

# Kite Tales



Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 34 Number III

November 1999

## Coming Attractions

### **November 11th, Thursday, 7:30 PM - General Meeting Darwin Hall, Room 207 - Sonoma State University, Cotati**

This month's program takes us to the Camargue of France's Provence region and to the Spanish Pyrenees. Come join Bryant and Diane Hichwa (plus a few other RROS personalities) as they lead us on a memorable trip through these scenic regions rich in history, architecture and unique cuisines plus birding in two of the best areas in Europe. Truly a program you won't want to miss.

### **November 20th, Saturday, 8:30 AM Field Trip to Shollenberger Park, Petaluma**

Meet in the parking lot at Shollenberger Park in southern Petaluma at 8:30 AM. The Park entrance is off of South McDowell Boulevard opposite Cader Lane. We will walk the loop and see what we can find. This is a good spot for gulls, ducks, and shorebirds. After Shollenberger Park, we will drive down to the marina near the Petaluma River mouth to see what's there.

Bring binoculars, scopes, field guides, water, and warm clothes. Rain is a possibility, plan accordingly. If you expect that you'll continue birding with the group after leaving Shollenberger Park, be sure to bring a lunch. Leader is Alan Wight. Call Alan at 763-8572 if you have any questions.

### **November 20th, Saturday - Observations Deadline**

The 20th is our 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@pon.net](mailto:ekwynn@pon.net)

### **November 26th, Friday - Kite Tales Deadline**

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

### **November 18th -21st, Thursday through Sunday Central Valley Bird Symposium - Stockton Radisson Hotel**

Learn how to identify our regional resident birds, where to see them and what optics you may need. Master the subtle differences between the "western" flycatchers. Learn everything about habitat, conservation efforts, distribution and life history of resident species in the Central Valley. Capture a bird's beauty or behavior on film, paper or canvas. Plant a birder's garden that will be enjoyed year round. You can find answers, knowledge, tips, "tools of the trade" and more by attending the 3rd Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium. There will be field trips, exhibits, seminars, workshops and a birder's market. Renowned speakers, artists, field trip leaders, local birders and others will be there to help you and share their expertise. For information call 800 950-1987 or you can visit the Web Site: <http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/5954/BirdingSymposium2.html>

**Good Birding Spots #10****Sugarloaf Ridge State Park***by Ted Eliot*

The time of year I enjoy Sugarloaf Park most is the spring. This is when bird song heralds the return of so many old feathered friends.

There is a walk and a hike to attain maximum pleasure as a birder. The walk is a loop of about 2 miles along the Meadow Trail and back through the campground on the Hillside Trail. Black-headed Grosbeaks, Western Tanagers, Warbling and Cassin's Vireos, Western Wood-pewees and Pacific-slope and Ash-throated Flycatchers, Lazuli Buntings, Northern Orioles, Wilson's and Orange-crowned Warblers, Black Phoebes and Chipping Sparrows, among many others, will entertain you.

The hike is along the Meadow Trail and then up onto the ridge on Brushy Peaks Trail. One can keep going to the summit of Bald Mountain and back down the Bald Mountain Trail or descend by a shorter route down the Red Mountain and Vista Trails. In either case, this hike takes at least 4 hours with some steep inclines and often over exposed, brushy terrain. So take a lunch and plenty of water and wear strong hiking footwear, a hat and sunscreen. Your rewards will be Mountain Quail calling and, if you are really lucky, sometimes on the trail, California Thrasher, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Black-throated Gray Warbler. You may also hear (if you are not aurally challenged as I am) and maybe see Rufous-crowned and Sage Sparrows. Other birds of such terrain, like California and Spotted Towhees, Wrentits, Bushtits, Scrub-Jays and Bewick's Wrens, are abundant.

On all these trails, you will see or hear most of our woodland woodpeckers, including Pileated, see Barn, Tree and Violet-green Swallows and, if you look up every so often, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered, Cooper's and Sharp-shinned Hawks and Kestrels.

An evening visit in the spring is also rewarding. A short walk out on the Meadow Trail can produce Pygmy and Great Horned Owls and Poor-wills.

