

KITE TALES

DECEMBER

REDWOOD REGION ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
VOL. 8 - NO. 4 SANTA ROSA, CALIF.

1973

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS.....

December 13, Thursday: December meeting of RRCS

Mr. and Mrs. Easi Henkins will give the program of their excellent slides of birds, animals and flowers.



December 14, Friday: Deadline for January Kite Tales

December 23, Sunday: RRCS Christmas Count

Gordon Bolander and Mike Parmeter are Co-Compilers. Contact Gordy (1650 Timber Hill Road, Santa Rosa 95401, 542-5216) if you are interested in participating in any capacity---as observer, recorder, driver, feeder observer. Please do this as soon as possible.

Christmas Count Compilation

All of you Christmas Count participants, and friends, are cordially invited to the Hanes' house to eat and report your sightings. The report board will be there from 5-8 P.M., so be sure to stop by during these hours to report in.

A pot of soup, and beverages will be waiting. Come as you are from the count. Now here's THE CATCH -- PLEASE bring something to add to the food table so there will be enough food: something you can carry around in your car that won't be much trouble, like olives or relishes, a dozen cookies, a loaf of tea bread or French bread, fruit, and so on. You can drop the food by early if you like-- someone will be at the house from noon on.

MONTGOMERY DR.

MIDWAY DR.

MAGOWAN

SONOMA AVE.



Linda and David Hanes

ADDRESS: 3237 Midway Jr.,
Santa Rosa
(near Montgomery
Village)

January 10, Thursday: January meeting of RRCS

Clark Nattkemper will show his slides of the Galapagos Islands which he took in August 1972, on a U.C. Extension trip. He was part of a group of 30 people who spent 7 days traveling by boat from island to island. Mr. Nattkemper is a Life Science teacher at Santa Rosa Junior College- where he's been teaching for 30 years- and is an ardent photographer.

REPORT ON THE GRAY LODGE TRIP, NOVEMBER 18th

Fourteen RROS members, plus a group of Peter Leveque's Santa Rosa J.C. students, enjoyed a rewarding trip. Weather was good and many species were seen. Several rough-legged hawks were seen. (This seems to fit the general pattern of many rough-legged hawks appearing in low-land areas this year.) The Ross' geese were hard to identify on the ground, but apparently there were large numbers -- possibly several hundred. For those interested in finding the vesper sparrow, good habitat seems to be on Hiway 20, going toward Williams, in the last 15 miles before coming out of the hills.



Trip List from Gordon Bolander
(Species not seen within the Refuge
are starred)



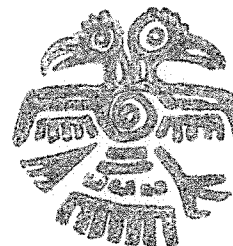
Horned grebe
Pied-billed grebe
Double-crested cormorant
Great Blue heron
*Great egret
Black-crowned night
heron
American bittern
whistling swan
Canada goose
White-fronted goose
Snow goose
Ross' goose
Mallard
Gadwall
Pintail
Green-winged teal
Cinnamon teal
European wigeon
American wigeon
Northern shoveler
King-necked duck
Canvasback
Bufflehead
Ruddy duck
*Turkey vulture
*White-tailed kite
Red-tailed hawk
*Rough-legged hawk
*Ferruginous hawk
Marsh hawk
*Prairie falcon (2)
American kestrel

*California quail
Ring-necked pheasant
Sandhill crane
Virginia rail
Sora
Common gallinule
Coot
Killdeer
Common Snipe
Long-billed curlew
Greater yellowlegs
Long-billed dowitcher
California gull
Ring-billed gull
Mourning dove
*Barn owl
Belted kingfisher
Common flicker
*Acorn woodpecker
*Lewis woodpecker
*Yellow-bellied sapsucker
Downy woodpecker
Nuttall's woodpecker
Black phoebe
*Say's phoebe
Horned lark
*Scrub jay
*Yellow-billed magpie
Common crow
*Plain titmouse
Bushtit
*White-breasted nuthatch
*Wrentit

Bewick's wren
Long-billed marsh wren
*Canyon wren
*Rock wren
Mockingbird
*American robin
*Varied thrush
*Western bluebird
Ruby-crowned kinglet
Water pipit
*Cedar waxwing
*Northern shrike
Loggerhead shrike
Starling
Yellow-rumped warbler
Common yellowthroat
*House Sparrow
Western meadowlark
Red-winged blackbird
*Hrewer's blackbird
House finch
American goldfinch
Lesser goldfinch
Rufous-sided towhee
Brown towhee
*Savannah sparrow
*Vesper sparrow
*Lark sparrow
*Dark-eyed junco
White-crowned sparrow
Golden-crowned sparrow
Fox sparrow
Song sparrow

MEMBER SIGHTINGS.....

