

Kite Tales

Redwood Region Ornithological Society



Volume 33 Number II

October 1998

Coming Attractions

October 8th, Thursday, 7:30 PM - General Meeting

Darwin Hall, Room 221 - Sonoma State University, Cotati

The Other Critters of Sonoma & Marin Counties:

Rich Stallcup, author, artist, field trip leader, and a long-time staff member of PRBO will introduce us to other many-legged critters that we often overlook when our binoculars are trained on the top of trees looking at our favorite two-legged critters. With slides and his usual flair, Rich will charm us into noticing some more inhabitants of our natural world. (See details on parking, page 2.)

October 9th-11th, Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival - Lodi High School

This is billed as a "celebration of wildlife for everyone, from first-time to experienced birders, children and adults. There is a small fee and activities include assorted entertainment and field trips. Call: (209) 368-6444.

October 10th, Saturday, 8:00 AM - RRROS Field Trip to Bodega Bay

Meet in the parking area near the rail ponds at the north end of the Bodega harbor. We will search for migrants, vagrants, and view arriving wintering birds. Bring warm clothes in layers. Leader: Betty Burridge 707-527-0225.

October 20th, Tuesday - Observations Deadline

The 20th is the deadline for Kite Tales observations. Please forward sightings to Ned Wynn 129-B Powell Ave. Healdsburg, Ca 95448 707 431-8412 or via email: ekwynn@sonic.net

October 26th, Monday - Kite Tales deadline

Send announcements and articles to Gerry Mugele PO Box 813 Glen Ellen, Ca 95442 or via email: mewgull@ix.netcom.com

October 27th, Tuesday, 5:00 PM - PRBO Birds & Bay Area Conservation

In honor of the Bernard Osher Foundation, for generous support of conservation programs, Dr. Nils Warnock, PRBO Senior Scientist, Avian Biologist, and Shorebird Specialist will discuss the essential role of the SF Bay estuary to migratory shorebirds on the Pacific Flyway. Call (415) 868-1221 ext 24.

**RROS Dues for '98 - '99
Are Now Payable**

Please check the address label on this Kite Tales. It will tell you if you have already paid or if you need to send along a check for our treasury. Individuals-\$8, Family-\$15, Students-\$3. Donations, as always, will be gratefully accepted.

**New Construction Closes Our
Favorite Sonoma State Parking Lot**

The south parking lots nearest Darwin Hall on the SSU campus, where most of us park for our general meetings, are no longer available due to a major construction project. Campus authorities recommend entering the campus from East Cotati Avenue at the main entrance. Turn left on Redwood Circle and then immediately left into Parking Lot J. Parking permits are available at Lot J for \$1.50. To reach Darwin Hall, walk a short distance along Redwood Circle as it curves northwest, then turn north along the edge of the closed parking lots. Darwin Hall is the first large multistory building on your right.

Condors Becoming Commuters?

Word on the released Condors from Robert Mesta, the USF&W Condor Program Coordinator: In April and the first part of May the condors were spending time in the Santa Ynez Valley/Mountains, but lately they have been at Lion Canyon or moving east into the Tehachapis. One of the condors released in Arizona flew to Flaming Gorge Wyoming, covering 305 miles and returned. Three of them flew to Grand Junction Colorado, 250 miles. They returned in one day.

Amazing Migration Report

Van Remsen forwards a message from a watcher on an oil rig in the Gulf of Mexico; it just boggles the mind.

"Just a heads-up to let you know that Rick and I are being evacuated. I was up all last night watching an amazing spectacle at South Pelto -- perhaps the most inspiring migration event I've ever witnessed. I have to gather my stuff for the flight, so details later. Let's just say that there were perhaps 3 million Prothonotary Warblers over the northern Gulf last night, together with over a million Ovenbirds, hundreds of thousands of Eastern Kingbirds (really, that's not a typo), plus a few miscellaneous others."

