



CHIRP-N-CHATTER

The Newsletter of the Shasta Birding Society

**Chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Shasta
and eastern portions of Trinity County, California**



Our May program features Cory Overton who will discuss the efforts of the U.S. Geological Survey to create a science strategy to monitor and assess the hydrology of saline lakes in the Great Basin and the migratory birds and other wildlife dependent on those habitats. They have marked American Avocet and Wilson's Phalarope with GPS and MOTUS style radio tags. The twenty terminal lakes and playas to be studied include Mono Lake, Tule Lake, Summer Lake, and Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

Cory Overton is a Wildlife Biologist and has worked at the Dixon Field Station of the Western Ecological Research Center for 25 years, specializing in spatial ecology and demographics of migratory birds. During that period, Cory completed a Master's degree at Oregon State University investigating band-tailed pigeon ecology and a Ph.D. at the University of California, Davis on Ridgway's Rail. An avowed data geek, his research focuses on applied ecology and enabling adaptive management of public and private lands and effective data delivery.

Shasta Birding Society is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Waterbird Ecology and Movement in the Saline Lakes of the Great Basin

Time: May 8, 2024 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86915126483> Meeting ID: 869 1512 6483

Phone in: +1 669 900 6833 <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/khFPn0b9Q>

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To show how much we appreciate our donors we want to recognize you in our monthly newsletter! These are our recent generous donors:

Erika Iacona and Deanna Madigan - Thank You!

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MAY ACTIVITIES

Note: If you have been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 10 days you must provide a certificate of vaccination or negative test results no longer than 72 hours prior to and as a requirement to participating in these events.

Newville Ponds – Buckhorn Campground at Black Butte Lake Recreation Area - Sunday, May 5th @ 7:30 am



We will meet at the parking lot for Newville Ponds which is located on Newville Road west of Stoney Creek bridge. Map location at: <https://goo.gl/maps/C78SVShicsrhr2QR7>. These two unique locations that are part of the US Army's Corp of Engineers, Black Butte Recreation Area. This recreation area is a great spot for migratory and residential birds, and in particular a good variety of waterbirds. Newville Ponds, located north of the lake, are fed water through Black Butte Lake's dam system that regulates lake levels and flow of Stoney Creek. This time of year, the dam releases are controlled for flood conditions. With our recent wet weather, several acres of developed wetlands should have formed making this area ideal for many varieties of waterbirds. Buckhorn Campground, primary access of Black Butte Lake's western shoreline, is heavily forested with blue oak habitat for several acres where many woodpecker and song bird species should be found nesting. The beach and lake areas are often filled with Gull, Grebe, and

Shorebird species. Occasionally, we find Rock Wren and Swallows along the boat launch and draws to the south parking lot. Entrance fees are \$10.00 per vehicle, but federal annual and lifetime passes are honored at this Recreation Area. We always recommend carpooling. I will be leaving early from Red Bluff and if there is 1-2 people that would like to meet me for a ride from my location, please contact me by email at least two days before trip. danbye56@gmail.com We recommend that you bring snacks, lunch, and plenty of water. Newville Ponds should be minimal walking which depends on water levels and accessibility. The best way to view Buckhorn Campground is walking through the many paths along campsites and woodland areas, so bring appropriate footwear. Birders from Redding will carpool from [Kutras Park](#) at **6:30am sharp**.

Birding Basics at Turtle Bay Bird Sanctuary - Thursday, May 9th @ 8:30 to 10:30



How many types of nests do our local breeding birds make? Where are you most likely to discover them? Find out by joining us on this search for breeding bird behaviors and their nests. We usually see between 30 and 36 bird species around the Sundial Bridge. Meet at the [Turtle Bay Redding Boat Launch](#), located behind the Redding Civic Auditorium for a leisurely two-hour stroll on accessible paved and gravel trails along the Sacramento River. Bathrooms can be found at several locations along the way. Binoculars are available to borrow, and instructions will be provided for their use. Rain will cancel. Contact Tricia Ford at triciathebirdnerd@gmail.com for more information.