I must confess that I have not birded Sugarloaf in the summer because it is too hot, nor in the fall, because there are better places to go for the fall migration. But come late winter, you will find me there not infrequently early in the morning looking for the brilliant colors and listening for the joyful sounds of our returning birds.

**Up from the Egg***by Ogden Nash***The Confessions of a Nuthatch Avider**

I aimed to be one, but I missed.  
 Since I'm both myopic and astigmatic,  
 My aimed turned out to be erratic,  
 And I, bespectacled and binocular,  
 Exposed myself to comment jocular.  
 We don't need too much birdlore, do we,  
 To tell a flamingo from a towhee;  
 Yet I cannot, and never will,  
 Unless the silly bird stands still.  
 And there's no enlightenment in a tour  
 Of ornithological literature.  
 Is yon strange creature a common chickadee,  
 Or a migrant alouette from Picardy?  
 You rush to consult your Nature guide  
 And inspect the gallery inside,  
 But a bird in the open never looks  
 Like its picture in the birdie books -  
 Or if it once did, it has changed its plumage  
 And plunges you back into ignorant gloomage.  
 That is why I sit here growing old by inches  
 Watching the clock instead of finches,  
 But sometimes I visualize in my gin  
 The Audubon that I audibin.  
 Bird watchers top my honors list.

**Field Trip Report**

**Bodega Harbor area** October 9th  
- by Alan Wight

Bodega Harbor was cloaked in fog when we arrived in the morning, but by afternoon the fog had lifted and it was a beautiful, sunny day. Landbird activity was low and we didn't find any vagrants, but the day had some nice highlights including great views of a single Common Tern perched with many Forster's Terns, at least 22 Red Knots, a late pair of Caspian Terns (adult with juvenile), a viewable Virginia Rail, several Band-tailed Pigeons, and a nice look at a Lincoln's Sparrow. Participants were Richard Hurley, Don and Louise Johnston, Ian Morrison, Mike Parmeter, Rhio Reigh, Ann Stone, Don Toms, and Alan Wight.

Birds observed: Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, American White Pelican, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Brandt's Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Scaup sp., Surf Scoter, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, California Quail, Virginia Rail, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Killdeer, Black Oystercatcher, American Avocet, Willet, Whimbrel, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Black Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Western Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Heermann's Gull, Ring-billed Gull, California Gull, Western Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Caspian Tern, Common Tern, Forster's Tern, Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Band-tailed Pigeon, Anna's Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Black Phoebe, Scrub Jay, Common Raven, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Bewick's Wren, House Wren, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, European Starling, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, California

Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, House Finch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

**Swans Sightings Wanted**

The Trumpeter Swan Society and US Fish and Wildlife Service wishes to receive reports of Trumpeter swan sightings again this winter. Please watch for Trumpeters and report sightings to Rod Hug (phone and address below), and he will pass them on.

You can also find a report form and check list on the internet at:

<http://fog.ccsf.cc.ca.us/~jmorlan/trswans.htm>.

Also at this site you'll find Trumpeter photos and calls

For assistance or more information please call:

Rod Hug  
(707) 539-3413  
4603 Bridle Trail  
Santa Rosa, Ca 95409

**31 Flavors of Robins**

Two robins were resting in a tree, were overcome with hunger after a night flying their annual migratory route. Despite a cat lounging under a shrub nearby, the two landed on the lush lawn and began to hunt. They ignored the risk and easily found grubs and worms aplenty. After they ate their fill, they continued to gorge themselves.

Spying a bush nearby, festooned with bright red berries they proceeded to fly over and continued stuffing their crops until neither was able to fly back to their perch in the tree.

So they returned to the lawn and basked in the warm morning sunshine.

Soon they were dozing. It was then that the big feral tom cat snuck up, effortlessly caught them both and gobbled them up. As he sat licking his chops after his meal, he thought:

"I love baskin' robins."

