

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 2011

March Activities

Field Trips

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

This outing is open to the public and all skill levels of birders are welcome. We will assemble in the parking area behind the monolith at Turtle Bay to observe the bird life on and around Turtle Bay and Kutras Lake. A great cross section of waders, raptors, waterfowl, gulls, and winter resident passerines can be seen close up with usually a surprise or two on this half day walk. Connie Word will lead.

Local Weekday Bird Walk---Lema Ranch, Tuesday, March 15 @ 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 bird species. We will look for Common Moorhens, rails, and winter resident ducks and passerines. This will be a 2-3 hour walk on paved trails with fine public restrooms. We will meet our leader, Linda Aldrich, at the North Parking Lot off Hemmingway Street. Hemmingway Street is across from Mountain View School on Shasta View Drive.

Millville Plains, Parkville Road to Jelly's Ferry Saturday, March 26 @ 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 Ferruginous Hawk, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Shrikes, Say's Phoebe and other open country denizens. Bring a lunch. Meet the leader, Bob Yutzzy, at the Redding Convention center for car pooling. Bring a FRS handheld radio set to channel 11-12, if you have one.

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.
Note: The March meeting has been moved to the large classroom in the museum bldg.

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 8: Randy Van Orden: *Seward's Folly Revisited: A Birder's Tour of Alaska*
April 12: Eda Eggeman: *Vernal Pools-What Good Are They?*

General Meeting

Tuesday, March 8 @ 7:00 pm
Seward's Folly Revisited: A Birder's Tour of Alaska

Variouly called "Seward's Folly" and "The Great Land", our largest and wildest state is a

fascinating place. Join us at 7:00 pm in the classroom in the main museum at Turtle Bay for a presentation by world traveler Randy Van Orden on his Alaskan adventure. He will show slides of sea birds, birds above the arctic circle, birds of the interior, Alaskan animals, Alaskan flowers and, if time permits, Alaskan scenery.

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

www.wintuadubon.org

April Activities

Field Trips

Second Saturday Bird Walk---April 9 @ 8:00 am

We will visit Turtle Bay and Kutras Lake for its great cross section of waders, raptors, waterfowl, gulls, and winter resident passerines. We will assemble in the parking area behind the monolith at Turtle Bay. This ½-day walk with Linda Aldrich is open to the public and all skill levels of birders are welcome.

Dye Creek Preserve Outing--- Saturday April 16 @ 7:30 am

Join us for a hike up Dye Creek Canyon. We are scheduling a repeat of this jaunt that has proved so popular last several years. 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. **Please note: Because the Redding Convention Center parking lot will be occupied by *Kool April Nights*, we will rendezvous at the Redding City Hall parking lot off Parkview Ave. to carpool. Bill Oliver will lead.**

Local Weekday Bird Walk---Reading Island, Tuesday, April 19 @ 8:00 am

Formed by the shifting channel of the Sacramento River, this Bureau of Land Management property, southeast of Anderson, boasts a varied habitat. Giant valley oaks harbor a variety of migrating passerines and the oxbow lake is home to herons and grebes. We will rendezvous at the Redding Convention Center to carpool. Bill Oliver will lead this ½ day trip.

General Meeting

Tuesday, April 12 @ 7:00 pm

Vernal Pools – What Good Are They?

Join us as Eda Eggeman, Environmental Scientist with the California Department of Fish & Game addresses this topic. She says, "This question always seems to come up when discussing vernal pools and it's one of my favorites. I'll take the audience through the vagaries of vernal pools and when I'm finished everyone will have an answer to 'what good are they?'"

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.

Trip Reports

Turtle Bay and Kutras Lake---January 8

Linda Aldrich reports that three intrepid birders assembled at Turtle Bay in fog and 35 degree temperatures. Imagine their surprise when they were joined by a photographer and reporter who went with them for part of the birdwalk. Despite the dismal weather, they saw 38 species of birds, including Say's Phoebe, a pair of Hooded Mergansers and Cedar Waxwings. On the way home, a Yellow-billed Magpie was spotted near a nest along Park Marina Drive. An article and photo were printed on the front page of the

Record Searchlight on 1/9/11 – nice publicity for our chapter and its activities.

Battle Creek State Wildlife Area---January 18

Twenty-one people spent a beautiful morning birding the excellent new trails at the Battle Creek SWA and Coleman National Fish Hatchery. Three members of Friends of Coleman NFH joined us and gave us lots of info on future plans and the history of the trail. Forty-two species were seen including adult and immature Bald Eagles, Common and Barrow's Goldeneye, Wilson's Snipe, Virginia Rail (heard), and a large flock of Snow Geese. A Sora was spotted by Gary Stacey at the end of the trip in the pond near the Oak Tree Trail head. Several people were able to see it. George Horn praised this area as one of our birding hot spots.

