

Kite Tales

MARCH

REDWOOD REGION ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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COMING ATTRACTIONS

March 8 - 9, Saturday and Sunday, Field Trip to Honey Lake

Rick LeBaudour will lead the RRDS group on this weekend trip to see the Sage Grouse at their lek and the winter residents of Honey Lake. These often include Golden and Bald Eagles, Rough-legged Hawks; Great-horned, Short-eared and Barn Owls; Yellow-headed Blackbirds, waterbirds and shorebirds.

Rick will be leaving on Thursday night, March 6. Anyone who would like to join him or wants more information, please call him at 525-9158.

Official meeting time to go see the Sage Grouse is 5 AM Saturday, March 8, at the Litchfield Motel, several miles out of Susanville. At that hour, RRDS members will join Joel Hornstein and the Sutter Buttes Audubon group. Joel will be leaving Yuba City for Susanville on Friday, March 7. Anyone who would like to join him may call him at 916/674-8618.

March 13, Thursday, General Meeting

Kurt Campbell will give our program this evening: "A Look at the Evolution of Birdwatching". Kurt is one of the naturalists running Pacific Adventures, which sponsored those spectacularly successful pelagic and whale-watching trips last fall. Roger Marlowe, another naturalist and artist with Pacific Adventures, will show some of his bird slides. The two men will discuss bird identification problems.

April 12-13, Field Trip to Humboldt Bay

Ruth Rudesill will lead this trip around one of her favorite birding areas. She plans to go up on Thursday, April 10, and will be camping. She will announce places where we can meet her around noon on Friday. The Saturday meeting place will be Patrick Point at 8:45 AM. She plans some inland birding around Arcata on Sunday. Lots of motels are available in Eureka, Arcata and Trinidad.

April 26, Saturday, Field trip to Ida Clayton Road

Leader for this trip will be Mike Parmeter. This ride over a ridge of Mt. St. Helena always turns up interesting raptors and chaparral birds, woodpeckers and other forest species.

FIELD TRIP RESULTS

The Skaggs Island Field Trip on February was a big day for raptors. Faye Beeman led the group of about 25 birders onto the island, and there Executive Officer Cosgriff and Chief Petty Officer Ruiz conducted them to the prize birding spots. A hayfield with scattered islands of broken concrete blocks has become a small city of Burrowing Owls. Almost every block island had a resident owl surveying his world from his concrete porch - and with an address marked in spray paint: O-I up to O-X. Seems the Navy had started to remove the concrete blocks to accommodate the farmer who leased the land. Then they found that Burrowing Owls had already moved in. So - since this Navy base is bird-conscious - they left the blocks which had become owl homes and are now trying to work out a compromise with the farmer. It seems likely that all of Sonoma County's missing Burrowing Owls have moved onto Skaggs Island, where developments have not yet driven them out.

Commander Cosgriff and Mr. Ruiz then took the group to a pair of roosting Great Horned Owls. A Merlin perched in a tree above one of the residences and stayed until everyone had a good look. The group also clearly saw Rough-legged Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Kestrel and Red-tailed Hawk. Other highlights were Clark's Grebe, American Bittern, a flock of 21 Black-crowned NightHerons, Greater Scaup, Ring-necked Duck, Loggerhead Shrike, Horned Lark, Western Bluebird, Allen's Hummingbird, Lincoln's and Savannah Sparrow.

OBSERVATIONS - Hal Corey (542-8429)

1/18-Lake Hennessey: Ross' Goose (PB).

1/25-Ursuline High School: female Western Tanager (PL).

1/26-Pope Valley Rd: Eurasian Wigeon, Tri-colored Blackbirds, Prairie Falcon (PB). 1/30-Lake Hennessey: Bald Eagle, ad.; Rufous-crowned Sparrows, 100+ Canada Geese, Pileated Woodpecker, Green-winged Teal, Cooper's Hawk (FB, JC, CMac).

