

Kite Tales



Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 33 Number IV

December 1998

Coming Attractions

December 10th, Thursday, 7:30 PM - General Meeting Darwin Hall, Room 221 - Sonoma State University, Cotati

Preparing for the Christmas Count:

Sharpen your skills with some bird study skins courtesy of Dr. Phil Northern & Sonoma State University. Some bird slides provided courtesy of Dan Nelson. Be there to enjoy testing your knowledge with some questions on identification, and esoteric bird trivia.

December 20th, Sunday - Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count

Anyone wishing to participate who has not already been contacted; please call Doug Ellis at (707) 579-9582 Wednesdays through Sundays between 6:00 P.M. and 9:00 P.M. or send him a note to PO Box 776, Kenwood, Ca 95452

The compilation will again be held at the Wikiup Greens Clubhouse, 450A Las Casitas in Wikiup. The tally will start at 6:30 P.M and will be preceded by the usual potluck dinner. All are welcome. See map enclosed.

NOTE: This count is also our field trip for December.

Other Christmas Bird Counts

Dec. 19th - Ukiah, Mendocino County Contact: Alan Falleri 707-485-1377

Point Reyes, Contact: David Wimpfheimer 415-663-1363 dwbird1000@aol.com

Mt. Diablo, Contact: Jimm Edgar 510-658-2330 jedgar@ag70.younglife.org

Dec. 21st - Benicia, Solano County Contact: Robin Leong 707-643-1287 leong@community.net

Jan. 1st - Angwin, Napa County Contact: Wayne Tillay 707-965-2978 ewtill@aol.com

Jan. 2nd - Marin County (Southern) Contact: Harrison Karr 415-744-1340 karr.harrison@epa.gov

Jan. 3rd - Centerville Beach, Humboldt County Contact: Stan Harris 707-822-3802

Dec. 27 Western Sonoma County: Ken Wilson 707-823-8408

December 20th, Sunday - 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

December 26th, Saturday - Kite Tales deadline

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

**Survey of Trumpeter Swans
Wintering in California**

The Trumpeter Swan Society (TTSS) will attempt to document Trumpeter swans wintering in California. TTSS knows that at least 50 and perhaps as many as 200 Trumpeters winter in California and suspects that most of the birds winter from the Sacramento Delta north, to as far South as the Owens Valley and Death Valley.

TTSS is asking for help to conduct this survey. Contact Rod Hug (address below), or Liz Cook for Yolo County < lcook@water.ca.gov >, if you can help. TTSS believes that marked Trumpeters may include birds released at Summer Lake, Oregon in 1991-1995, as well as migrants from Canadian flocks in North West Territory and Alberta. Some of the unmarked birds may also be coming south from Alaska.

Birders please record the following information:

- A.** Color and number of birds, singles or family groups, mixed or not mixed with Tundra swans. (Note: Immature Trumpeters are gray, and mature Trumpeters are white. Trumpeters might be found as singles or family groups mixed with large numbers of Tundra swans.)
- B.** Neck collar color and markings, make a sketch if possible. (Note: Collars are green with white codes that usually are read from the body toward the head. A few collars are red with white codes, and a few are yellow with black codes. Probably less than 10% will have neck collars.)
- C.** What characteristics caused you to identify these birds as Trumpeters rather than Tundra swans? Did you hear them call? (Note: The Trumpeter head is somewhat distinctive if viewed a close range. However, the call of the Trumpeter is diagnostic. But groups of Trumpeters often remain silent for long periods.)
- D.** Activity; i.e., resting, feeding on pond, field, or flying.
- E.** Take photos if you can.

Other pertinent information: date(s), location, name, phone number and e-mail address of observer (report as soon as possible after observation is made).

Report information to:

Rod Hug, 4603 Bridle Trail, Santa Rosa, Ca 95409, phone/fax (707)539-3413, email: rodhug@aol.com or Karen J Brown, Environmental Specialist III, California Department of Water Resources, 3374 East Shields Avenue, Room B19, Fresno, California 93726-6990, Phone (559)445-5386 Fax (559)445-5370, email: karenb@water.ca.gov

Of course, try not to disturb swans when making observations. TTSS will send you the history of any swans whose collar markings are identified.