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge---January 22

A warm, clear and very windy day was enjoyed by fifteen Wintu Audubon members and friends at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. We saw fifty-four species. More passerine birds might have been spotted except for the strong north wind. Highlights were at the Visitor Overlook at the Southeast corner of the auto route. Here a Bald Eagle, harassed by a Herring Gull, then seemed to delight in flying low over several huge flocks of Snow Geese setting them aloft. A raft of hundreds of Black-necked Stilts and Dunlins were asleep sheltered from the wind. At the Northwest corner of the auto tour we got good looks at several blue phase Snow Geese.

Nominees for Officers, Board of Directors and Committee Chairs for 2011-2012

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 April General Meeting. The approved slate will assume their duties April 12,

2011. The Nominating Committee had it easy this year because most of the current slate has agreed to serve again for the coming year. Here are the nominees:

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT--George Horn

VICE-PRESIDENT--Esther Cox

TREASURER—Connie Word

RECORDING SECTY—

CORRESPONDING SECTY--Beatrice Currie

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

PROGRAMS--Linda Aldrich

EDUCATION--Don Goodykoontz

CONSERVATION--Claudia Yerion

NEWSLETTER--Bill Oliver

WEBMASTER--Larry Jordan

MEMBERSHIP--*Vacant*

PUBLICITY—Frank and Darliss Sanderson

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Ken Bachman, Shelly Carasaro, John Coon, Dan Greaney, Gary Stacey, Nola Wade

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

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT--George Horn 244-0581

VICE-PRESIDENT--Esther Cox 474-4379

TREASURER--Nola Wade 547-5627

RECORDING SECTY--Rose LaRoque (562) 221-2641

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY--Beatrice Currie
243-3955

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

PROGRAMS--Linda Aldrich 223-5341

EDUCATION--Don Goodykoontz 474-1655

CONSERVATION--Claudia Yerion 241-7156

NEWSLETTER--Bill Oliver 941-7741

WEBMASTER--Larry Jordan 472-3131

MEMBERSHIP--*Vacant*

PUBLICITY—Frank and Darliss Sanderson 242-8770

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Ken Bachman, John Coon, Mike Damoth, Connie Word, Dan Greaney,

Update on the Hatchet Ridge Wind Farm

Claudia Yerion, Conservation Chair reports that "the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), of which Wintu Audubon is a member, has had several meetings and the selected consultant has submitted a final mortality monitoring plan for the TAC's review after we requested some changes in the protocols. I am unsure exactly when the monitoring is going to start, but it should be late winter/early spring. We have also been working with Ron Jackman on a Bald Eagle monitoring project proposal, which would involve radio tracking of several pair of Bald Eagles that nest within foraging proximity to the wind facility---the idea being to see how their daily flight patterns interact with the wind facility."

Birding and Brunch in the Intermountain, Saturday, March 5th, 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon

Enjoy the Fall River Mills/McArthur Area (eastern Shasta County) and learn to identify birds you may see in our flyway. Ornithologist and local expert Ken Able, along with several resident experts will be on hand with scopes and expertise to answer all of your questions. Special permission has been obtained for viewing on private ranches. The grand finale will entail a fabulous brunch featuring frittata, scones, homemade jams, mimosas, and a selection of meats and fruits.

This event is sponsored by the Intermountain Fall River Branch of the American Association of University Women. All proceeds go toward scholarships and opportunities for local young women. Tickets: \$45/person. Space is limited, please call Carri at: 530-410-3027 or email her at carribenefield@yahoo.com to reserve your spot today.

Special Note: should unforeseen weather conditions occur the event will be rescheduled.

IT'S RIGHT THERE...IN THE GREEN TREE! Getting Others Onto That Bird

Condensed from an article by Chuck Almdale in the Santa Monica Bay Audubon Society online newsletter, January 19, 2011

For many of us birding is both fun and art. As with any art, the better you get, the more you enjoy it and vice versa. But like any art, there are certain techniques you can learn that enhance both your enjoyment and your ability to share that enjoyment with others. Many of these techniques and skills are covered in field guide introductions or magazine articles. Neglected – until now – is the skill of getting others onto the bird you've found. The joy of finding a new, interesting or beautiful bird increases when you share it with others. But you can't share it if you can't help them find it. Of the four basic points presented here, the final is the most difficult to learn and gets the longest explanation.

Four Basics Points

Scope: If you have a scope, it's easy to put the scope on the bird and let others look at it. This works well with birds like shorebirds, ducks or resting raptors which don't move around quickly, but it's nearly useless with birds hopping rapidly through leafy trees.

