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Kite Tales



Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 34 Number VIII

April 2000

Coming Attractions

April 13th, Thursday, 7:30 PM - General Meeting
Darwin Hall, Room 207 - Sonoma State University, Cotati

A Visit to Thailand

Our own inimitable Mike Parmeter will take us along on his recent eighteen days of birding in exotic Thailand. Mike, co-author of "Birds of Sonoma County", 1978 published in association with RROS is now in the 4th printing, is an ace birder. He also possesses extensive identification skills of native plants, butterflies and dragonflies. Thailand is noted for its beautiful dancing girls as well as its beautiful and unusual birds so we'll eagerly await Mike's presentation. Did he restrict his viewing to the birds?

April 15th, Saturday, 7:30 / 9:00 AM
Field Trip to Mitchell Canyon, Contra Costa County

This beautiful canyon on the slopes of Mt. Diablo is a wonderful place to observe newly arrived spring migrants. In addition, it is a magnet for less common migrating birds such as Hammond's Flycatcher, Calliope Hummingbird, Nashville Warbler, and Hermit Warbler. Along with the birds comes a nice variety of butterflies, reptiles, and wildflowers. Meet at 7:30 am at the Petaluma Park-and-Ride for carpooling or meet at the Mitchell Canyon parking lot at 9:00 am. The Petaluma Park-and-Ride is located on Lakeville Highway in Petaluma just west of US101. To get to Mitchell Canyon, take Highway 680 south to Walnut Creek. Take the Ygnacio Valley Road exit east. Once on Ygnacio Valley Road, drive east 7.7 miles and turn south on Clayton Road. Drive one mile and turn right onto Mitchell Canyon Road. Follow this road for 1.6 miles to the end. Bring binoculars, hiking shoes, water, and a lunch. We will walk about three miles total at a leisurely pace. Heavy rain cancels. Leader is Alan Wight. Contact Alan at 763-8572 with any questions.

April 20th, Thursday - 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

April 25th, Tuesday - Kite Tales Deadline

Send announcements, articles, complaints, 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

June 9th, Friday - Monday June 12th
RROS Field Trip to Kern River Preserve and Surrounding Area.

See page 5 of this issue of *Kite Tales* for details.

Good Birding Spots #15**Old Toll Road/Highland Springs***by Mike Nelligan*

The Old Toll Road between Hopland and Kelseyville traverses an area of unique habitats with no bird list yet developed, but with the potential for an interesting and varied list. In talking with birders, few have expressed knowledge of this area or its bird populations.

The Old Toll Road is reached from Hwy 101 in Hopland. A 45 minute drive North on Hwy 101 from Coddington in Santa Rosa brings you to the intersection with Hwy. 175. Turn East onto Hwy. 175 and continue about 3 miles through the beautiful valley of oak trees and grape vines, over the Russian River to Old Toll Road. Turn right onto the Old Toll Road just before Hwy. 175 begins climbing eastward through the hills.

This must have been the site where the toll was collected when the road was private. Reset your odometer here. A gradual upgrade begins through oak woodlands overlooking the vineyards of the valley you have just crossed. Look for the usual oak-woodland species: nuthatches, woodpeckers, flycatchers, warblers etc. At 4.6 miles the climb has leveled. Look for a farm pond on the left and raptors hunting nearby. At 5.3 miles you'll find an open grassland area which is partially fenced. Look for grassland birds that are fence sitters including Grasshopper and Savannah Sparrows and also Western Bluebirds and Loggerhead Shrikes. Another half mile (odometer 5.8) the pavement ends, the road has a shale surface and the climb resumes. From this point your journey is not for the faint of heart as it becomes narrow (one way in places) and winding. The dominant trees are manzanita, madrone and buckeye. At 7.1 a pull-out provides an expansive North-South view of the surrounding hills. Spend a few minutes here watching for raptors, especially golden eagles (maybe even a Goshawk?) and the area looks appropriate for Mountain Quail. At 8 miles the climb continues and wild grapes dominate the roadside while chaparral covers the hillside. What chaparral dwelling birds might we find here? At 9.2 you'll begin to notice conifers and the road is still climbing. At 10.2 the conifers are dense: look for a pull-out to stop and listen for Blue grouse. On the left at 10.4 there is access to

the BLM Shelton Creek Recreation Area campground and picnic area. The campground is about a 2 mile detour but worth it. From the road there's a spectacular view to the West with the valley below and Hopland in the distance. The viewpoint is also appropriate for raptor viewing. A small creek (Shelton Creek?) runs through the campground which is dominated by very tall oak trees. Look for Olive-sided Flycatchers in the trees at the right time of year. Back on the main road, at 12.1, conifers are on the north-facing slope and chaparral is on the south-facing slope. At 14.4 you'll reach the crest, the habitat changes, and so does the name of the road.