2/4-Lake Ralphine: Osprey, Hermit Thrush, Hutton's Vireo. Annadel, Channel Dr: 5 Common Goldeneye (H&OC)

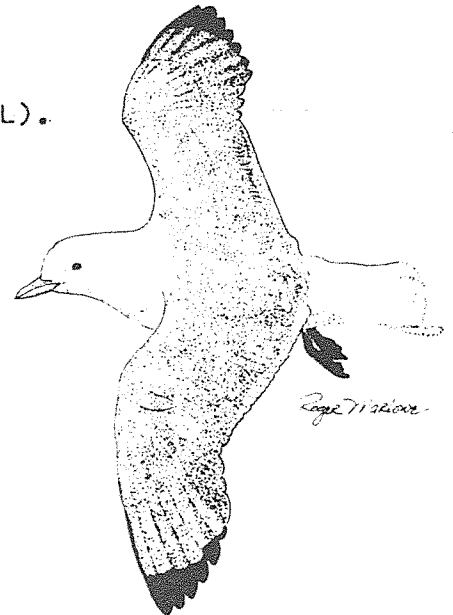
2/5-Salmon Creek: Common Merganser, Common Snipe, Say's Phoebe, Black Phoebe (FB, CMac, MOB). Doran Park: Green-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, American Avocets, Ruddy and Black Turnstones, Heermann's Gull (FB, CMac, HC, MOB).

2/11-Five Brooks: 5 Gadwall, American Coot, Varied Thrush, NO Hooded Merganser! Bolinas Lagoon, near Audubon Canyon Ranch: Harlequin Duck (Thanks to Skip Swartz); Lesser and Greater Scaup, Canada Goose. Pine Gulch Creek: Red-breasted Sapsucker, Rufous Hummingbird (HC, JT).

2/13-Garcia River: over 300 Tundra Swans, Peregrine Falcon, Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Wrentit. Sea Ranch: 11 Whimbrel (FB, CW, VB, HC, MOB).

2/16-Vacaville: Yellow-billed Magpie (H&OC):

Observers: Faye Beeman, Phil Burton, Valerie Byrd, John Chostner, Hal & Olive Corey, Peter Leveque, Carol MacMillan, Ruth Rudesill, Lois Roberts, Jack Troutfetter and Clarence Wolcott.



LATEST ON THE BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

Western Field Ornithologists held a workshop on conducting a Breeding Bird Atlas at their conference in Sacramento on February 7. Betty Burridge was there.

She reports that the maps to be used in plotting breeding bird species will likely be divided into metric segments - a point of some controversy in ornithological circles. The metric method of division is strongly recommended by those conducting the WFO workshop. This is the system used already in Britain and in Europe and is becoming most commonly used in this country. Los Angeles, for instance, has their atlas well underway and is on the metric system.

Breeding bird atlas projects, which were started in Great Britain, have spread to North America during the last decade and are now being widely promoted. The information obtained from the atlas is found to be of great value in all sorts of environmental and habitat studies. The data will, of course, be of maximum value if it is collected in the same way everywhere, using standardized maps, vocabulary and other points of reference.

The WFO conference workshop was an effort to standardize methods and procedures used in running a breeding bird atlas.

For those of you who came in late, Betty Burridge is Coordinator of RROS' Breeding Bird Project. Madrone Audubon Society has agreed provisionally to sponsor the project, thereby allowing volunteers' expenses and contributions to be tax deductible. And we will need many volunteers!

Betty explained that a bird atlas differs from a census - such as the Christmas Bird Count - in that a breeding bird species is plotted on each atlas map segment only once. Once you have noted on your map an American Robin feeding young, you can ignore all other American Robins in that survey section. You can then concentrate on finding one each of every other possible species behaving like a breeding bird.

So Volunteers - be ready! Your services will be needed!

BIRDING NORTHERN CALIFORNIA by Jean Richmond

This is a detailed, clearly mapped site guide to numerous birding spots in the Bay Area and beyond, including Los Banos, Monterey, Bodega Bay and many others. This 160-page bound publication is being offered by Mt. Diablo Audubon Society. Jean Richmond was Editor of Mt. Diablo Audubon's newsletter, THE QUAIL, for many years and has led innumerable birding expeditions. BIRDING NORTHERN CALIFORNIA will be distributed in early April.

Orders should be sent to the Treasurer of Mt. Diablo Audubon: Gifford A. Young, 1451 Janet Court, Benicia, CA 94510; (707) 745-4134. The price of \$12 includes tax, packaging and mailing costs. Copies purchased directly from MDAS in this way also have a \$5 tax deductible contribution.