Please help if you can. Thank you. Rod Hug

Good Birding Spots #3**Shollenberger Park**

by Betty Burridge

One of Sonoma County's best kept secrets, from the birder's point of view, is Shollenberger Park in south-eastern Petaluma. Not a lawn-and-tree kind of a place, this is a well protected wetland bordered in part by Adobe Creek and the Petaluma River. This park has a variety of diked ponds, ample marsh vegetation and open fields, level paths (some paved, some gravel) and a few benches and picnic tables. A loop trail extends 2 miles around the main dike. The park is owned and maintained by the City of Petaluma.

An astonishing variety of birds may be found here in every season. Large flocks of shorebirds and waterfowl arrive in fall and stay throughout the winter. In recent years a Burrowing Owl has also taken up winter residence here along with increased numbers of American Bitterns.

During breeding season, nests and young of American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, Pied-billed Grebes, Common Moorhens, American Coots, Canada Geese, and Mallards can be fairly easily found. Rails, Common Yellowthroats, American Bitterns and Song Sparrows are more secretive in their breeding locations here.

Birder's will find that they share the trail with bicyclists, joggers, walkers, and dog owners. Fortunately the design of the park allows for relatively undisturbed pursuit of each of these

healthful out-door activities. Note that no restrooms or drinking water are available.

Some twenty five years ago this was a seasonal wetland serving as an unimproved pasture for a few cattle, flood control for the overflow from the Petaluma River, and home or wintering area for many birds. Because of its location at the foot of Cader Lane, this wonderful wetland became known in the birding community as the Cader Lane Ponds and is referred to as such in the *Sonoma County Breeding Bird Atlas* published in 1995.

To reach Shollenberger Park from Hwy 101, go east on Lakeville Hwy. (Hwy.116 East) one mile to South McDowell Extension. Turn right (south) and proceed to the far side of the U. S. Postal Service Buildings. Turn right there at a tiny lane marked with a simple street sign, "City Park." This turn-off is at the foot of Cader Lane. Fifty yards down the primitive lane is a paved parking lot. The lane continues as a trail leading up onto the loop trail on the main dike.

Field Trip Report - Shollenberger Park, on November 21, 1998 by Ruth Rudesill

Six brave birders faced the elements and were treated to a nice outing. It was raining in the morning but stopped in time for a stroll around the park. Highlights were:

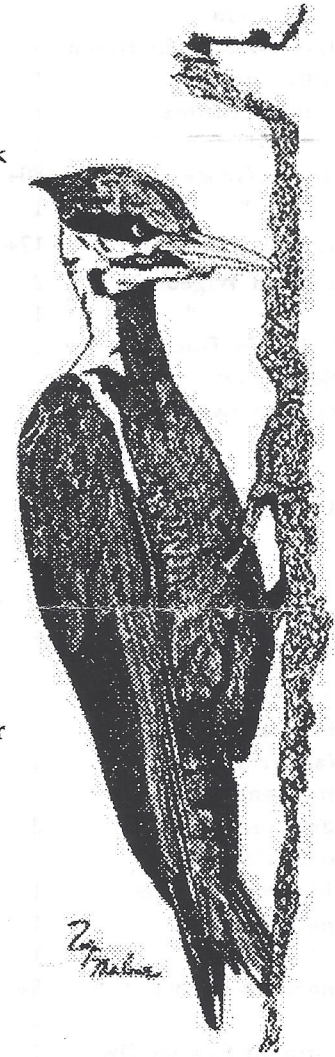
American Bittern, Sora, 12 Blue-winged Teal, Barrow's Goldeneye, and Hooded Merganser

Participants: Linda Allen, Lew and Marilyn Edmondson, Richard Hurley, Mike Parmeter, and Ruth Rudesill

Birds Observed:

- Pied-billed Grebe
- Eared Grebe
- Double-crested Cormorant
- Great Blue Heron
- Great Egret
- Snowy Egret
- American Bittern
- Mute Swan
- Canada Goose
- Green-winged Teal
- Blue-winged Teal