Good Thinking

According to the Knight-Ridder News Service, the inscription on the metal bands used by the U.S. Department of the Interior to tag migratory birds has been changed. The bands used to bear the address of the Washington Biological Survey, abbreviated:

Wash. Biol. Surv.

Recently the agency received the following letter from a camper:

"Dear Sirs:

While camping last week I shot one of your birds. I think it was a crow. I followed the cooking instructions on the leg tag and I want to tell you, it was horrible."

The bands are now marked "Fish and Wildlife Service".

(ed: Hey, I don't make this stuff up.)

Field Trip Report - Pt. Reyes on September 20, 1998 *by Ruth Rudesill*

A cold, blustery day greeted us and unfortunately, there were few migrants on the outer point. We did see thousands of Sooty Shearwaters offshore and in Drake's Bay. A few people saw a Yellow-headed Blackbird in the flocks of birds at the dairies (we witnessed a calf birth - with a Turkey Vulture waiting on a nearby fence!) After lunch at Drake's Beach, we heard about some Pacific Golden-Plovers at Drake's Corners (four to six.) Then we heard a flock of migrants were inland at Mt. Vision Road - where it was actually warm and sunny. We saw an American Redstart and Chestnut-sided Warbler among the flock and ended the day at Olema Marsh.

Participants: Carol Brant, Mary Finn, Betty Groce, Louise Johnston, Terry Law, Bob and Bertha Rains, Ruth Rudesill, and Jim and Jean Tonascia.

Birds Observed:

Common Loon	Pied-billed Grebe	Pink-footed Shearwater
Sooty Shearwater	Brown Pelican	Double-crsted Cormorant
Brandt's Cormorant	Pelagic Cormorant	Great Blue Heron
Snowy Egret	Black-crowned Night Heron	Wood Duck
Green-winged Teal	Mallard	Cinnamon Teal
Northern Shoveler	American Wigeon	Surf Scoter
Turkey Vulture	Northern Harrier	Red-tailed Hawk
American Kestrel	California Quail	Virginia Rail
American Coot	Black-bellied Plover	Pacific Golden-plover
Killdeer	Greater Yellowlegs	Pectoral Sandpiper
Heermann's Gull	Ring-billed Gull	California Gull
Western Gull	Glaucous-winged Gull	Common Murre
Rock Dove	Mourning Dove	Anna's Hummingbird
Belted Kingfisher	Northern Flicker	Black Phoebe
Say's Phoebe	Horned Lark	Barn Swallow
Common Raven	Steller's Jay	Scrub Jay
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Bushtit	Red-breasted Nuthatch
Winter Wren	Marsh Wren	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Western Bluebird	American Robin	Wrentit
American Pipit	Starling	Hutton's Vireo
Orange-crowned Warbler	Chestnut-sided Warbler	Townsend's Warbler
Hermit Warbler	Wilson's Warbler	American Redstart
California Towhee	Savannah Sparrow	Fox Sparrow
Song Sparrow	White-crowned Sparrow	Golden-crowned Sparrow
Red-winged Blackbird	Tricolored Blackbird	Brewer's Blackbird
Yellow-headed Blackbird	House Finch	Lesser Goldfinch
American Goldfinch	House Sparrow	

