

# Kite Tales



Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 35 Number I

September 2000

## Coming Attractions

### September 14th, Thursday, 6:00 PM - General Meeting and Fall Potluck Jack London State Historical Park, Glen Ellen

Along with your utterly delightful and life promoting nutritious potluck contribution, please bring your own plate, utensils and a serving spoon.

There will be no entrance fee and Supervising Ranger Greg Hayes has generously extended normal park hours to accommodate our meeting and a following short bird walk. Come prepared to share the highlights of your summer bird sightings.

The address for Jack London State Historic Park is 2400 London Ranch Road in Glen Ellen. The most direct access is via Arnold Drive which may be reached via Highway 116, Highway 12 or Warm Springs Road.. Follow Arnold Drive into Glen Ellen Village west of Sonoma Creek. London Ranch Road which takes you up the hill to the west of downtown Glen Ellen intersects Arnold Drive adjacent to London Lodge..

### September 16th, Saturday, All Day Long The Point Reyes Bird Observatory Birdathon for 2000

It's time again for Point Reyes Bird Observatory's big fund raising event of the year, an effort which certainly deserves our support. If you aren't already a counter, call PRBO at 415 868-1221 to sign up. If you can't participate in the field you can still sponsor an individual or a team. Luckily again this year, by special request, *Kite Tales* invites you to sponsor editor, Gerry Mugele and Team MewGull. Be sure to call at 707 766-8682 to make your pledge or to join the team. Our spies report that there will likely be some *other* team counting in Sonoma County too, so you *could* offer to sponsor Mike Parmeter (707 255-6757) and the Gray Jays although it will probably be much more expensive for you on a per species basis, and of course better for PRBO.

### September 17th, Sunday, 7:30 A.M. Field Trip to Point Reyes National Seashore

Join us for our traditional end of Summer trip to this wonderful birding spot. Meet at 7:30 am at the Petaluma Park-and-Ride (located at Highway 101 and Lakeville Highway just west of Highway 101) for carpooling. We will be searching the usual spots for fall migrants and vagrants. Bring binoculars, spotting scopes, field guides, lunch, water, and warm clothing. Leader is Alan Wight. Call Alan at 763-8572 if you have any questions.

### September 20th, Wednesday - 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)

### September 25th, Monday - 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](mailto:mewgull@ix.netcom.com)

**Good Birding Spots #16****Clear Lake and Anderson Marsh***by Jim Tonascia*

A good one day birding trip to Clear Lake may include one or more of three easily birded parks.

From Santa Rosa, take Calistoga Road to the junction with Highway 128 a little north of Calistoga. Turn left on Highway 128 and go about one half mile to Tubbs Lane where you'll turn right and proceed a mile and a half to Highway 29. Turn left onto 29 and go over Mt. St. Helena until you get to Lower Lake (30 miles). Continue straight ahead 1 mile to Anderson Marsh entrance on the left.

Park in the lot. Maps are available at the Park Headquarters (in one of the historic ranch buildings). Several easy trails emanate from the Headquarters; one is for handicapped. Watch for the rare Bald Eagle that winters in the park. Peregrine Falcons, also considered rare, can be seen here.

Other birds found in this area include Great Blue Herons, Red-shouldered Hawks, Mourning Doves, Great Horned Owls, Anna's Hummingbirds, Western Bluebirds, House and Purple Finches, and all three kinds of Goldfinches. Anderson Marsh is open from Wednesday through Sunday, 10 am - 5 pm.

On leaving Anderson Marsh, go right to the stop sign in Lower Lake (about 1 mile). Turn right onto Highway 29, go 7.7 miles to Soda Bay Road. (Highway 281). Continue 6.9 miles to a split in the road with a stop sign and take Soda Bay Rd. to the left.

Beautiful views of the lake will be on your right. The entrance to Clear Lake State Park will be 3.8 miles from the split in the road. Turn right into the park (fee required). Bird lists and maps are available at the toll gate and visitor center.

Established in the 1940's with a gift of 300 acres from Fred and Nellie Dorn, Clear Lake State Park is a refuge and nesting place for many varieties of waterfowl. Wood Ducks and Osprey nest in the trees, and Western Grebes perform their dramatic courtship rituals and build nests of floating

grasses just offshore. Other birds found in the area include Pied-billed Grebes, Great Blue Herons, a variety of Gulls, California Quail, Mourning Doves, Western Scrub Jays, Steller's Jays, Lesser and American Goldfinches, Cooper's Hawks, Great Horned Owls, Bushtits, at least three species of Blackbirds, including Yellow-headed, Turkey Vultures, California Thrashers, both Kinglets, Swallows, Nuthatches, Black-headed and Evening Grosbeaks and all the expected flycatchers with an abundance of Ash-throated.