- Northern Shoveler
- American Wigeon
- Mallard,
- Northern Pintail
- Greater Scaup
- Common Goldeneye
- Barrow's Goldeneye
- Bufflehead
- Ruddy Duck
- Hooded Merganser
- Turkey Vulture
- Northern Harrier
- Red-shouldered Hawk
- Red-tailed Hawk
- American Kestrel
- Virginia Rail,
- Sora
- Common Moorhen
- American Coot
- Black-bellied Plover
- Killdeer
- Black-necked Stilt
- American Avocet
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Willet
- Marbled Godwit
- Long-billed Curlew
- Western Snadpiper
- Least Sandpiper
- Dunlin
- Long-billed Dowitcher
- Ring-billed Gull
- California Gull
- Western Gull
- Herring Gull
- Glaucous-winged Gull
- Rock Dove
- Black Phoebe
- American Crow
- Marsh Wren
- American Pipit
- Yellow-rumped Warbler
- Song Sparrow
- Savannah Sparrow
- White-crowned Sparrow
- Golden-crowned Sparrow
- Western Meadowlark
- Red-winged Blackbird
- Brewer's Blackbird
- House Finch
- American Goldfinch



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Observations *by Ned Wynn*

Species	#	Date	Place	County	Who	Notes
Red-necked Grebe	2	Oct	Doran Park Jetty	SON	Mob	
Short-tailed Shearwater	2	10/31	Cordell Bank		DN	
Black-vented Shearwater	10	10/31	Cordell Bank		DN	
✓ American Bittern	3+	*	Shollenberger Park	SON	TE, GM, et al.	Throughout the period
✓ " "	1	11/21	Hudemann Slough	SON	DA, TE	
Green Heron	1	*	Shollenberger Park	SON	BDP, Mob	Throughout the period
Blk-Crwnd Night Heron	•	11/21	Hudemann Wetlands Proj	SON	DA, TE	Many in rookery
✓ Cattle Egret	1	11/18	Sebastopol	SON	DH, DE	
White-faced Ibis	1	11/5	Gray Lodge	BUT	BDP	
" " "	1	11/5	Sacramento NWR	GLN	BDP	
✓ Canada Goose	80+	10/30	Marin Cheese Factory	MAR	DN, WN	
" "	1	10/30	Doran Park	SON	DH, BDP	
✓ Blue-winged Teal	12+	*	Shollenberger Park	SON	LE, Mob	Throughout the period
Eurasian Wigeon	2	11/8	Bolinas Lagoon	MAR	RL, RM	
" "	1	11/21	Rush Creek Marsh	MAR	DA, TE	
Harlequin Duck	1	10/31	Fish Docks	MAR	DA, TE	Alternate plumage
✓ Old Squaw	1	11/21	Bodega Harbor	SON	DeH, MN, BB	
✓ Ferruginous Hawk	1	10/27	Ramal Rd.	SON	DN	immature
✓ " "	1	10/27	Old Adobe Rd at Frates	SON	DN	adult
✓ " "	2	11/21	Hudemann Slough	SON	DA, TE	both adults
✓ Merlin	1	11/2	Penngrove	SON	RL, DN	Rick LeBaudor's yard
✓ " "	1	11/8	Doran Park	SON	DN	
✓ " "	1	11/11	Two Rock	SON	DN, TCN	
✓ " "	1	11/21	Hudemann Slough	SON	DA, TE	
✓ " "	1	11/26	Stage Gulch Rd	SON	GM	
Prairie Falcon	1	11/12	Lovall Valley	NAP	GM, KM	
Gyr Falcon	1	11/24	Tule Lake	MOD	NC	brown-phase (or im. gray)
Mountain Quail	1	10/31	Mt. St. Helena	NAP	BDP, SP	
Wandering Tattler	1	10/30	Bodega Head	SON	DH, BDP	
Stilt Sandpiper	1	10/25	Rush Creek Marsh	MAR	RS, RL, RM	Stayed at least to 11/26
Pomarine Jaeger	2	10/31	Cordell Bank		DN	
South Polar Skua	1	10/31	Cordell Bank		DN	
Rhinoceros Auklet	1	10/30	Bodega Head	SON	DH, BDP	
Spotted Owl	1	11/4	Salmon Creek Road	SON	BDP	calling
" "	1	10/30	Pine Flat Road	SON	DC	
✓ Short-eared Owl	5+	11/3	Reclamation Rd.	SON	DN	Lakeville Road extension
✓ " " "	1	11/19	Ramal Rd.	SON	RL	
Northern Sawhet Owl	1	11/4	Salmon Creek Road	SON	BDP	calling
Pileated Woodpecker	2	11/5	Near Ursuline High School	SON	C&NK	
✓ Red-naped Sapsucker	1	11/2	Penngrove	SON	RL, Mob	ad. male - RL's yard
✓ Tropical Kingbird	1	11/8	Bodega Head	SON	TL	
Rock Wren	2	11/5	West Butte Rd	SUT	BDP	Sutter Buttes
Canyon Wren	1	10/31	Mt. St. Helena	NAP	BDP, SP	
✓ Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	2	11/8	Bodega Head	SON	DN	
Townsend's Solitaire	1	10/31	Mt. St. Helena	NAP	BDP, SP	
Brown Thrasher	1	11/2	Muddy Hollow	MAR	BDP	netted for banding
✓ Loggerhead Shrike	7	11/21	Ramal Rd.	SON	DA, TE	7 birds in a short stretch
Northern Parula	1	11/30	Bolinas	MAR	KH	male