Observations *by Ned Wynn*

<u>Species</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Red-throated Loon	40+	9/10	North of Westport	MEN	DT	
Sooty Shearwater	∞	9/5-13	Bodega Head	SON	BG, BDP, DH, EKW, CG	On 9/13 a steady stream of Sooties passed within 200-300 yards of the Head. 3 hours later the birds were still seen passing in an unbroken line at Wright's Beach (EKW, CG)
Black-vented Shearwater	?	9/13	Bodega Head	SON	EKW, CG, BG	Interspersed w/ Sooties
Harlequin Duck	1	9/5-12	Glass Beach, Ft. Bragg	MEN	DT	eclipse male
Black Scoter	1	8/23	MacKerricher	MEN	DT	female, Unusual Date
Hooded Merganser	1	8/8 +	Caspar Pond	MEN	DT	Unusual Date
Wild Turkey	30	8/29	Oakmont	SON	BG	feeders
	18	9/19	Sweetwater Springs Rd	SON	GM	
Sora	1	9/5	Chanslor Ranch	SON	BG	
	4	9/13	Willowside Road	SON	EKW, CG	heard only
	4	9/15	Shollenberger Park	SON	EKW, GM	heard only
Lesser Yellowlegs	3	8/1	Pudding Creek	MEN	DT	
	1	8/2	Estuary	MEN	DT	
	2	8/23	Garcia River mudflats	MEN	DT	
Wandering Tattler	3	8/31	Caspar Creek	MEN	KC, RI	
Solitary Sandpiper	1	9/4	Ukiah Wastewater Ponds	MEN	CV, GC	alternate plumage
Red Knot	1	8/25	Virgin Creek Beach	MEN	KC, RI	early
	9	9/2	Bodega Bay	SON	MAS walk	
	1	9/5	Glass Beach, Ft. Bragg	MEN	DT	
	1	9/11	MacKerricher	MEN	DT	
Baird's Sandpiper	1	9/2	Bodega Bay	SON	BG, DB, MAS	
	2	8/31	Caspar Creek	MEN	KC, RI	
Parasitic Jaeger	1	8/29	Off Todd's Point Ft. Bragg	MEN	DT	rousting phalaropes
Franklin's Gull	1	9/10	Shollenberger Park	SON	mob	
Common Tern	1	9/15	MacKerricher	MEN	DT	
Marbled Murrelet	4	9/10	North of Westport	MEN	DT	
Rhinoceros Auklet	2	8/9	Mendocino Bay	MEN	DT	
	1	8/15	Mendocino Bay	MEN	DT	
	2	9/7	North of Westport	MEN	DT	
Black Swift	2	9/19	Sweetwater Springs Rd	SON	GM	in large mixed flock
Lewis's Woodpecker	2	9/12	Hopland Field Station	MEN	CV, GC, JW	
Least Flycatcher	1	9/26	Campbell Cove	SON	DN	
Tropical Kingbird	1	8/26	North of Ft. Bragg	MEN	DT	early
Gray Catbird	1	9/26	Campbell Cove	SON	AW	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1	8/29	Pt. Cabrillo	MEN	DT	
Blackburnian Warbler	1	8/30	Owl Canyon	SON	BDP, AW, EKW+1st Fall male	
Palm Warbler	1	9/13	10-Mile River	MEN	DT	
Blackpoll Warbler	1	8/30	Owl Canyon	SON	BDP, AW, EKW+	
Black & White Warbler	1	9/2	Owl Canyon	SON	BG, DB, MAS	
Prothonotary Warbler	1	9/26	Campbell Cove	SON	BB, DH	
Canada Warbler	1	8/27	Owl Canyon	SON	DH, EKW	alternate plumage male
Summer Tanager	1	9/2	Muddy Hollow	MAR	BDP	
Lark Bunting	1	9/7	Ukiah Wastewater Ponds	MEN	CV, GC, JW	Adult female
Vesper Sparrow	1	9/12	Ukiah Wastewater Ponds	MEN	CV, BK, GC	
Yellow-headed Blackbird	1	8/24	Talmadge/Ukiah	MEN	CV, GC	Immature
	1	8/28	town of Mendocino	MEN	DT	immature male at feeder

Observers:

Dennis Beale, Betty Burrridge, Kris Carter, George Chaniot, Chris Graham, Betty Groce, Deyea Harper, David Hoffman, Richard Irvin, Bob Kieffer, Gerry Mugele, Dan Nelson, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Dorothy Tobkin, Chuck Vaughn, Jerry White, Alan Wight, Edmond K. Wynn, Madrone Audubon Society

Good Birding Spots #1**Golden Gate Park - San Francisco***by Richard Merriss*

Golden Gate Park is often worth a side trip if you are on your way to another location, or it could be worth spending several hours checking out several locations. Middle Lake at the corner of Chain of Lakes Dr. and Kennedy Dr. has been a good spot for vagrant warblers, e.g. Northern Waterthrush and Worm-eating Warbler, and it is a good place for some of the usual suspects such as Pygmy Nuthatch, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Townsend's Warbler. Mallard Lake on Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. (a Hooded Warbler spent some time there 3 winters ago) and Strybing Arboretum are both good locations for vagrants and western passerines as well.