Dye Creek Preserve Outing - Saturday, May 11th @ 6:30 am



Located in the foothills below Mount Lassen, the 37,540-acre [Gray Davis Dye Creek Preserve](#) is an expansive landscape of blue oak woodlands, volcanic buttes, and rolling wildflower fields. The landscape is dissected dramatically by Dye Creek Canyon with its vertical cliffs, clear-water creek, and diverse riparian forests. The forest widens as it leaves the canyon mouth and flows westward, through wetlands, to its confluence with the Sacramento River. Join Larry Jordan, trip leader, for a hike up Dye Creek Canyon. Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcons and Canyon Wrens are a possibility. Wild flowers should be abundant. The three mile trail is rough so be prepared. Bring water, a lunch, and sturdy shoes for this all day outing. Meet at **6:30 sharp** at the [Kutras Park on Park Marina Drive](#) to caravan, or meet us at the [north end of Foothill Road](#) at 7:15. We will bird Foothill Road on the way to the preserve with each vehicle having a walkie-talkie to communicate birds seen. All participants must fill out [this waiver](#) before the day of the event. Contact Larry Jordan at 530-949-5266 for more info.

Clear Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant - Saturday, May 18th @ 7:30 am



Our May 18th field trip will be to the ponds targeting any late migrants and spring summer residents. Assemble at the treatment plant's administration building at the end of Metz Road at 7:30 am sharp to meet your leader Tim Kashuba. This is a 1/2 day trip that may end in the early afternoon if the birding is good. Directions to the Clear Creek Plant: Take Hwy 273 south, after crossing Clear Creek and past the Win River Casino, take the second left turn at River Ranch Road and cross over the railroad tracks. Turn left on Eastside Road. Entrance is at [2200 Metz Road](#) on the right. Rain Cancels.

Grace and Nora Lakes - Saturday, May 25th at 5:30 am



Falls field trip for this year will be limited due to closures of the park's Falls Loop Trail. For this reason, we will start our day at the Falls followed by a quick trip to Baum Lake which also includes a small section of Crystal Lake. Our goals for this full day event are as follows: At McArthur-Burney Falls Memorial SP, we will venture north on the Rim Trail overseeing the views across and down Burney Falls canyon along the backside east of Rim Campground. Our target species on this morning walk includes Black Swifts, Osprey, Pileated, Hairy, and White-headed Woodpecker, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, many Warblers, and Flycatchers. At Baum Lake we will hike the small trail on the west shore that travels northbound. Midway is an intersection at the north shore of Crystal Lake another short trail that travels westbound. What does this all mean? This is our best attempt to locate

nesting Purple Martin, and search Passerines in variations Warbler, Wren, Blackbird, and Oriole, as well Waterbirds like Egret, Heron, Goose and Duck Species. We will meet at [Safeway in Burney](#) at 8:30 sharp and depart immediately together to McArthur- Burney Falls Memorial State Park. Please contact Dan Bye by email: danbye56@gmail.com with any questions or if you need other contact information.

