



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

March / April 2010

Burrowing Owl Habitat Growing in the North State

As announced in the January/February issue of the Chirp-N-Chatter, Wintu Audubon received a collaborative funding grant from Audubon California to construct artificial Burrowing Owl habitat here in the north state.

The burrow design is easy enough to build using 5-gallon buckets and 4-inch corrugated, perforated tubing. The buckets are turned upside down as nesting cavities and the tubing extends 12 feet to the surface with a 90 degree bend in the middle

The first site was installed on Parkville Road with the kind consent and help from Sandy Dubose, a local resident concerned about Burrowing Owl declines.



Ten local birders and Burrowing Owl enthusiasts managed to construct eight artificial burrows at the second site near Chico on February 20. The weather

held as they installed two groups of four burrows each in the heavy wet soil of a location where the habitat will be conserved in perpetuity.

There have been Burrowing Owls seen at this location for nearly twenty years according to the resident biologist that studies the vernal pools located on the property. One owl was spotted when Larry Jordan visited the site a couple of weeks ago to mark out the locations for the burrows.

We want to thank Michelle Ocken, Steve King, and Nancy

Nelson from Altacal Audubon, Michele and Lonnie Swartout and the Wintu Audubon President, George Horn for all their hard work on this dig. Special thanks to Claudia Yerion, Wintu Audubon Conservation Chair and Dawn Garcia, Altacal Audubon Conservation Chair for helping coordinate the event (as well as doing a good deal of shoveling) and Dorothy Davis and Howard Wurlitzer for their constant support that led to this segment of the Burrowing Owl Project.

WINTU A.S. CHAPTER MEETINGS ARE ON THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM in the theater 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

March 9, 2010: Jordan Wellwood; *Working to Protect California Birds*

April 13, 2010: Ray Bruun & Rob Santry; *Butterflying in Northern California*



Of course without the grant from Audubon California none of this would be possible. We want to thank Garry George, Chapter Network Director, for his insightful consideration of the Burrowing Owl problem in California. Projects like this may be able to turn the tide of the decline of this "Species of Special Concern." We would also like to thank Jordan Wellwood, Central Valley/Sierra Nevada Conservation Coordinator, for her continuing advocacy for the Burrowing Owl and other conservation issues in California.

Anyone with knowledge of current Burrowing Owl locations or possible sites that would be appropriate for artificial burrow installation, preferably on conservation easement property, is encouraged to contact Larry Jordan, webmaster@WintuAudubon.org. If you are interested in a copy of the *Guidance for Burrowing Owl Conservation* describing CDFG recommendations for a Burrowing Owl conservation plan, email a request and the document will be emailed back to you.

March Activities

Field Trips

Second Saturday Bird Walk--March 13 @ 8:00 am

This open-to-the-general-public outing will be at Turtle Bay and Kutrass 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.

Local Weekday Bird Walk – Lema Ranch, Tuesday, March 16 @ 8:00 am

Lema Ranch, an oasis of open space in Redding, is excellent year-around birding. The ponds, orchards, and fields of the McConnell Foundation Headquarters provide an abundance of birds. We will look for Common Moorhens, rails, Lewis's Woodpecker, Lark Sparrows, and a variety of ducks. This will be a 2-3 hour walk. We will meet at the North Parking Lot off Hemmingway St. Hemmingway St. is across from Mountain View School on Shasta View Drive. Linda Aldrich will be your leader. Fine public restrooms and paved trails make this a very pleasant and rewarding bird walk.

Millville Plains, Parkville Rd. to Jelly's Ferry--- Saturday, March 20 @ 7:30 am

Both birds and the spring vernal pool wildflower displays are on the menu for this full-day trip. We will look for Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Shrikes, Say's Phoebe and other open country denizens. Meet at the Convention Center to carpool. Bring a lunch. Bob Yutzy will lead.

General Meeting

Tuesday, March 9, 2010 @ 7:00 pm *Working to Protect California Birds*

Jordan Wellwood, Conservation/Education Coordinator for Audubon California, will discuss the major threats that birds face in California and what Audubon California is doing to protect the landscapes that birds will need in order to thrive in the future. She will also share opportunities for local citizens to get involved and make a real difference in their communities.

April Activities

Field Trips

Second Saturday Bird Walk--April 10 @ 8:00 am

We will switch locations from Turtle Bay to the Shasta College Campus for this open-to-the-public outing. Here woodlands, ponds, and fields yield a variety of songbirds, waterbirds, and raptors. Meet at the north parking lot on campus. John Coon will lead this half-day walk.

