



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 2013

May Activities

General Meeting

Tuesday, May 14th @ 7:00 pm
Status and Nesting Ecology of Purple Martins at Shasta Lake

The western Purple Martin is a local and rare breeder in California and currently designated as a species of special concern. We are fortunate to have one of only a few interior northern California Purple Martin breeding locations here in our own backyard at Shasta Lake. Join **Len Lindstrand III**, local wildlife biologist at North State Resources and longtime Wintu Audubon Chapter member, as he presents results from an on-going program monitoring this important Purple Martin population.

Field Trips

Bear Creek Watershed Outing and Bird Survey-- Saturday May 4th @ 7:30 am

A rare chance to bird on private property! Wintu Audubon President **Esther Cox** 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 Civic Auditorium to carpool at 7:30am or join Esther at the Share-A-Ride parking lot at the intersection of Hwy.44 and Black Butte Road at 8:00am. This will be a full day trip, so bring a lunch and water.

2nd Saturday Bird Walk---May 11 @ 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** will lead.

Local Weekday Bird Walk---Mary Lake, Thursday, May 16 @8:00am

An old dam on Jenny Creek forms this small lake in a west Redding subdivision. Developed lakeside vegetation, a small marsh and oak woodland has created a varied habitat for birds. Green Herons can be seen up close and California Thrashers are resident. Meet at the south parking lot of the Redding Civic Auditorium to carpool. **Bill Oliver** will lead.

WINTU A.S. CHAPTER MEETINGS ARE ON THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM at the United Way, 2280 Benton Drive, Redding.

BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM also at the United Way meeting room. All members are urged to attend to contribute information and new ideas.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 14: **Len Lindstrand III: Status and Nesting Ecology of Purple Martins at Shasta Lake.**

June 11: **Annual Picnic**

June Activities

Annual Picnic—Tuesday, June 11 @ 6:00pm

As has been 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 ride with others who have a seasonal or permanent pass for Whiskeytown by assembling in the parking lot of Tops Market on Eureka Way in Redding at 6:00pm.

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 except Christmas Bird Counts.

Camp-out at Lassen Volcanic National Park— Friday, Saturday & Sunday, July 26-28.

We have enjoyed the birding and camping at the Lost Creek Group Campground over the years. We cancelled last year because of the fire. But it never reached the camp ground so we are scheduling it again this year. Group Camp Site #2 has been reserved for the nights of Friday, July 26 and Saturday, July 27. Altacal Audubon Society has also scheduled a camp-out that same weekend and has reserved Site #8. We have again invited the Redwood Region Audubon Society to join us. 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 Civic Auditorium (Convention Center) at 8:00 am 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, July 28, will meet at the camp site at 9:00 am. Lost Creek has primitive facilities--pit toilets and no electricity, but potable water is available. Contact **Bill Oliver** (Ph. 941-7741 or email vwoliver9@gmail.com) for other particulars.

Trip Reports

Youth/Beginner Bird Walks Reported by Dan Greaney, Education Committee Co-chair

March 2

Four students from Mr. Gunther's class at Sequoia Middle School gathered for this month's Youth Bird Walk. In comfortable spring weather we found that spring arrivals were barely showing up—tree swallows slashed through the cottonwoods—and winter residents were getting scarce, with a good showing of waterfowl, but no sparrows seen at all in our two-hour, half-mile stroll.

Spring was in the air. Outbound gulls were flocking for the trip to their nesting grounds. Ducks and geese were pairing, with some getting feisty as they settle their relationships. The eagles continue to be impressive. We saw Mom and Dad switch incubation duty, and hope to see chick-feeding next month.

2013-2014 OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS & DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

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NEWSLETTER--Bill Oliver 941-7741

WEBMASTER—Larry Jordan 949-5266

MEMBERSHIP—George Horn 244-0581

PUBLICITY—Frank and Darliss Sanderson 242-8770

DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Ken Bachman, Ray Bruun, Jeanette and Harvey Carroll

April 9

Another new birder showed up on a beautiful spring morning at Turtle Bay. The cliff swallow nests at the monolith are busy, with what seems a higher occupancy rate than last year, and the tree swallows are holding their own against the starlings eyeballing their nesting cavities. We found many lingering duck species--Hooded Mergansers, Buffleheads, Ring-neck Ducks, Gadwalls, as well as Mallards--and our first goslings, yellow fluff-balls toodling along between mom and dad. Subtropical color rode in on a Bullock's Oriole, which offered a long, clear view of its brilliant orange. Finally, we were pleased to see a handful of Savannah Sparrows showing bright yellow in perfect spring plumage.

Summer Birding!

Our Youth/Beginner Bird Walks will continue through the summer! Bring your family and friends to the Turtle Bay Monolith on the Second Saturday of each month, 8-10am. In the season when parent birds are raising their young, we will explore who our feathered neighbors are and how they make a living. Audubon can provide binoculars and field guides. Call **Dan Greaney**, 276276-9693 with questions or for more information.