Mike Parmeter contributed the following sightings for the second half of October:



Mike and John Parmeter observed a single immature Golden Eagle near Napa Airport on Oct. 16th. On the 21st, they observed a Prairie Falcon at Edgerly Island and another single immature Golden Eagle near Napa Airport (a different bird than the previous sighting). On October 24th and 25th they saw a single Evening Grosbeak in their yard in Napa.

Gordon Bolander and Mike observed, at Bodega Lagoon on Oct. 27th, Red-necked Grebes (2 birds), Rough-legged Hawks - a migrating movement of 10 light phase and one dark phase birds, Golden Eagles (2 adults, 1 immature), and, at Bodega Marine Lab, an immature Northern Shrike.

They report the following list for a trip made on Oct. 28th:
Rough-legged Hawk -- total of 10 birds at Point Reyes, 2 dark phase
Golden Eagle -- single immature near Point Reyes Station
Bar-tailed Godwit - single bird in winter plumage at Bolinas Lagoon --
seen by several observers -- second record for the state
Black-throated Blue Warbler -- single male at Point Reyes Coast Guard
Station
Red Crossbill -- flock of 7 at Inverness
Knot -- 15-20 birds at Inverness

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS.....

Deyea Harper has gleaned some information about two new RROS members:

Carol Johnson has been interested in birds for about 2 years..She is a senior at Sonoma State majoring in biology and working for a veterinarian. She is very much interested in shrikes.

Tim Barnart used to hunt, but after watching last fall's migrations at Klamath Refuge, where he saw 13 Bald Eagles, he has become "hooked on birdwatching". Tim is particularly interested in learning to make calls, especially owl calls. He and his wife, Marianne, are teachers at the Montessori Pre-school in Santa Rosa.

TRAVEL.....

This is a new section of Kite Tales, intended as a place for members to share travel ideas: descriptions of interesting places to go, ways of solving trip mechanics, bibliographies for certain areas. This month we

have an article on a fruitful birding area which is usually not given a great deal of attention, the East side of the Sierras.

Because California is watered mostly by Pacific storms out of the Northwest, the massive Sierra Nevada acts as a very effective rain shield for the Eastern borderlands of our state. This situation has produced an interesting collection of wildlife habitats, including Bristlecone Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper woodlands, and Great Basin Sage Brush.

RROS member Faye Beaman and his wife have become familiar with this region, having vacationed there three times during 1972-73. Faye describes the 234 mile section of U.S. Highway 395 from its junction with U.S. 50 (near Carson City, Nevada) south to Lone Pine, Calif. This stretch of highway passes through five valleys sandwiched between the Sierra Nevada to the west and several smaller ranges to the east. The valleys, from north to south, are Carson, Antelope, Bridgeport, Mono Lake Basin, and Owens.

Many thanks to Faye for this contribution:

East Side of the Sierra

The Eastern side of the Sierra is entirely different than the western side in that there are no foothills; the mountains drop almost straight down to the valley floor. In the spring, Carson Valley, Antelope Valley, and Bridgeport Valley are very lush with water running all over the fields. South of Bridgeport, most of the water is used by Los Angeles, so the valleys are mostly Sage Brush.

In June of this year, Virginia and I saw Yellow-headed blackbirds, Dowitchers, Phalaropes and Cinnamon teal on Topas Lake in Antelope Valley. In Bridgeport Valley, we saw all of these plus an Avocet. East of Bridgeport Lake we found a Sage thrasher. At Bishop this year we saw a Lesser nighthawk and lots of Kingbirds. In May 1972, we saw western tanagers at Bishop and at Mono Lake. In the Bristlecone Pine Forest east of Bishop this June I saw Clark's nutcrackers, Mountain bluebirds, Mountain chickadees, and Rock wrens. At Lone Pine, where the true desert starts, we saw lots of Ingbirds. All along Highway 395 there are blackbirds, the most numerous of the birds. We also saw lots of magpies.

To the west are roads leading up into the edge of the mountains. Most of these lead up to mountain lakes. Several that we drove follow along a beautiful rushing stream. At Silver Lake on the "June Lake Loop" we saw more kinds of birds in one place than at any other spot: warblers, grosbeaks, wrens, robins, and other fairly common species. In Sept. 1973 at Bridgeport Lake we saw a Mountain chickadee as well as lots of Western grebehead cots. At the south end of Topas Lake we saw a flock of about 150 Canadian geese in a pasture; we also saw a flock there in Sept. 1972.

There were lots of spring wild flowers in bloom this year but I was not familiar with them, although we did see acres of wild iris.