Observations (continued)

Species	#	Date	Place	County	Who	Notes
✓ Nashville Warbler	1	10/30	Owl Canyon	SON	DH, BDP	
✓ " "	1	11/18	Bodega Marine Lab	SON	DH, DE	
✓ Blk-thrted Blue Warbler	1	11/3	Owl Canyon	SON	DH, BDP	male
Palm Warbler	2	10/28	Las Gallinas Sewer Ponds	MAR	RL	
✓ " "	1	11/2	Bodega Head	SON	DN	
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	3	11/4	Lower Willow Creek Rd	SON	BDP	
Fox Sparrow	few	10/31	Mt. St. Helena	NAP	BDP, SP	Gray-headed race
Swamp Sparrow	2	11/4	Lower Willow Creek Rd	SON	BDP	
White-throated Sparrow	2	11/7+	Healdsburg	SON	EKW	Feeders
" " "	2	11/22	Penngrove	SON	RL	Rick LeBaudor's yard
✓ Lapland Longspur	?	11/3	Doran Park	SON	BDP	heard only
Red-winged Blackbird	Ks	10/27	Ramal Rd.	SON	DN	Thousands of 'em
✓ Tricolored Blackbird	few	10/27	Ramal Rd.	SON	DN	
Yellow-headed Blackbird	1	11/5	Sycamore Slough Rd.	COL	BDP	Butte Sink
✓ Hooded Oriole	1	12/1	Sonoma	SON	AC	Im. male at a hummingbird feeder

Observers:

Dick Ashford, Betty Burrridge, Tyler Cannon-Nelson, Anthony Cermack, Neil Clark, Drew Cronk, Lew Edmondson, Ted Elliot, Doug Ellis, Keith Hansen Deyea Harper, Dave Hoffman, Chris & Nancy Kuhn, Terry Law, Rick Lebaudour, Richard Merris, Gerry Mugele, Kathy Mugele, Mike Nelligan, Clyde & Wini Nelson, Dan Nelson, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Sally Parmeter, Rich Stallcup, Alan Wight, Ned Wynn,

Local Birding Guide Now Available -

RROS member Kris Carter's *A Guide to Finding Birds in Mendocino County*, is now ready for your Christmas shopping. 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 tip for travelers -

This past fall, as migration approached, two elderly vultures doubted they would be up to making the trip south, so they decided to go by commercial airline. While they checked their baggage, the attendant noticed that they were each carrying a dead raccoon.

"Do you wish to check the raccoons through as luggage?" she asked.

"No, thanks," replied the vultures. "They're carrion."

(yeah, we know that vultures don't vocalize...but...)

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 Burridge, 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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