



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

May / June 2011

May Activities

Field Trips

**Bear Creek Watershed Outing and Field Survey—
Saturday, May 7 @ 8:00 am**

A rare chance to bird on private property! Wintu Audubon vice-president Esther Cox also belongs to this watershed organization and has interested property owners to learn the bird species that live on their spreads. We will visit several of them. Meet at the Redding Convention Center to carpool or join Esther at the Share-A-Ride parking at the intersection of Hwy. 44 and Black Butte Road. This will be a full day trip, so bring a lunch and water.

2nd Saturday Bird Walk---May 14 @ 8:00 am

With spring migration in full swing and arrival of summer residents, we are moving this bird walk to the campus of Shasta College. The oak woodlands, wastewater treatment pond, riparian, and fields support a wide variety of species. Meet in Shasta College's north parking lot for this ½ day trip that is open-to-the-public. Connie Word and Linda Aldrich will lead.

**Local Weekday Bird Walk---Anderson River Park,
Tuesday, May 17 @ 8:00 am**

This gem of riparian habitat has many groomed trails and will be led 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.

General Meeting

**Tuesday, May 10
@ 7:00 pm**

The Natural History of the Burrowing Owl

Larry Jordan, our webmaster and Shasta County coordinator for the California Bluebird Recovery

Program, will present a video and discuss the challenges we face in turning around the decline of this species of special concern in California. Larry is installing and monitoring artificial burrows to help with the recovery of our local population. A model of the artificial burrow design will be displayed. As well as several photographs of this beautiful little owl.

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

May 10: Larry Jordan: **The Natural History of the Burrowing Owl**
June 14: **Annual Picnic**

Birds for Youth! - May 7

Designed especially for youth, grades 4-8 and up, this walk will introduce birding basics—the birds, their behavior, and how to know them. We have binoculars to share; bring your own if you have them. Meet at the Sundial Bridge for this 8:30-10 a.m. walk. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and all are welcome.

June Activities

Annual Picnic--Tuesday, June 14 @ 6:00 pm

As is our custom, the last general meeting before our summer meeting hiatus will be a bring-your-own picnic at the Camden House (Tower House) at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. We will enjoy good birding and good fellowship in this lovely setting. The parking lot for the Camden House is on the left side of Hwy. 299W just before the turnoff to French Gulch. Some members may wish to carpool or to ride with others who have a seasonal or permanent pass for Whiskeytown by assembling in the parking lot of the Sunset Market on Eureka Way in Redding at 6:00 pm.

Camp-out at Lassen Volcanic National Park— Friday, Saturday & Sunday, July 22-24.

We have enjoyed the birding and camping at the Lost Creek Group Campground the last two years so we are planning a repeat. Group Camp Site 6 has been reserved for the nights of Friday, July 22 and Saturday, July 23. Atacal Audubon Society has also scheduled a camp out that same weekend and has reserved the adjacent Site 5. We have again invited the Redwood Region Audubon Society to join us, and for the first time, the Redbud Audubon Society of Lake County. Wintu folks can either camp at Lost Creek or drive up for either or both Saturday and Sunday. Campers can arrive at the camp site at a time of their choosing on Friday afternoon. Saturday day trippers should meet at the Redding Convention Center at 7:30 Saturday

morning to car pool. We will bird Manzanita Lake and vicinity on Saturday morning. The rest of the itinerary is open and will depend on the interests of the participants. Day trippers for Sunday, June 28, will meet at the campground at 8:30 am. Lost Creek has primitive facilities—pit toilets and no electricity, but potable water is available. Contact Bill Oliver (Ph. 941-7741 or Email wvliiver9@gmail.com) for other particulars.

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

Llano Seco Unit of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge and the Chico Oxidation Ponds Wetlands---February 26

Eight die hard birders led by George Horn braved a cold morning and enjoyed a clear day with striking views of snow covered mountains and foothills on a spectacular drive to Butte County. The hills between Redding and Red Bluff were even white. Appropriately, thousands of Snow Geese almost covered the large pond near the viewing platform at Llano Seco. Some of the party returned to Redding via Jelly's Ferry, Parkville and Millville Plains Roads and tallied an additional 17 species for a total for the day of 72 species.

Turtle Bay ---April 9

Linda Aldrich reports that nine birders converged upon Turtle Bay under cool, cloudy skies. As the day warmed and brightened, the birds became active and we saw 51 species. A pair of Hooded Mergansers swam close-by in a pond near the new trail that parallels Hwy 44. Warblers were active, especially numerous were Orange-crowned Warblers, and an unusually cooperative Common Yellow-throat. Yellow-rumped Warblers

are still here, sporting brilliant breeding plumage. It was a good raptor day – we saw one of the Bald Eagle parents, a Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk and Turkey Vultures.

Dye Creek Preserve---April 16

A warm spring day greeted 11 birders for a hike up Dye Creek Canyon. Our first stop was at the always birdey Cone Grove Park just south of Red Bluff where we picked up 34 species. Driving slowly south along Foothill Rd. we found 15 additional species including the aerial display of a pair of Northern Harriers. The hike up the canyon did not disappoint. Despite the lack of nesting Golden Eagles and American Kestrels so memorable from last year's hike, we did, however, see high-soaring Golden Eagles and were continually serenaded by Canyon Wrens. All but three of the party made it all the way to the Caves at the base of Campo Seco. The hike yielded 46 species.

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DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Ken Bachman, Shelly Carasaro, John Coon, Rose LaRoque, Nola Wade, Janet Wall.

Update on Hatchet Ridge Wind Facility

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the Hatchet Ridge Wind facility had several meetings last fall and winter. After Tetra Tech incorporated changes suggested by the TAC, the TAC approved the final Mortality monitoring study protocol. The permit requires 2 consecutive years of avian and bat mortality monitoring, with a third year required as well, the timing of which will be determined by the TAC. Avian point count surveys are also being conducted, which although not required by the permit, Pattern Energy has agreed to fund these as well. At the most recent TAC meeting, Tetra Tech presented the TAC with the preliminary mortality monitoring update for the winter of 2010-11. Monitoring started last fall, with the study protocol calling for half of the turbines to be surveyed every two weeks for carcasses and the remaining turbines surveyed once a month. Weather was a factor, as snow was up to 8' deep on the ridge, so survey teams used snowmobiles and snowshoes to access the site, and binoculars to spot carcasses when weather and safety concerns prevented closer access. The number of observed bird carcasses was 18, including 1 Canada Goose, 1 Turkey Vulture, 1 Ross's Goose, 1 Varied Thrush and 1 Merlin. It is likely that additional carcasses will be uncovered as the snow recedes. The raw mortality data will be adjusted to determine the number of fatalities according to a standard formula, which takes into consideration factors such as predator scavenging rates and searcher efficiency.

The point count surveys were conducted once per month during the winter season, and the results consisted of 13 species observed, totaling 328 individuals, with waterfowl having the highest mean use at 78%, consisting of several large flocks of snow goose and Ross's goose. The raptors observed were 1 Bald Eagle, 5 Red-tailed Hawks and 1 Turkey Vulture. For the spring season (March-June), point count surveys will be conducted twice per month.