Over 150 bird species are found in the Clear Lake Basin.

Leave the State Park, by turning to the right onto Soda Bay Road once again. Go 2.1 miles, then turn right on Park Drive to Lake Side Park. Park in the lot for the launching ramp. Look for Yellow-headed Blackbirds in the trees and the dancing Western Grebes on the lake. It is better to avoid weekends because of the racing boats scaring the birds. White Pelicans with the breeding lump on their bill can be seen in season. Look for Hooded Mergansers in the Lagoon. A rookery for Great Blue Heron and Double-crested Cormorants and a nesting Great Horned Owl can be seen North of the Corinthian Bay subdivision.

Proceed back to Soda Bay Rd., turn right and stay on Soda Bay Rd. to Highway 29. Two choices from here are to go left on Highway 29 and retrace the route to Santa Rosa or go straight ahead on Highway 175 to Hopland and take 101 to Santa Rosa.

**Banking Your Life Birds**

The BOU (British Ornithology Union) indicates that they now consider the Common Teal, *anas crecca*, (what National Geographic field guide calls the Eurasian subspecies of the Green-winged Teal) and the Green-winged Teal, *A. crecca-carolinensis*, to be two different, distinct species.

Although there is no current indication that the AOU is going to follow the BOU, you might want to make the extra effort to see Common Teal the next time that one shows up in our area. You can be ready when the split is official; you'll have that extra life bird on your list.

**RROS Loses a Founding Member**

AUGUST 7, 2000

The birding community has lost a dear friend and beloved mentor with the recent passing of Dr. Jack Arnold. A California native raised in the Central Valley town of Coalinga, he studied biology at Fresno State University, earned his Masters Degree at the University California Berkeley in 1934, and his Doctorate in Ornithology from Cornell University in 1938.

During WWII, while in the U. S. Army in the European theater, he was able to continue his passion for birding, and one of his favorite war stories was to recount his first sighting of a Wall Creeper, on a castle on Lake Geneva in Switzerland.

He was the first scientist hired by Sonoma State University when it opened in 1961. It was he who hired the scientific staff and designed and set up the School of Natural Sciences. He had full time tenure until he retired in 1976, then continued teaching part time and curating his vertebrate collection until he sustained a serious injury at SSU about 3 years ago.

He had long been active at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, having been named a Fellow in 1970. He continued his association there, which included working with the bird and mammal specimen collections and even accompanying travel groups, until shortly before his accident.

A long time member of Madrone Audubon Society, he taught a very popular and demanding Ornithology course at SSU attended by many local Audubon members. He is fondly remembered as a gentle, patient teacher who expected a maximum effort from each student.

As a founder and patron of Redwood Region Ornithological Society, he did much to enhance the knowledge and skills of local birders.

Almost everyone who knew him has a favorite Jack Arnold story. One he often told on himself occurred while he was on a field trip in Mexico collecting small mammals. One morning as he was

preparing to preserve a mouse on an outside table his attention was diverted briefly but just long enough for a Steller's Jay to swoop down and make off with his intended scientific specimen.

Nancy Conzett of Bodega Bay recalls frequently meeting Jack and his trusty old, well-worn camper truck out at Doran Park. Invariably there would be an invitation to get in out of the wind, and to enjoy a cup of hot tea, or hot chocolate and a cookie. Nancy's dog Shala was always included, of course.

Former student (from 30 years ago) Earle Cummings remembers Jack sharing one of his happiest memories from graduate school, which involved digging out and plotting the labyrinth of a gopher burrow in the Berkeley Hills.

Everyone who knew him remembers Jack as a dignified and caring gentleman. His handsome features and gracious manner were equaled only by his vast scientific knowledge which he shared so willingly with us all.

He is survived by a son, John, and two grandchildren, and hundreds, if not thousands, of adoring and grateful friends and admirers.

*Betty Burrige*

**Another Terrible Loss**

On June 13th, 2000 Bay Area birders were saddened by the loss of Dr. Luis Baptista. He was curator of ornithology and mammalogy at the California Academy of Sciences. It was his expertise in bird song that made him famous around the world. He was known, in particular, for his research on geographically distinct avian dialects.

Dr. Baptista was a gifted speaker and his talks were always enthralling. His inspiration certainly has led to more attention to the aural aspects of birding.

He was 59 when he passed unexpectedly, in his garden, at home in Sebastopol.

Whenever I see I White-crowned Sparrow in San Francisco I will remember Luis Baptista.