Dye Creek Preserve Outing—Saturday April 17 @ 7:30 am

Join us for a hike up Dye Creek Canyon. We are scheduling a repeat of this jaunt that proved so popular last year. The Nature Conservancy manages this working cattle ranch, hunt club, and ecological preserve west of Los Molinos, Tehama County. Golden Eagles are a possibility. Wild flowers should be abundant. The trail is rough and a small stream crossing should provide some excitement. Bring water, a lunch, and sturdy shoes. A hiking pole could come in handy. We will rendezvous at the Redding Civic Center parking lot (Parkview Avenue side) to carpool. Bill Oliver will lead.

Local Mid-Week Outing—Anderson River Park, Tuesday, April 20 @ 8:00am

This gem of riparian habitat has many groomed trails and will be led again by Ken Bachman who lives nearby and has a wealth of experience in the Park. We will assemble at the amphitheater in the Park for this half-day outing.

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, April 13 @ 7:00 pm**

Butterflying in Northern California

Rob Santry and Ray Bruun, dedicated and accomplished butterflyers, will illustrate the commonly seen butterflies in our region with exquisite pictures and let us in on the hot spots where we can observe these beautiful “other” flying creatures ourselves.

A Welcome to New Members

Thank you for joining the Wintu Audubon Society. If you joined the National Audubon Society 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

Trip Reports

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge—January 16

Six Wintu Audubon members disregarded the weather prediction and spent a marvelous day at the refuge. No wind or rain just partly cloudy. We tallied 57 species. The highlights were the usual tens of thousands of Snow Geese and in one impoundment



the Ross's Geese seemed to be in equal numbers with the Snows. The wave upon wave of geese rose filling the sky overhead was especially

inspiring and Ken Bachman left his camera in the truck. Bald Eagles were abundant. We must have seen 5 or 6; ditto for Peregrine Falcons of which we saw 3. One was close enough that Ken Bachman and Bill Oliver got good pictures.

“Redding Hotspots” – Snow Goose Festival Field Trip, January 30, 2010

Alicia Young and Pablo Herrera began the tour of Redding's Hotspots at Lema Ranch. Although there was a slight drizzle, the 10 participants brought the Snow Goose Festival spirit with them – or perhaps it was the coffee and pastry we provided that set the mood! Highlights were great looks at an elusive Lincoln's Sparrow, a Common Moorhen, and the call of a Sora deep within the cattails.

We next caravanned to Kutrass Lake hoping to impress the group with the typical large numbers of ducks and geese, but much to our chagrin, hardly a bird was present except for a couple of Eared Grebe and a female Canvasback. The best moment of the trip happened here when the large flock of obligatory Rock Dove suddenly took to the sky, Pablo yelled to look up and sure enough, a Peregrine Falcon buzzed overhead! The Island Pond down the road did not disappoint. We saw a handful of Black-crowned Night Herons and a group of ducks, including Ring-necked, American Wigeon, and Gadwall.

Our last stop of the day was the riparian trail at Turtle Bay. Although we had built up the famous Redding

Bald Eagle pair extensively throughout the day, the couple was nowhere to be seen – of course! The highlights for this stop were in the parking lot where we had Greater White-fronted Geese foraging on the Convention Center lawn and were thrilled by a Say's Phoebe hawking within and around the monolith. We tallied 64 species for the day.

Llano Seco unit of the Sacramento River NWR on Saturday February 6

Four optimistic birders braved a rainy Redding morning for Llano Seco. As it turned out it was a little cold with a couple of very light showers, otherwise it was good birding. Fifty-three species were seen; probably the most interesting were 2 Eurasian Wigeons close by with good comparison views of Eurasian and American Wigeon in the scope at the same time. There was also a very striking leucistic American Coot about 3 miles south of the viewing platforms on 7 Mile Road. It had a gray head and a white body. Out of all the thousands of coots we've seen over the years this one was unique.



All in all it was a good chance to get out and fight the cabin fever this time of year.

Nominees for Officers, Board of Directors and Committee Chairs for 2010-2011

The Nominating Committee presented the slate for the coming year at our February General Meeting. In accordance with our Bylaws, the slate will be presented again with a call for additional nominees from the floor and then voted on at our March General Meeting. The approved slate will assume their duties April 1, 2010.

The Nominating Committee had it easy this year because all the current slate has agreed to serve again for the coming year. In addition, Alicia Young has agreed to serve on the Board of Directors.

Great Backyard Bird Count

Redding Second in State with 136 Reports

You did it again! This year Redding was second only to Sacramento in number of reports. Since 2005

Redding has been first 3 times and second three times.