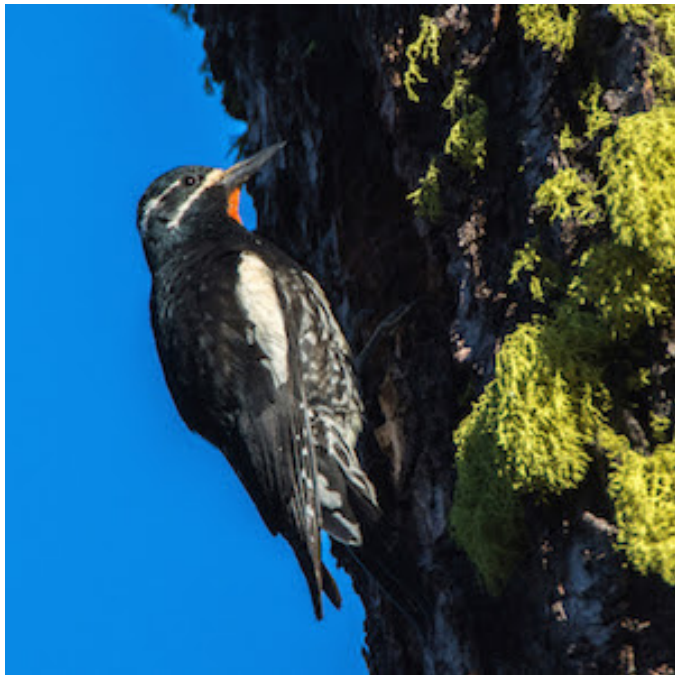


Shasta Birding Society Picnic - Wednesday, June 12th @ 6:00 pm



Join us for our traditional end of the season picnic at the Camden House in the Tower House Historic District at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, June 12th. It is located on the south side of Highway 299 West just west of the turnoff to French Gulch. Bring your own brown bag dinner and we will eat by the creek and then go birding on the Camden Water Ditch Trail. This is a one-mile dirt trail that loops around the historic Camden House, Tenant Farm House, barn and outbuildings. Hiking boots are recommended. We hope to see Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lazuli Buntings, Bullock's Orioles, Western Tanagers, and maybe an American Dipper. An entrance pass is required to use the area and can be purchased online at [Your Pass Now](#). Senior, Access, Military and the Interagency Annual Pass can also be used. Contact trip leader Tricia Ford at triciathebirdnerd@gmail.com for more information.

Lassen Volcanic National Park Lost Creek Group Campground - July 19th - 21st



AltaCal Audubon will be camping and birding in Lassen VNP with the Shasta Birding Society, and other Audubon chapters. [Lost Creek Group Campsite #5](#) has been reserved for the nights of Friday, July 19, and Saturday, July 20. Campers can arrive at the campsite on Friday after the 1pm check-in and check-out by noon on Sunday, July 21. Species likely to see or hear, include Osprey, Pileated Woodpecker, White-headed Woodpecker, Black-backed Woodpecker, Williamson's Sapsucker, Vaux's Swift, Common Nighthawk, Bufflehead, Canada Jay, Brown Creeper, American Dipper, Yellow Warbler, Western Tanager and Cassin's Finch, plus more. We will bird Manzanita Lake, Hat Creek, Summit Peak, and Kings Creek areas and the rest of the itinerary is open and will depend on the interests of the participants. Lost Creek Group Campground has primitive facilities, pit toilets, and potable water is available. Group size is limited. If you would like to join us, contact Karen Smith, birds4ks@gmail.com to sign up and for more details.

THE CONSERVATION CORNER from Bruce Webb, Conservation Chair

During April's Board meeting, three issues were considered by the Board for its role as an advocate for birds and wildlife in our area of the north state. Due to limits of space and time, they were not mentioned here previously; I feel they are still timely and important to mention.

1) The Board approved a request by the Center for Biological Diversity for support of listing under the California Endangered Species Act of at-risk burrowing owl populations. Burrowing owls are found in limited numbers in northeastern California and from Redding south into the Central Valley; populations on the central coast, Bay Area and San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys may be at higher risk than Northeastern populations. Their current official California status is "species of special concern." The proposal recommends two alternatives: either list the Southwestern and Central- Western California, and San Francisco Bay Area burrowing owl populations as endangered, and the Central Valley and Southern Desert populations as threatened, or list all California populations as threatened. Shasta Birding Society's support was included in CBD's April 16 letter to the Fish and Game Commission.

2) The Board approved a request from the Western Rivers Conservancy for a letter of support of the acquisition by the Bureau of Land Management of the 288-acre Jelly's Ferry Parcel within the Sacramento River Bend Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The acquisition by BLM includes a mile of river frontage with valuable riparian bird habitat including overstory riparian forest of huge sycamores, valley oaks, and cottonwoods. It will enhance the restoration of river and wetland habitats, and will provide new opportunities for birding enthusiasts. We filed a detailed letter of support with the BLM.