Just north of Bridgeport on Sept. 9 we saw a hawk chasing an immature Golden eagle. While watching the eagle, which lit alongside the road under a small pinyon pine, a coyote crossed the highway and went up the bank in no hurry. About 1/2 mile further north we saw a Prairie falcon right over the highway.

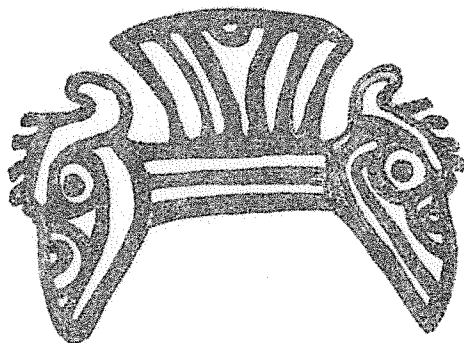
by Faye Beeman

ILLUSTRATIONS

Designs in this month's Kite Tales are from the book Design Motifs of Ancient Mexico, by Jorge Enciso (Dover Publications, N.Y., 1953). They represent bussards or King bussards (those with two heads).

ARTICLE ON RAPTOR MANAGEMENT STUDY (See next page)

Bud Grelapp contributed this important article from the Santa Barbara Audubon Society's publication "Tecosote".



Still looking for Christmas gift ideas? Why not give a membership in RROS? The price can't be beat!

RAPTOR MANAGEMENT STUDY URGENTLY NEEDED IN CALIFORNIA

Ever since the days when all hawks and owls were considered vermin, shot by the plunker and trapped by the farmer, man has manipulated and controlled their numbers. And, as a result, bird of prey populations have suffered greatly. Even today, in light of a recent amendment to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, hawks and owls can legally be taken from the wild in most states. As widespread as harvesting has become in California, no one can provide evidence that the proliferation of this activity in the state has not contributed to established problems which have caused the demise of predatory birds: persistent pesticides, trapping, shooting, poisoning, and habitat encroachment.

If a nongame group of wildlife is to be likened to game animals — as birds of prey are presently being treated in California — then sound management techniques must be undertaken to insure that over-exploitation of this resource does not occur. Wildlife management programs should insure that populations are stable and healthy before classifying that resource a safe and renewable one. Raptor management programs should include the securing of valuable nesting habitat and providing adequate protection for endangered or depleting species.

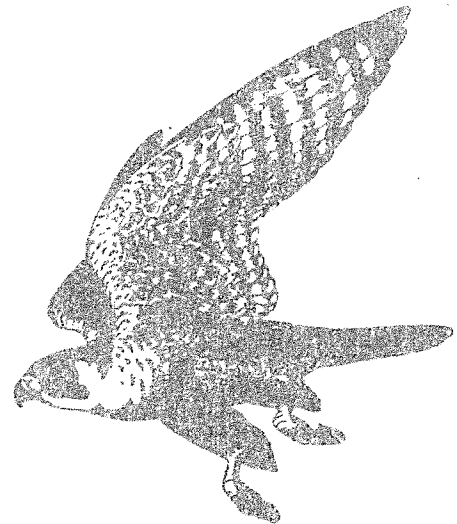
California has the largest number of falconry permit holders in the nation, yet its Department of Fish and Game has no management program for birds of prey and has conducted no research on the effects of harvesting. That removal of raptorial birds is legally allowed without any knowledge of the annual mortality and productivity of these birds is scientifically unsound. Although many ornithologists, birders, and environmentalists challenge California's laws which allow the taking and possession of adult and fledgling birds of prey, all agree that if harvesting is to legally occur, the agency charged with enforcing these regulations — the California Department of Fish and Game — must show and produce evidence that harvesting can be adequately controlled, managed, and that birds of prey do not suffer as a result of such activities.

California's Fish and Game Commissioners want to hear from you. Express your concern about raptor populations in California by recommending a study on the legal and illegal activities of harvesting. Letters should urge that during such a study, the issuance of falconry permits be ceased and that no predatory birds should be taken from the wild. If birds of prey are to be classified as a renewable resource, as they presently are, then a comprehensive population study is one prerequisite towards a proper management program.

Direct letters to any one or more of the five Commission members listed below and address your letters in care of Mr. Leslie Edgerton, Executive Secretary, Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth St., Sacramento, Calif. 95814.

CALIFORNIA FISH AND GAME COMMISSIONERS

Sherman Chickering, President
Peter T. Fletcher, Vice President
Timothy M. Doherty
C. Ransom Peerman
Joseph Russ III



The following is an initial list of organizations sponsoring this raptor management concept: Defenders of Wildlife, El Dorado Audubon Society, Friends of the Earth, Redwood Region Audubon Society, San Diego Audubon Society, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, Sea and Sage Audubon Society, Sequoia Audubon Society, Sierra Club, and the Society for the Preservation of Birds of Prey.