River Lake had Common Loons, Pacific Loons and a Red-throated Loon.

Second Saturday Trip Report - Four birders enjoyed a sunny (but chilly) morning on 12/13/08 at Turtle Bay with an extension to Kutrass Lake. We saw 40 species of birds – best sightings were Horned Grebe (at Kutrass), an immature Bald Eagle and two pairs (and a spare female) of Hooded Mergansers. The Hoodies were a life bird for one of us.

Wintu Officers and Board of Directors

President - Bill Oliver 241-2187

Education – Don Goodykoontz 474-1655

Vice President – George Horn 244-0581

Newsletter – Linda Aldrich 365-6770

Treasurer – Nola Wade 547-5627

Webmaster – Larry Jordan 472-3131

Secretary (Corr.) - Bea Currie 243-3955

Programs – Open

Secretary (Record) – Rose Powder (562)221-2641

Membership – George Horn 244-0581

Conservation – Claudia Yerion 241-7156

Publicity – Open

Directors (in addition to Officers and Committee Chairs): Debby Anderson, Ken Bachman, John Coon, Esther Cox, Mike Damoth, Red Modeen, Rob Santry, Connie Word, Bob Yutzy.

A Welcome to New Members

Thank you for joining the National Audubon Society. We are pleased to have you as a member! You are automatically a member of Wintu, your local chapter. Our newsletter, CHIRP-N-CHATTER, will be mailed to you five times a year. We hope that you will join us at our meetings and on our field trips. If you do not want to receive the local newsletter, please call George Horn at 244-0581.

COMINGS & GOINGS - Where to watch birds in January & February

by Bob Yutzy

As you know our local Christmas Bird Counts have been completed and lots of good birds are now settled in on their respective winter territory. According to ornithological research, birds are as faithful to their winter territory as they are to their summer one! Your local feeder birds are probably the same ones year after year! The best winter birds to look for are waterfowl, hawks, shrikes and sparrows. However, it hasn't been the best winter so far for good numbers of these species. A Northern Shrike and two Loggerheads have recently been seen in the Fall River area, but those numbers are usually reversed. Do you think your local bird numbers are up, the same, or lower than usual? It seems to me that both hawks and sparrows seem to be down in numbers so far this winter.

For the best winter birding, try Fall River and McArthur, Kutras Lake, Turtle Bay, Whiskeytown Lake, Anderson River Park, Millville Plains, Lema Ranch, Reading Island and Lone Tree pond. If you haven't visited one of our large wildlife refuges this winter you have a great opportunity to join Wintu Audubon at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge on January 17. We always see lots of hawks and sometimes even the local Peregrine Falcon at the Sacramento Refuge. A visit to Tule Klamath Refuge or Gray Lodge Refuge can also be quite productive, and the timing right now is at its best! When at a refuge, or anywhere you see lots of flying geese, don't forget to check the Snow Geese for the slightly smaller Ross's Geese. Try to notice the Ross's shorter neck, smaller head and smaller body (and lack of a grin patch if you see one close.) There are often a few Ross's in every flock of Snow Geese in the Central Valley area. Also look and listen for those magnificent Tundra Swans. The super rare, and super hard to identify, Trumpeter Swan, could be mixed in with any group of Tundras, especially at the Tule Klamath Refuges, but remember they are extremely rare anywhere in the state.

Be sure to look through the White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows at your feeders and in brushy areas around the county for the much rarer White-throated, American Tree, and Harris's Sparrows. Last winter we had two American Tree Sparrows in the McArthur area but we haven't had any this year. No one has looked for the resident Rufous-crowned Sparrows at the end of Coleman Road past the fish hatchery as far as I know. The best place to search for sparrows outside your local feeder is along Parkville Road, at Lema Ranch or around the ranches in the Glenburn and McArthur areas.

Three Red-breasted Mergansers have returned to Kutras Lake and while you look for them, also search for a Surf or White-winged Scoter, or maybe a Long-tailed Duck! Red-necked Grebes are probably regular in winter, so be sure to keep that in mind too. A Common Loon has been seen on Fall River Lake and another on Lake Britton and may hang around all winter. While Common Loons are the most expected, Pacific, and the much rarer Red-throated Loon, are also possible in winter. Fall River Lake, Whiskeytown Lake, Kutras Lake and Eastman Lake on Island Road in Glenburn, are usually our best locations.

A black or dark phase Rough-legged Hawk has been hanging around Horr Road in Glenburn and last year there was a nifty dark phased Ferruginous Hawk seen regularly around Rat Farm Road in McArthur. Both these color phases are pretty rare, especially the Ferruginous. Look for the unusual adult male plumage of the Rough-legged Hawk in Fall River and McArthur as that plumage is not that uncommon there. Illustrations of the adult males are only shown in the most recent field guides. A closer place to look for hawks is the Millville Plains area, which usually has Prairie Falcon, Golden and Bald Eagle, Rough-legged Hawk, and sometimes Merlin or even a Ferruginous Hawk. Speaking of hawks, the local wintering Peregrine Falcon has already been reported around Kutras Lake, Turtle Bay and along the Sacramento River. Please share your sightings with Shasta Birders so others can learn what is around.