Make sure the other person is looking in the same direction as you are: Just glance around, if possible. Often birders are looking in completely different directions while arguing about what they're seeing. This happens so often that it's a standing joke. A quick, "Stand behind me and look where I'm looking," can at least get them into the general area.

Clock face: In many situations, using a clock face can aid speedy location. In an open area, twelve o'clock is always straight ahead, six is directly behind, three and nine are 90 degrees right and left, respectively. Other numbers fall in between. For a vertical object such as a tree, twelve is the top, three is ½ way down on your

right side, and so on. On a boat or in a car (or line of cars), twelve is straight ahead down the road, six is straight behind down the road, and so on. If you're young and don't know how to read an analog clock, now is a good time to learn.

The Toughest Basic: Starting from the Obvious

So what's considered obvious? Here are some examples: a lone tree, bush, rock or structure; the largest, tallest, darkest, lightest of an assortment of such items; the only group of trees; the leftmost or rightmost tree in a line of trees; the only cloud in the sky; the sun; the only red house in sight or the only house on the left side of the road; the only green sailboat on the sea. Something *unique* (in the proper sense of one-of-a-kind).

Once you've gotten everyone looking in the same direction with your "see the big red house on the hill?" you can bring them along step-by-step to the bird. "OK, starting from the house, come down seven o'clock ½ way down the hill to a large brown rock with a big white spot on the bottom left side. Got that? OK, from four o'clock on the rock, go about three times the width of the rock to a round gray-green bush with a forked leafless stick pointing out ten o'clock from the center of the bush. The bird is on the left fork."

Occasionally someone "jumps the gun" on your instructions. They hear the first instruction, "See the big red house..." and immediately complain that they can't see the bird. Deal with this as best you can. We tend to steamroll right over such comments and restate, perhaps enunciating slightly more forcefully: "Now, *from the red house on the hill*, come *down* seven o'clock...", and so on. We figure that getting many or most of the people on the bird is good for the first pass; there is always someone who wasn't listening or couldn't follow. If the bird stays put, we try again.

And Finally – What Not To Say

There's no end to the list of unhelpful,

frustrating and irritating directions one might give. And – like speaking to someone in a foreign language – emphasis, raising your voice and waving your arms around does little more than scare away the bird.

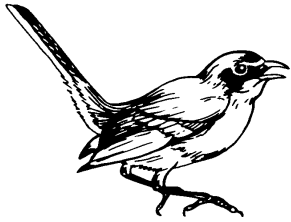
Here is a small sampling: It's right there. Just look. Over there. *IT'S RIGHT THERE!* There! No, there! Are you blind? It's right behind the green leaf.

Some useless directions are situation specific. For example: out there in the grass (in a large grassy field); on the phone wire (in a city forest of wires); on the pole (with dozens of phone poles stretching off to the horizon); on the bush (in the chaparral); on the water (from the beach). And the ever-favorite classic, frequently heard in the forest: it's in the tree, the *green* tree. You get the idea.

Getting into details of distance and size can mislead. "A foot high bird on a 100-foot boulder 500 yards away," can be really misleading when the bird is really a Rock Wren 50 yards away on a car-size boulder.

When your knowledge of vegetation, rocks, soil, clouds and so forth is better than average, it's easy to assume your audience knows what you know. "It's in the Phalanopsis growing by the Dichrodendria next to that crumbled franitactic gneiss," can be as useless as saying "over there" to the person who cannot identify those objects. And you just might use the wrong term, thus confusing those that actually *do* know. Common English is best.

And if you want to *really* irritate your birding mates, just give a lengthy description of the bird before giving *any* clue as to where you're looking. Make sure you pop in plenty of "Oooh....Wow...what IS that?...It's soooo beautiful....Pleeeese tell me what it is!", finishing up with "well...it's....geee...how can I – whoops!, it just took off! You missed it? But it was right there...in the green tree!"



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March / April, 2011

MISSION

Our mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity.

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**California Redwoods Bird and Nature
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Researcher, Mark Rauzon

Contact: www.calredwoodsbirdfest.org or
Ph: 1-800-343-8300

**2011 Point Reyes Birding Festival
April 29-May 2.**

Some of California's preeminent birders & naturalists will be leading trips and making presentations, including Josiah Clark, Jules Evens, Dave DeSante, Keith Hansen, Alan Hopkins, Lisa Hug, John Kelly, John Muir Laws, Ron LeValley, David Lukas, Joe Morlan, Bob Power, Peter Pyle, and David Wimpfheimer. Internationally respected author and field-leader, Al Jaramillo, will be the keynote speaker. Go to:

www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org to sign-up for trips and events.

Activities sell-out fast, so best to register soon.