Although not marked on the road, on the map the crest appears to be the Lake county line. The name of the road becomes Highland Springs Road, and the riparian habitat that the road follows is created by Highland Springs Creek. At 15.5 look to the right across the creek to a dry hillside and notice the interesting mixture of bay, cypress and maple trees. Look for Black Phoebe at the creek crossing at 15.9 miles. At 17.6 cross the creek again putting the creek on your right and enter an area of mixed hardwoods. Pavement resumes at 19.1 in an area of redbud and gray pine. Look for possible Rock Wren along the left side of the road near a rock quarry.

At 20.0 you'll be at Highland Springs Reservoir. At 21.3 there is the turn-off into the reservoir recreation area. Here you will find rest rooms, a picnic area, and a good view of the reservoir and marsh area. Look for rails, bitterns, waterfowl. Marsh Wrens and Yellow-headed blackbirds. Returning to Highland Springs Road turn right and continue to the intersection with Bell Hill Road. Return to Sonoma County over Mt. St. Helena to the South. An alternative is to pass the intersection with Bell Hill Road and continue on to the intersection with Hwy. 175, at which point you can return to Hopland via 175.

Overall, this is a beautiful outing even if you see no birds. However there are many birds to be found. The best time of year is early spring, on a weekday morning. Allow a minimum of 4 hours more if you want to stop frequently. I have experienced little or no traffic on this drive, but caution is always advised.

Field Trip Report**Bodega Harbor - Salmon Creek Road**

March 18, 2000 Mike Parmeter, leader

A little good weather certainly brings out the birds for Spring birding at Bodega. Mike led a group of eighteen to view 95 species on a beautiful day.

Participants were Linda Allen, Avis Anderson, Terry Babineaux, Nancy Davison, Mel Davison, Ted Eliot, Margaret Flemming, Barb Guntow, Richard Hurley, Don & Louise Johnston, Terry Law, Rick Lebaudour, Richard Rehngren, Carole Sunlight, Wayne Tillay, Don Toms and Ned Wynn.

The following is a list of the species found: Red-throated Loon, Pacific Loon, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Eared Grebe, Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Brandt's Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Black-crowned Night-heron, Brant, Mallard, American Wigeon, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Black Scoter, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Bufflehead, Red-breasted Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, Osprey, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, American Kestrel, Turkey, California Quail, American Coot, Black Oystercatcher, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Black Turnstone, Surf-bird, Sanderling, Western Sandpiper, Dunlin, Short-billed Dowitcher, Mew Gull, California Gull, Herring Gull, Western Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Glaucous Gull (third year bird), Caspian Tern, Common Murre, Great Horned Owl, Anna's Hummingbird, Allen's Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Black Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Violet-green Swallow, Barn Swallow, Steller's Jay, Western Scrub Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Bushtit, Pygmy Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Bewick's Wren, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Western Tanager, American Robin, Wrentit, Northern Mockingbird, European Starling, Solitary Vireo, Hutton's Vireo, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, California Towhee, Song Sparrow, White-

crowned Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Black-bird, Brewer's Blackbird, Purple Finch, House Finch.

Now Time for Killing Swans?

Word reaches us that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has recently released a draft environmental assessment titled: "Proposal to establish operational general swan hunting seasons in the Pacific Flyway."

A public comment period is now open and we have been told it will remain open for at least the next 60 days. One or more public hearings will also probably be held in mid-May.

Copies of the draft EA are available from USFWS/MBMO Pacific Flyway Representative Bob Trost in Portland and can be obtained by phone or email request to his office (phone: 503-231-6162, Robert_Trost@fws.gov).

The scope of this document is much broader than simply determining future swan hunt frameworks. In addition to proposing to permanently authorize harvest of migrant trumpeters in Utah, Nevada, and Montana, this document will also establish USFWS direction for their future efforts to reduce the vulnerability of Canadian and US nesting trumpeters in the western US.