3) We received a request from Animal Wellness Action to file a protest with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for their proposal to

implement the program of killing barred owls in Pacific Northwest forests to aid in the recovery of the Northern spotted owl. Non-native barred owls have successfully competed for habitat with spotted owls across the PNW, putting increased pressure on dwindling populations of spotted owls. Due to the complex ethical and population dynamics implications of this program (it is opposed by some wildlife advocates and in contrast supported by some prominent birding societies, including Redwood Region Audubon and the Bird Alliance of Oregon), the Board elected to take no stance in opposition at this time.

TRIP REPORTS

Lightning Canyon Ranch on April 6th



Brisk early April weather greeted six pre-dawn birders taking advantage of an opportunity to bird a special 2,205-acre property near Lakehead overlooking Shasta Lake. The group was led by Jeremy Kangas, local caretaker of the Lightning Canyon Ranch, owned by Bob Hixon. After receiving a brief history of the property from native American roots, wildfire and conservation trusts, the group drove a steep fire road to our rendezvous site serving as a central staging point for the ranch. The group then took a vigorous birding hike from our rendezvous site to an overlook about a mile away, allowing a rare perspective of Shasta Lake and Dam. Descending back to our gathering point, we were greeted with a warming campfire while we ate lunch and continued birding before driving back down the mountain to I-5 and Redding. Birding highlights included singing Pacific Wrens, an American Dipper in Salt Creek, and a lone Mountain Quail calling up at the higher elevations. We tallied 17 species, a good number given the cold and cloudy conditions. We hope to return during another season to bird again. Our thanks to our gracious hosts allowing the

Shasta Birding Society to experience this unique property in our Shasta County backyard.

Birding Basics at Turtle Bay on April 11th



Signs of spring were abundant as five birders witnessed a Western Bluebird pair bringing nesting material to their oak tree cavity, Canada Geese in an epic battle for territory on an island in the middle of the Sacramento River, and a Black Phoebe beginning to plaster a mud nest on the side of a building. Hundreds of Cliff Swallows were starting to build their own mud nests under the Sundial Bridge and Tree Swallows were checking out any available tree holes for nesting possibilities. Common Goldeneyes, White-crowned Sparrows, and Buffleheads were some of the few stragglers that hadn't yet migrated north.

Crawling Critters and Feathered Friends on April 13th



Shasta Birding Society partnered with the Shasta Land Trust and the Spoiled Gargoyle for this event at the Beaver Banks Preserve. Young children used binoculars to find birds and observed various types of nests. Anna's Hummingbirds zoomed around the feeders, California Quail ran around the lawns, and a California Towhee came out of hiding to give their metallic "Chink!" call repeatedly.

Earth Day Celebration on April 20th



Thanks to David Ledger, after months of careful planning and organization by several dedicated volunteers from the SEA Earth Day Committee, and with help from over a dozen volunteers day-of, the [2024 Earth Day Festival](#) was a resounding success. Held on April 20th, the festival drew a larger crowd than last year and featured a diverse lineup of organizations, groups, and agencies tabling at the event. This created a vibrant atmosphere and provided attendees with ample opportunities to learn about local initiatives, connect with their community, and celebrate the beauty of nature. Our President, Rebeca and myself "womaned" and "manned" the booth having several interesting conversations about birds, our organization, and nests! A great day was had by all!

Rancho Breisgau on April 27th



A special thanks to Brooke Thompson from the Redding Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for leading this trip to this special property. Brooke gave the group of 10 outdoor enthusiasts a tour of 426-acre property being restored from agricultural use to valuable oak woodland habitat. A great variety of birds and plants were observed during the sunny spring morning. Steve Layman, also from the Redding Field Office BLM, helped with the birding with the group identifying over 44 species, perhaps the best of the day was a pair of Blue Grosbeaks foraging in the tall grass where Walnut Orchards once stood. The property is now an eBird hotspot and is open to the public for foot traffic or if you have a BLM escort you may access with a vehicle.

Here is the link to a video I filmed of a Great Horned Owl that was startled by a flock of Canada Geese flying overhead as she was feeding her young, not yet out of the nest.

<https://youtu.be/Un-bAdutmeE?feature=shared>