**Observations**

<u>Species</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Red-necked Grebe	1	9/23	Duncan's Mill, Russ Riv.	SON	DB, PC	
Black-footed Albatross	145	9/25	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Laysan Albatross	1	9/25	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Northern Fulmar	450	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Pink-footed Shearwater	95	9/25	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Flesh-footed Shearwater	3	10/1	Offshore	SON	DN	
Buller's Shearwater	975	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel	15	9/25	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
" " " "	10	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
" " " "	1100	10/5	West of Cordell Bank		DN	
Ashy Storm-Petrel	2	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Cattle Egret	17	10/10	Laguna de Santa Rosa	SON	JR	
Grtr-wht Fronted Goose	flk	10/3	Bodega Harbor	SON	RS	
Mandarin Duck	1	Sept	Spring Lake	SON	PL	
Garganey	1	10/16	Rodman Slough, Clr Lake	LAK	RS, JW, M.Ob.	present week+
Redhead	1	10/19	Lakeville Sewage ponds	SON	KF	
Bald Eagle	2	10/23	Rodman Slough, Clr Lake	LAK	GM, LR	adults
Cooper's Hawk	1	10/7	Oakmont	SON	BG	at yard Birdbath
Broad-winged Hawk	4+	10/8-9	Marin Headlands	MAR	M.ob.	
Rough-legged Hawk	1	9/23	N. Duncan's Landing	SON	DB, PC et. al.	
Peregrine Falcon	1	10/28	Doran Park	SON	DB, PC	
Prairie Falcon	1	10/3	Lakeville Hwy	SON	KG	
Spotted Sandpiper	1	9/19	Spring Lake	SON	JB, BG	
Baird's Sandpiper	1	9/28	Abbotts Lagoon	MAR	TE	
Stilt Sandpiper	1	9/23	Bolinas Lagoon	MAR	TE, DA	
Red Phalarope	500+	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
South Polar Skua	5	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Pomarine Jaeger	18	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Parasitic Jaeger	15	9/25	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Bonaparte's Gull	1	10/19	Lakeville Sewage Ponds	SON	KF	
Sabine's Gull	125	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Elegant Tern	3	10/17	Bodega Harbor	SON	KW	
Arctic Tern	12	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
White-winged Tern	1	Sept	Moonglow Dairy	MNT	DA, TE, M.ob.	Sept thru Oct
Xantus' Murrelet	5+	10/5	West of Cordell Bank		DN	<i>hypoleuca race</i>
Tufted Puffin	1	9/30	Offshore	SON	Mollymawk	
Black-chinned Hummer	1	10/28	Bodega Lodge Shrubs	SON	DB, PC, R&LR	
Pileated Woodpecker	1	9/28	Oakmont yard	SON	BG	
Red-throated Pipit	2	10/24	N. Beach, Pt. Reyes	MAR	DA	
Nashville Warbler	1	10/3	Owl Canyon	SON	DN, JL	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	1	9/24	Marine Lab Entrance	SON	TE	
Blackpoll Warbler	1	10/3	Marine Lab Entrance	SON	DN, RM	
Connecticut Warbler	1	10/3-5	Pt. Reyes Lighthouse trees	MAR	RS, M.Ob.	
White-throated Sparrow	1	10/9	Furlong Rd.	SON	NB	arrival
" " " "	1	10/22	Wikiup, yard	SON	B&BR	
Black-headed Grosbeak	1	10/4	Bodega Dunes	SON	NC	same bird as last winter?

**Observations *continued***

**Observers:** Dick Ashford, Dennis Beall, Dennis Beall, Nikka Bingel, Janet Bosshard, Pam Conley, Nancy Conzett, Ted Elliot, Kathy Francone, Betty Groce, Kevin Guse, Peter Leveque, John Luther, Roger Marlowe, Mollymawk Offshore Adventures, Gerry Mugele, Dan Nelson, Bob & Bertha Rains, Ron & Laverne Richert, Lilly Reichert, Jane Robinson, Rich Stallcup, Jerry White, Ken Wilson

**Parrot Invasion**

Karen Mabb and Kimball Garrett organized a survey of the parrots that have become resident in the San Gabriel Valley. Here are some preliminary results of the parrot count which was conducted in the late afternoon and evening of 21 September 1999. The plan was to cover the known major roost sites in Temple City, and also to station observers at other sites throughout the San Gabriel Valley to determine numbers, times and flight directions of commuting birds and look for other possible roost sites.