*Gerry Mugele*

**Redwood Region Ornithological Society - Report of Finances 1999 - 2000**

Beginning bank balance, 1 July 1999.....\$2,061 \*

<b>Receipts:</b>		<b>Disbursements:</b>	
Dues	\$ 922	Kite Tales newsletter	\$ 554
Book Sales	168	Book sales proceeds to heirs of co-author	84
Interest on Savings	57	Guest Speakers	0
Donations	636	Rent, Insurance, Meeting & Potluck	398
Field Card Sales	20	Repair of Slide Projector	87
		Purchase of new Slide Projector	532
		Founder's (Dr. Arnold) Birthday Party	78
		Postage, taxes, filing fee	10
<b>Total receipts for year</b>	<b>1,803</b>	<b>Total disbursements for year</b>	<b>-1,743</b>

**Ending bank balance, 30 June 2000.....2,121\***

\* Includes a \$1,250.00 certificate of deposit

**Mike Nelligan, Treasurer**

**Field trip Report - Kern River Preserve and Surrounding Area - June 9-12, 2000**

- by Alan Wight

Eleven of us enjoyed cooler-than-normal temperatures and lots of interesting birds and places. We were led by Bob Barnes, State Director of Bird Conservation and Kern Valley Outreach for Audubon. He did a wonderful job of showing us the great variety of habitats and birds in and around the Kern River Preserve. We saw riparian birds, Sierran birds, Great Basin birds, and desert birds. Our trip coincided with the first arriving Yellow-billed Cuckoos of the year. We didn't see any cuckoos due to the dense riparian growth; we did hear a couple.

We had good luck with the other specialties of the preserve, seeing all of the following: Summer Tanager, Willow Flycatcher, Indigo Bunting, Blue Grosbeak, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Yellow-breasted Chat, Tricolored Blackbird. Other highlights were Black-chinned Hummingbirds at the feeders, a single calling Brown-crested Flycatcher, Kern County's only nesting Cassin's Kingbirds, a few Plumbeous Vireos, a couple of flocks of Pinyon Jays, a Green-tailed Towhee, singing Black-throated Sparrows, and nice looks at a beautiful male Scott's Oriole.

A total of 124 bird species were observed. Several photos that I took during the trip can be viewed at my website: <http://www.sonic.net/~shwand>

Many thanks to Linda Allen for suggesting this trip. Participant: were Linda Allen, Mike Parmeter, Bertha and Bob Rains, Cynthia and John Rathkey, Ruth Rudesill, Carole Sunlight, Chris Traub, Alan Wight, and Jon Winter

Birds observed: Pied-billed Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Turkey Vulture, Wood Duck, Mallard, White-tailed Kite, Red-shouldered & Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel, Prairie Falcon, Mountain & California Quail, Killdeer, Rock&Mourning Dove, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Greater Roadrunner, Great-Horned Owl, White-throated Swift, Black-chinned, Anna's, Costa's and Calliope Hummingbirds, Acorn Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Ladder-backed, Nuttall's, Downy, Hairy and White-headed Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Western Wood-Pewee, Willow, Hammond's and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Black & Say's Phoebes, Ash-throated & Brown-crested Flycatchers, Cassin's & Western Kingbirds, Loggerhead Shrike, Plumbeous, Cassin's & Warbling Vireos, Steller's, Western Scrub and Pinyon Jays, Clark's Nutcracker, Common Raven, Tree, Violet-green, Northern Rough-winged & Cliff Swallows, Mountain Chickadee, Oak Titmouse, Verdin, Bushtit, Red-breasted, White-breasted & Pygmy Nuthatches, Brown Creeper, Cactus, Rock, Canyon, Bewick's, House and Winter Wrens, Golden-crowned & Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Western & Mountain Bluebirds, Townsend's Solitaire, Robin, Wrentit, Mockingbird, California Thrasher, European Starling, Cedar Waxwing, Phainopepla, Nashville, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Hermit and MacGillivray's Warblers, Common Yellowthroat, Wilson's Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Summer & Western Tanager, Green-tailed, Spotted & California Towhees, Chipping, Brewer's, Black-chinned, Lark, Black-throated, Sage, Savannah, Fox, Song and Lincoln's Sparrows, Dark-eyed Junco, Black-headed and Blue Grosbeaks, Lazuli and Indigo Buntings, Red-winged and Tricolored Blackbirds, Western Meadowlark, Brewer's Blackbird, Great-tailed Grackle, Brown-headed