Christmas Bird Count Results

Fall River Mills, December 19

We tallied 117 species, 2 were new to the count – a Herring Gull found on Rat Ranch Road and a Great-tailed Grackle found at the Island Road Bridge. *Bob Yutzzy, Compiler*

Red Bluff, December 20

We tallied 117 species in our first count since 2006. Four were new to the count - 157 Eurasian Collared Doves in all areas, 1 Hooded Oriole in the Rio Vista Mobile Estates, 2 Tree Swallows, and 2 Black-throated Gray Warblers. *Karen Scheuermann, Compiler*

Redding, January 2

We had a record high number of participants---36 and a record high number of species---132 plus 2 more seen on count week. The most noteworthy species were Cinnamon Teal (first record in the 34 years of the Count), and seen only once before were Red-necked Grebe, Red-naped Sapsucker, and House Wren. Rufous-crowned Sparrows were seen only twice before but should be a regular for the Count now that we know where to find them. *Bill Oliver, Compiler*

We wish to thank all the dedicated participants that made these successful Counts. Special thanks go to Karen Scheuermann who took the lead in resurrecting the Red Bluff Count after a 2-year hiatus.

Run and Walk for the Wild

Go for a stroll Easter Weekend and tour the Shasta Wildlife Rescue & Rehab Center in Anderson River Park. The "Run for the Wild" has a 2-mile Walk/Run and 5.5-mile Run on Saturday, April 3rd. All proceeds benefit SWRR, a non-profit center that serves the north state. Cost is \$15 for Adults or \$10 for Youth (Under 18) if you pre-register by 3/27/10. Add \$5 if you register past that date. For an entry form, please call Kim Stempien at 275-2816 or email her at liveoak4@com-pair.net or check out: www.shastawildliferescue.com

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

PRESIDENT--George Horn 244-0581
VICE-PRESIDENT--Esther Cox 474-4379
TREASURER--Nola Wade 547-5627
RECORDING SECTY--Rose Powder (562) 221-2641
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY--Beatrice Currie 243-3955

COMMITTEE CHAIRS
PROGRAMS--Linda Aldrich 365-6770
EDUCATION--Don Goodykoontz 474-1655
CONSERVATION--Claudia Yerion 241-7156
NEWSLETTER--Bill Oliver 941-7741
WEBMASTER--Larry Jordan 472-3131
MEMBERSHIP--*Vacant*
PUBLICITY-- Frank & Darliss Sanderson 242-8770

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE
Ken Bachman, John Coon, Mike Damoth, Connie Word,
Bob Yutzy

Shasta County Top Listers

Here are the total number of species seen in
Shasta County by dedicated birders.

297-Bob Yutzy	270-George Horn
297-Carol Yutzy	251-Cathy Santry
293-Red Modeen	249-Ken Bachman
292-Nancy Modeen	243-John Sterling
289-Bruce Deuel	243-Bud Widdowson
281-Rob Santry	238-Len Lindstrand III
277-Bill Oliver	226-Alicia Young
276-John Coon	199-Pablo Herrera

Upcoming Bird Festivals

These north state festivals have field trips and indoor programs geared for every age and skill level--enjoyment for the whole family. Here are phone numbers and email addresses.

Godwit Days—Spring Migration Bird Festival, April 15-21, Arcata, CA 1-800-908-WING or 1-707-826-7050 or www.godwitdays.com

Heron Festival and Wildflower Brunch, April 24-25, Kelseyville, CA 1-707-263-8030 or help@heronfestival.org

California Redwoods Bird and Nature Festival (formerly the Aleutian Goose Festival), May 7-9, Crescent City, CA 1-800-343-8300 or 1-707-465-0888 or www.calredwoodsbirdfest.org

Birding Tips from the Fertile Imagination of Pete Dunne

Cackling Goose is a Ross's Goose dressed like a Canada Goose.

...it (Blue-winged Teal) must rank among the most beautiful birds in the world. Every birder should have the experience of training a spotting scope on the bird at close range and letting time suspend itself.

-Gleaned by Ken Bachman from *Pete Dunne's Essential Field Guide Companion*

American Kestrel

High noon opened up:
the sun in the center, crowned.

The earth awaited indecisively
some movement in the sky
and everyone remained
indecipherably still.

At that slender second
the hawk hammered its flight,
cut loose from the firmament,
and swooped like a sudden shiver.

The landscape remained serene
and the woodlands were not
frightened,
the volcanoes were still aloof,
the river kept proclaiming
its abrupt and wet lineage:
everything kept throbbing
in that green-pattered pause
except a hare, a bird,
something that flew or ran,
something that used to live
on that blood-spattered spot.

From: *Arte De Pajaros* by
Pablo Neruda

For the latest Wintu A.S. news
and birding information visit our
website:

www.wintuaudubon.org