Preliminary results suggest that there were very few Amazona parrots away from the Temple City roost sites; it was not possible to confirm the existence of any additional roosts. There were relatively few sightings of "commuting" parrots away from the Temple City roosts (the few "remote" sightings were from central Pasadena and Monrovia).

The count of Amazona parrots in the main Temple City roost areas was approximately 1,150. The birds roosted in four main areas: Golden West Ave. south of Live Oak Ave.; vicinity of Live Oak Oak; vicinity of Pal Mal and Live Oak; and vicinity of Tyler and Freer (technically in sw. Monrovia). The vast majority of the birds identified to species were Red-crowned Parrots (*Amazona viridigenalis*), but many Lilac-crowned Parrots (*A. finschi*) and a few Red-lored Parrots (*A. autumnalis*) were also found.

An estimated 200 Aratinga parakeets were found roosting near Tyler and Freer in sw. Monrovia and (earlier) feeding near the Arcadia Par 3 Golf Course (west side of Peck Pit). These birds were not identified to species, but previous coverage here suggests that about 80% are Mitred and 20% Red-masked. The only other parakeet species reported was Rose-ringed (a few in Temple City and Sierra Madre).

Efforts will continue to fine-tune results from this count, and use the successes and failures to come up with a better strategy for a future count. Expect an announcement about another parrot count sometime during the winter of 1999-2000.

By the way, the Pasadena Audubon Society web site now has a page about parrots in California, with an on-line reporting form. Please feel free submit sightings. The parrot site is:

[http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ca/pasadena/parrot\\_project/index.htm](http://www.audubon.org/chapter/ca/pasadena/parrot_project/index.htm)

**Projector Fund Grows**

At our October meeting, President Deyea repeated the plea for donations for RROS's own slide projector. We've managed to get by with borrowed equipment for over three decades and now, finally, have our own Kodak Carousel. Donations as of October 14th totalled a bit over \$200; so we're over half way there.

**Important Miscellaneous Tidbits**

Were you aware that:  
2000 mockingbirds = two kilomockingbirds

Have you heard about the newly discovered red-phase Western Screech Owl? It was found in San Francisco sittin' on the dock of the bay. It is not yet clear if this is a color morph or a distinct species. If it turns out to be a species, official at AOU are not sure what the common name will be, but the taxonomic designation has already been determined: *Otus Redding*.

(Note: Although *Kite Tales* does not intend to exclude anyone; you may have some difficulty appreciating the foregoing if you are now eligible for Medicare.)

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 207 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.

**1999 - 2000 Officers:**

**President:** Deyea Harper, 2310 Northwood Dr., Santa Rosa CA 95404 -2245 707 542-1542  
E-Mail: JHarperTrustee@compuserve.com

**Vice President:** Betty Groce, 411 Trail Ridge Ct., Santa Rosa CA 95409-6482 707 539-8664  
E-Mail: blgroce @ Prodigy.net

**Secretary:** Benjamin D. Parmeter, 2500 Emerson St., Napa CA 94558-4611 707 255-6757

**Treasurer:** Mike Nelligan, 124 Wikiup Drive, Santa Rosa CA 95403-7700 707 576-1475  
E-Mail: bandm@monitor.net

**1999 - 2000 Chairs:**

**Field Trips:** Alan Wight, 19 Wooddale Dr., Petaluma CA 94952 707 763-8572  
E-Mail: shwand@sonic.net

**Observations:** Ned Wynn, 129-B Powell Ave., Healdsburg CA 95448-3413 707 431-8412  
E-Mail: ekwynn@pon.net

**Social:** Barbara Gumtow, 7915 Bella Vista Dr., Sebastopol CA 95472-2701 707 823-7869

**Christmas Count:** Doug Ellis, PO Box 776, Kenwood CA 95452-0776

**Good Birding Spots:** Ted Eliot, 5850 Grove St., Sonoma CA 95476-6095 707 935-3410  
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