Awed by the Travelers

Ted Eliot

All of us birders know that one of the wonderful and miraculous sights we are privileged to see is migration. Anyone who would have been at Shollenberger Park with me the afternoon of March 20 would have shared with me my wonder at the hundreds of migrating swallows battling a headwind, fighting their way over the marshes and ponds, rising, falling, circling to fly ever northward. Five species were there (Barn, Cliff, Rough-winged, Tree and Violet-Green) to remind me of the enormous difficulties these small birds face as they try to attain their breeding grounds. I saw a similar movement of swallows against even stronger winds the next day at Grizzly Island. And on the 24th, I had a new "backyard bird" on Sonoma Mountain: an Osprey beating his way steadily north over the ridge of the mountain, headed for, maybe, Alaska. Aren't we lucky to be aware of such sights!

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	2/20	Bodega Harbor Entrance	SON	DN	
" " "	1	3/1	Bodega Harbor	SON	BG	
" " "	1	3/8	Pt Reyes Fish Docks	MAR	BG	
Black-footed Albatross	30+	3/19	Cordell Bank		DN	
Laysan Albatross	15+	3/19	Cordell Bank		DN	
Mandarin Duck	1	3/1	Lake Ralphine	SON	BG	Drake
Blue-winged Teal	2	3/1	Shollenberger Park	SON	BG	Pair
Canvasback	?	3/1	Carmody Road Ponds	SON	BG	
Redhead	?	3/1	Shollenberger Park	SON	BG	
Ring-necked Duck	18	3/6	Chileno Valley	SON	DN, TCN	
Black Scoter	?	3/8	Pt Reyes Fish Docks	MAR	BG	
Bald Eagle	1?	Feb	Lake Hennessey	NAP	BW	
" "	2	3/3	West side Fitch Mtn	SON	DN	1 ad, 1 imm.
Cooper's Hawk	1	2/25	Wynn's yard Healdsburg	SON	DCW, EKW	
" "	1	2/26	near Bodega Farm Pond	SON	KW	
	1	3/3	near Annadel State Park	SON	DN	
Golden Eagle	1	2/26	near Bodega Farm Pond	SON	KW	
Merlin	1	3/1	Rural backroad	SON	BG	
Sandhill Crane	1	3/1	Las Gallinas ponds	MAR	SC	
Snowy Plover	?	3/1	Doran Park	SON	BG	
Wandering Tattler	?	3/1	Bodega Head	SON	BG	
Glaucous Gull	1	Mar	Porto Bodega Marina	SON	DB, LP, Mob	3rd year bird
" "	1	3/12	Shollenberger Park	SON	AW	2nd Winter
Long-eared Owl	1	3/5	Levitz Warehouse, RP	SON	DN, DH	
White-throated Swift	4	3/4	Rush Creek Marsh	MAR	AW	
Rufous Hummingbird	1	2/28	Bodega Dunes CG	SON	DA, TE	
Allen's Hummingbird	1	2/26	Owl Canyon, Bodega	SON	KW	
" "	1	3/3	Healdsburg; Hidden Acres	SON	DN	
" "	1	3/13	Oakmont	SON	BG	
Pileated Woodpecker	1	3/3	Wilshire Dr, Santa Rosa	SON	DN	
Plumbeous Vireo	1	3/15	Owl Canyon, Bodega	SON	DB, LP, MAS	
Cassin's Vireo	1	2/26	Owl Canyon, Bodega	SON	KW	
Rock Wren	1	3/8	I St. Extension Petaluma	SON	DN, TCN	
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	1	2/21	Shiloh Park	SON	D&KB	
White-throated Sparrow	1	3/1	Tonascia's yard, S. Rosa	SON	BG	
" " "	2	Winter	Gehricke Road, Sonoma	SON	KN	
" " "	1	3/2	Mark West Creek	SON	GR, DN	ad.
" " "	1	3/4	Post St., Petaluma	SON	DN	imm.
" " "	1	3/5	Petaluma Feeder	SON	CN, DN	
Indigo Bunting	1	3/21	Santa Rosa Feeder	SON	PG, BP	ad. Male
Tricolored Blackbird	?	3/1	Carmody Rd.	SON	BG	

Observers:

Dick Ashford, Dennis Beall, Kathy & Dave Biggs, Tyler Cannon-Nelson, Sarah Cornelius, Ted Eliot, Paul Gravel, Betty Groce, Diane Hichwa, Madrone Audubon Society, Karen Nagel, Clyde Nelson, Dan Nelson, Bill Payne, Linda Petruvias, Gail Roper, Alan Wight, Brian Wilson, Ken Wilson, Donna Wynn (DCW), Ned Wynn (EKW)

RROS Fieldtrip to Kern River Preserve

Friday, June 9 - Monday, June 12

Join us for a long weekend of birding at the Kern River Preserve and surrounding area. Kern River Preserve is located about an hour east of Bakersfield at the south end of the Sierra Nevada. We will be led by Bob Barnes, State Director of Bird Conservation & Kern Valley Outreach for Audubon California. Bob is very knowledgeable about the birds and birding locations in this area.

We will visit the Kern River Preserve (extensive riparian habitat) as well as surrounding mountain and desert areas. Bird possibilities include Yellow-billed Cuckoo (hopefully just arriving on their breeding grounds at the time of our visit), Summer Tanager, Willow Flycatcher, Indigo Bunting, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Tricolored Blackbird, Scott's Oriole, Cactus Wren, and Ladder-backed Woodpecker. Participants in this fieldtrip may come for all four days, or for only a subset of the four days, as desired. We will visit Kern River Preserve on Saturday and/or Sunday. The cost of the trip is membership in Audubon-California's Friends of the Kern River Preserve (\$20 per participant minimum). Additionally, Kern River Preserve T-shirts designed by Keith Hansen will be on sale (\$12) for those who are interested.

There are a number of motels and inns near the Kern River Preserve in Kernville and Wofford Heights. I have arranged for a group discount at the Barewood Motel in Wofford Heights. Double occupancy rate for a room is \$75 per night (minus the group discount which is to be determined). The phone number is (760) 376-1910. Ask for Lori or Mercedes and mention Redwood Region Ornithological Society (or RROS) for the group discount. This motel has only ten rooms (and three already reserved as of 3/24) so please make reservations soon. If this motel becomes full, please contact me for other options. Information for car and RV camping is available by calling me.

This fieldtrip will be limited to a maximum of 25 participants in order to preserve the quality of the trip. Please call me to sign up for this trip (or to get more information). The first 25 people will go on the trip.

-- Alan Wight 707 763-8572

RROS Nominating Committee Report for 2000-2001

President:	Betty Groce
Vice-president	Ken Wilson
Secretary	Bertha Rains
Treasurer	Mike Nelligan

Submitted by Bertha Rains, Avis Anderson, Olive Corey

★ Vote at the April meeting! ★

Cornell Lab of Ornithology Needs your Help

Allison Wells, of Cornell's Ornithology Lab asks Kite Tales to share the following with you.

I want to share with you information about a very important bird conservation initiative you can volunteer for. It's called Birds in Forested Landscapes (BFL). BFL is working to determine the effects of disturbance from recreational development and forest fragmentation on the breeding success of Cooper's and Sharp-shinned hawks and on seven species of forest thrushes (Wood, Hermit, Swainson's, Bicknell's, Gray-cheeked, and Varied as well as Veery), several of which are experiencing population declines. You select your own study sites in a forest near you, then census birds on at least two visits. Results from a similar study, Project Tanager, have been written up as a publication now available from the Lab, called "Land Managers Guide to Improving Habitat for Scarlet Tanagers and Other Forest-Interior Birds."

BFL is a great way to gain "in the field" experience. We send you all research material at no charge. If you can help with either or both of these projects, please e-mail me, Allison Wells, at amw25@cornell.edu.

This is the fourth year of the study and last year we had only 8 participants in all of California. Although only a few of the BFL species breed in CA, we need as much data about them as possible in order to determine the effects of forest fragmentation and recreational land use.

Thanks, as always, for your support of the Lab's work.

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 707 542-6641
E-Mail: blgroce@Proc

Secretary: Benjamin D. Parmeter, 2500 Emerson St., Napa CA 94558-4611 707 252-2222

Treasurer: Mike Nelligan, 124 Wikiup Drive, Santa Rosa CA 95403-7700 707 572-7700
E-Mail: bandm@monit

1999 - 2000 Chairs:

Field Trips: Alan Wight, 19 Wooddale Dr., Petaluma CA 94952 707 763-8
E-Mail: shward@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 707 935-3410

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