Meiss Lake Outing—March 16. Frank and Darliss Sanderson led nine adventurous birders north to visit birding spots in Siskiyou County. Their first stop (out of

necessity and besides it's a good birding location) was at the Grass Lake Rest Area on Hwy. 97 where they had a close encounter with a Bald Eagle, perched in a pine tree just above them while they spied their first Sandhill Cranes of the day and scoped a good mix of ducks, geese and Tundra Swans. In the field just north of the Meiss Lake Road a large flock of Greater White-fronted Geese and one Snow Goose were feeding while several immature Bald Eagles fought over something on the ground just beyond. Meiss Lake held large numbers of mixed ducks and geese. The group also had several close views of the many Sandhill Cranes. One of the highlights of the trip was observing a pair of Bald Eagles engaged in a spectacular aerial courtship, locking talons and descending in a series of somersaults. Great views of Golden Eagles, many Red-tailed Hawks and beautiful Rough-legged Hawks were a treat. From the Butte Valley Wildlife Area they traveled north to Indian Tom Lake on the Oregon border where in addition to a large number of ducks, geese and coots, they were surprised to see the largest concentration of Common Mergansers (many hundreds) any of the party had ever seen. Even though it was past midday and getting windy six of the group continued on to the Lower Klamath NWR finishing a great day of birding.

Local Weekday Bird Walk at Clover Creek Preserve—March 21 Four intrepid birders showed up despite chilly temperatures and a stiff wind to bird the preserve with **Linda Aldrich**. They saw only 28 species. Nevertheless, the preserve specialties were found—Great-tailed Grackle, Say's Phoebe, Greater Yellowlegs and Western Meadowlark (a declining species in our suburban areas).

Dye Creek Preserve Outing—April 6 Although it had rained in Redding and was showery in the morning, **George Horn** reports that 11 birders decided to be optimistic and proceeded to the Dye Creek Preserve, a Nature Conservancy holding in Tehama County, for the scheduled bird trip. When they arrived it was a little cool and overcast, but quickly changed to a very pleasant day. In fact the trails and streams looked like no rain had fallen recently. They were rewarded with 56 species, probably the best birds were: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Rock Wren, Canyon Wren, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and first of season Western Kingbirds and Bullock's Orioles. Close-up views of the singing Canyon Wrens were thrilling!

Local Weekday Bird Walk at the John Reginato Fishing Access--- April 18. Nine birders enjoyed the walk along the fishing access trail at the John Reginato boat launching site on South Bonnyview Road. The wind probably hampered our birding. Nevertheless, 46 species were identified. We were disappointed not to see more summer residents and spring migrants but a Warbling Vireo and several Bullock's Orioles were highlights. After most participants had left **Bill Oliver** found a note on my windshield giving very detailed instructions on how to locate an Anna's Hummingbird nest with incubating

female on a low branch just 50 feet from where he parked. Many thanks to Ruth Jessen for leaving the note.

Gleanings from: *OPINION: What Do Birders Know?* Published in all the social media, April 19, 2013 by Brian Kimberling, author of the forthcoming novel "Snapper".

A BIRD-WATCHER is a kind of pious predator. To see a new bird is to capture it, metaphorically, and a rare bird or an F.O.Y. (First of the Year, for the uninitiated) is a kind of trophy. A list of birds seen on a given day is also a form of prayer, a thanksgiving for being alive at a certain time and place. Posting that list online is a 21st-century form of a votive offering. It's unclear what deity presides. There was prestige in knowing birds in ancient Rome, and there is prestige today.... There are 5.8 million bird-watchers in the United States, slightly more than the number of residents of Wisconsin. That's a huge army of primitive hunter-mystics

....The Audubon Society's population estimates, drawing on databases and the practices of citizen science, is descended from folk wisdom, where birds are ascribed a certain predictive power....Folk wisdom has deep roots. "Auspice" and "augury" share a Latin origin with "avian." An augur was a priest in ancient Rome who studied birds to determine the will of the gods (Cicero was one). When an elected official is inaugurated today, he or she is etymologically promoted to bird-watcher in chief. Mr. President, your binoculars. There are no accidental hawks or eagles in the "Iliad" or the "Odyssey," either. This says more about humans than about birds....

....The ancient wisdom of fretting obsessively over bird behavior has obtained the vindication of modern science. Hawks and eagles do not appear by accident. When, where and whether they appear is, absolutely, a portent. The spotted owl is a bioindicator, a species that can be used to monitor the condition of an ecosystem. In other words, bioindicator is just modern parlance for omen. And so the practice of bird-watching, no matter how geared up and teched out, cannot escape its ancient roots; or, rather, it has come back around. Birds are not moving north in anticipation of climate change; rather, they are moving in response to it. Still, they are becoming predictive in a manner not founded in superstition but well-documented in reported behavior. There is no telling what kinds of perverse ecological arrangements we will create for birds in the future, or what new technologies will be introduced to bird-watching.

**For the latest Wintu Audubon Society news and
birding information visit our website**

www.wintuaudubon.org



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MEMBERSHIP

APPLICATION Two categories of membership are offered.

- Membership in the local Wintu Audubon Society only, which includes the Chirp-N-Chatter, our bi-monthly newsletter of local birding events which will be emailed to you. With a local chapter membership, 100% of your dues support the local chapter. Hard-copy newsletters are available by request.
- Membership in National Audubon which entitles you to the same benefits as the chapter membership and in addition you receive National Audubon's award winning magazine "Audubon."

Please indicate your membership choice: _____\$20 New Chapter only _____\$20 Renewal Chapter only
_____ \$35 Two-year Chapter only (Checks payable to Wintu Audubon Society)
_____ \$20 New National Audubon Society (Checks payable to National
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National Audubon Society uses our local chapter membership list to solicit by mail and phone. If you wish to have your name removed from this list, please check here _____. Please complete the application and mail to: Wintu Audubon Society C38, P.O. Box 994533, Redding, California 96099