Spreckels Lake, Mallard Lake, Elk Glen Lake, and Lloyd Lake are good for wintering ducks. Tufted Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, and Hooded Merganser will sometimes show up on these lakes, and many of the expected wintering ducks (Greater and Lesser Scaup, American Wigeon, Pintail etc.) are often found at these locations. Take a scope and Good Birding!

And the Prez Sez: *by Mike Nelligan*

Thank you, Richard, for this first and very fine *Good Birding Spot* item. I hope that other RROS members will also volunteer to write about their favorite birding areas (Bay Area, Sonoma County, neighboring counties) so that all of our members can benefit from the rich fund of knowledge within our organization.

And in Other News:

Congratulations to Albion residents Richard Irvin and Kris Carter who now are enrolled in an RROS Family Membership, having tied-the-knot in May '98.

in a related item: **A New Book**

October Release of Local Birding Guide -

The long-awaited birding site guide, *A Guide to Finding Birds in Mendocino County*, by RROS member Kris Carter, is expected to be released on 15 October 1998. The guide provides information on 67 birding locations in Mendocino County, habitats, special birds, and more. The 1998 *Checklist of the Birds of Mendocino County* by R.J. "Bob" Keiffer is included. Whatever your interest--- from the beginning birder with a free day in Mendocino to the obsessive lister--- this book provides the information you need to find birds in Mendocino County. 148 pages, spiral bound, soft cover, \$13.99. For more information, contact Kris K. Carter, P.O. Box 700, Albion, CA 95410, (707) 937-1194, or kkcarter@mcn.org.

A Point of Interest -

While doing field research in Papua New Guinea in the early 1990s, graduate student John Dumbacher discovered the first known poisonous bird, the Hooded Pitohui, a brilliant orange-and-black passerine. A potent neurotoxin is present in its skin and feathers to discourage predators.

(ed: remember, I don't make this stuff up. Although it does kind of make one wonder what the leg tag should say doesn't it?)

Redwood Region Ornithological Society was organized in 1962 "to encourage the study and conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their natural habitat." Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month, September through May. Regular general meetings (October through April) are held at 7:30 PM in room 221 Darwin Hall, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California. Dues are \$15 per family, \$8 per individual, or \$3 per student for one year membership. Send dues to the treasurer shown below.

1998 - 1999 Officers:

President: Mike Nelligan, 124 Wikiup Drive, Santa Rosa CA 95403 707 576-1475
E-Mail: bandm@monitor.net

Vice President: Deyea Harper, 2310Northwood Dr., Santa Rosa CA 95404 707 542-1542
E-Mail: JHarperTrustee@compuserve.com

Secretary: Benjamin D. Parmeter, 2500 Emerson St., Napa CA 94558 707 255-6757

Treasurer: Betty Burrige, 1653 Arroyo Sierra Way, Santa Rosa CA 95405 707 527-0225
E-Mail: bettyb@monitor.net

1998 - 1999 Chairs:

Field Trips: Ruth Rudesill, PO Box 371, Kenwood CA 95452 707 833-6026

Observations: Ned Wynn, 129-B Powell Ave., Healdsburg CA 707 431-8412
E-Mail: ekwynn@sonic.net

Social: Barbara Gumtow, 7915 Bella Vista Dr., Sebastopol CA 95472 707 823-7869

Christmas Count: Doug Ellis, PO Box 776, Kenwood CA 95452 707 935-3410
Ted Eliot, 5850 Grove St., Sonoma CA 95476 707 938-2134

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