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September 2000

## Observations

Species	#	Date	Place	County	Who	Notes
White-capped Albatross?	1	7/29	Pelagic trip from Bodega	?	DS	probable ID Salvin's
Black Scoter	1	7/2	Russian River Mouth	SON	AW	female
✓ Cooper's Hawk	?	period	Sonoma Mountain	SON	DG	nest w/ fledgling young
Golden Eagle	1	5/9	East of Geyserville	SON	DN, KH	
Peregrine Falcon	1	5/4	East of Asti	SON	DN, KH	adult
" "	1	7/2	Adobe Canyon Road	SON	IM	adult
Wild Turkey	4	5/9	East of Geyserville	SON	DN, KH	
✓ Black Rail	2	6/18	Tubbs Island	SON	AW	
Baird's Sandpiper	1	8/19	Carmody Road pond	SON	AW	
✓ Least Tern	1	7/21+	Bodega Harbor, north end	SON	PC, AW	
✓ Black Tern	1	6/16+	Tubbs Island	SON	LH	
Black Skimmer	1+	period	Corte Madera Marsh	MAR	MOB	
✓ Marbled Murrelet	2	7/2	Russian River Mouth	SON	AW	breeding plumage
✓ Horned Puffin	1	8/18+	Off Bodega Head	SON	RSc, MOB	juv. close to shore
✓ Greater Road Runner	1	6/6	Ida Clayton Rd.	SON	DSh	heard only
Western Screech-Owl	2	6/6	Ida Clayton Rd.	SON	DSh	
✓ Short-eared Owl	2	8/4	Hiway 37/ Tubbs Is. Rd	SON	DSh	(?! ed.)
✓ Lesser Nighthawk	1	5/2	Bodega Bay	SON	A&DC	
✓ " "	1	6/3	Bodega Harbor	SON	TE	
Vaux's Swift	2	5/4	Asti	SON	DN, KH	
Cassin's Vireo	1	5/4	Asti	SON	DN, KH	
Cliff Swallow	30+	7/2	Off shore rock	SON	AW	nesting!
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	3	5/3	Moon Mountain Road	SON	DN, KH	
Black-thrt'd Gray Warblr	1	5/4	Asti	SON	DN, KH	
✓ MacGillivray's Warbler	2	5/8	Sonoma Mountain	SON	KF	
✓ " "	1	8/16	Sonoma State	SON	AW	
Western Tanager	1	5/8	Sonoma Mountain	SON	KF	
Rufous-crownd Sparrow	1	5/4	East of Asti	SON	DN, KH	
Sage Sparrow	1	6/25	Near Adobe Canyon Rd	SON	IM	
Grasshopper Sparrow	2-3	5/4	East of Asti	SON	DN, KH	
" "	2+	5/8	Sonoma Mountain	SON	KF	
✓ " "	4	7/2	Fort Ross	SON	AW	
✓ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	6/16	Coleman Valley Rd, feeder	SON	SH	male
✓ " " "	1	6/16	Santa Rosa feeder	SON	BT	male
✓ " " "	1	6/22	Sebastopol feeder	SON	GĠ	male
✓ Blue Grosbeak	2	6/18	Tubbs Island	SON	AW	w/ nesting material
Lazuli Bunting	1	5/3	Moon Mountain Road	SON	DN, KH	fem. calling
" "	2+	5/9	East of Geyserville	SON	DN, KH	singing males
" "	2	5/15	Austin Creek @ 116	SON	DB, PC	pair
Hooded Oriole	1	5/8	behind Safeway, Petaluma	SON	DN	
" "	1	5/9	off Riebli Rd. Santa Rosa	SON	DN	
✓ " "	1	6/3	Owl Canyon	SON	TE, BDP, AW	singing male
✓ Red Crossbill	3	7/2	Salt Point State Park	SON	AW	

### Observers:

Dennis Beall, Ann & Dan Cohen, Pam Conley, Peter Connor, Ted Eliot, Kathy Francone, Gene Gaffney, Donna Gleckler, Kerry Heise, Lisa Hug, Sharon Huyck, Ian Morrison, Dan Nelson, Mike Parmeter (BDP), Rusty Scalf (RSc), Doug Shaw (DSh), Debbie Shearwater, Barbara Tomin, Alan Wight,

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 at the Laguna Waste Water Treatment Plant 4300 Llano Road, Santa Rosa, California. Dues are \$15 per family, \$8 per individual, or \$3 per student for one year membership. Send dues to the treasurer shown below.

**2000 - 2001 Officers:**

- President:** Betty Groce, 411 Trail Ridge Ct. , Santa Rosa CA 95409-6482 707 539-8664  
E-Mail: blgroce @ Prodigy.net
- Vice President:** Ken Wilson, 388 Ferguson Rd., Sebastopol, CA 95472-9601 707 823-8408  
(net impaired)
- Secretary:** Bertha Rains, 450A Las Casitas, Santa Rosa, CA 95403-1383 707 528-6785  
E-Mail: bbr@ap.net
- Treasurer:** Mike Nelligan, 124 Wikiup Drive, Santa Rosa CA 95403-7700 707 576-1475  
E-Mail: bandm@monitor.net
- 2000 - 2001 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  
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- 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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