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# Kite Tales



Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 36 Number III

November 2001

## Coming Attractions

### November 8th, Thursday, 7:30 PM - General Meeting

Administration Building, Laguna Waste Water Treatment Plant - 4300 Llano Road, Santa Rosa

This month's program presentation will be by Mike Parmeter, reporting on his trip this summer to Papua New Guinea.

### November 10th, Saturday at 7:30 AM - Field Trip to Willow Creek Canyon

Meet at Bridgehaven Pond (at the intersection of Highways 1 and 116) at 8:30 am Park off the road in the dirt area. We will scope the Russian River mouth and then head up into Willow Creek Canyon for a day of land birding.

Bring binoculars, scopes, field guides, lunch, water, and warm clothes.

Leader is Alan Wight. Call Alan at 763-8572 (weekdays 7-9 pm or weekends any time) if you have any questions.

### November 20th, Tuesday - 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

### November 25th, Sunday - 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@mugele.net NOTE new Email address

### December 13th, Thursday, 7:30 PM - General Meeting

Administration Building, Laguna Waste Water Treatment Plant - 4300 Llano Road, Santa Rosa

December's program presentation will be in preparation for the Christmas Bird Count. We will be testing our identification skills on some video pictures provided by Dan Nelson. Come and hone those IDs to perfection. It isn't very often that you get confirmation (or a correction) on an ID. They don't put the answers in the back of the field guides.

### December 16, Sunday, All Day - RRROS Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count

Co-compilers Bob Evans and Ted Eliot will be contacting those who have participated in the past. This is the annual RRROS sponsored Christmas Count. Become part of the history and help us be sure that we've found 'em all; don't let any of those birds go uncounted. The CBC takes the place of our monthly field trip.

## Field Trip Report

**Bodega Harbor  
October 20, 2001**

Fourteen of us spent the day birding around the harbor with nice overcast light. The highlights were great looks at a flock of two Palm Warblers near Gaffney Point; a female Redhead mixed in with the scaup flock near the rail ponds; 2-3 Red-necked Grebes, a Pigeon Guillemot, and a Pacific Loon off the jetties; two Wild Turkeys above the rail ponds, and a perched Peregrine Falcon near Doran mudflats.

The field trip participants were Sharon Audiss, Joan Dranginis, Ted Eliot, Betty Groce, Jack Groce, Terry Law, Eric Lichtwardt, Don McCarthy, Mike Parmeter, Annette Roth, Craig Roth, Wayne Tillay, Don Toms, Alan Wight.

Birds observed: Pacific Loon, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Horned Grebe, Red-necked Grebe, Western 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, Brant, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Redhead, Greater Scaup, Lesser Scaup, Surf Scoter, Ruddy Duck, Turkey Vulture, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Wild Turkey, Virginia Rail, American Coot, Black-bellied Plover, Killdeer, Black Oystercatcher, American Avocet, Willet, Marbled Godwit, Black Turnstone, Surfbird, Red Knot, Sanderling, Western Sandpiper, Dunlin, Dowitcher sp., Heermann's Gull, Mew Gull, Ring-billed Gull, California Gull, Western Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Forster's Tern, Common Murre, Pigeon Guillemot, Anna's Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Black Phoebe, Western Scrub Jay, Common Raven, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Bewick's Wren, Winter Wren, Marsh Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hermit Thrush, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Hutton's Vireo, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Palm Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, California Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, White-

crowned Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, American Goldfinch, House Sparrow.

~ Alan Wight

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## RROS Dues

If you haven't already done so, be sure to get your check in the mail to treasurer Betty Burrige at the address on the masthead of this issue of *Kite Tales*. If you don't renew soon this will be your last edition of *Kite Tales*.

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## Social Chair Needed

President Ken is seeking a volunteer to fill the role of Social Chair at our monthly meetings. The position is open due to the recent passing of Barbara Gumtow. Duties include bringing the coffee and tea supplies to the meetings and garnering a list of folks to bring cookies to each of the meetings. Give Ken a call at 707 795-7547.

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## Remembering Dr. Jack Arnold

A memorial bench for Jack Arnold, sponsored by his daughter-in-law, Judy Spotswood, will be dedicated at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 11 at the Arms of the Cross Educational Center, on the southeast corner of the intersection of Hwy 116 and Guerneville Rd.

RROS members and other friends of Jack and Ardell are welcome to attend. Driving north on 116, turn right into the last driveway before Guerneville Rd, and drive up to a small parking area. Expect to meet Father O'Brien who lives on this beautiful property and who has generously agreed to allow the placement of this bench on a hillside with a wonderful view to the west.

Jack's friends will be welcome to visit this site in the future.

Heavy rain cancels!

~ Betty Burrige

**Local Christmas Bird Counts**

In addition to the RROS CBC on December 16th, Madrone Audubon is holding its Western Sonoma CBC on December 30th. If you wish to volunteer just contact our President, Ken Wilson at 707 795-7547 or co-compiler: Russ Agnew at 707-823-7555. They'll appreciate your help.

Other counts you may wish to consider:

**Saturday, December 15th:**

Point Reyes	David Wimpfheimer 415-663-1363
Ukiah	Chuck Vaughn 707-462-8137

**Monday, December 17th:**

Benicia	Robin Leong 707-643-1287
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**Thursday, December 20th:**

Peace Valley (Sutter county)	Bruce Deuel 530-527-9071
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**Thursday, December 27th:**

Rio Cosumnes (Sacramento cnty)	Andrew Engilis 916-684-5266
San Francisco	Alan Hopkins 415-664-0983

**Friday, December 28th:**

Monterey Peninsula	Steve Rovell 831-883-9288
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**Saturday, December 29th:**

Southern Marin	Karen LeMay 415-924-9772
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**Sunday, December 30th:**

Western Sonoma	Russ Agnew 707-823-7555
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**Tuesday, January 1st:**

Angwin	Wendy Cole 707-963-2331
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**Owens Lake Gets a 2nd Chance**

Most of us are familiar with the plight of Mono Lake. In the early 1900s the city of Los Angeles bought the water rights to the watershed east of the Sierra and had been diverting the water destined for Mono Lake up until about a decade ago. At the same time, under the same circumstances, Owens lake, about 100 miles farther south also lost its water supply. The result was an essentially dry lake bed. Historical records show heavy use of the Owens Lake by migratory shorebirds and waterfowl prior to the water diversions.

Now a major environmental problem has developed for Los Angeles Water and Power. The prevailing winds in the Owens Valley have created serious dust storms which kick up significant quantities of arsenic from the dry lake bed. This airborne arsenic has reached the Los Angeles basin and drifted as far as Las Vegas creating quite a dilemma for LA Water and Power.

The good news is that Los Angeles Water and Power is now actively studying and mitigating the dust problem. Test areas of the lake are currently being shallowly flooded; other test areas are being replanted with salt grass to control the dust. The best news is that migratory birds are already dropping out of the sky to use this newly restored habitat. Already reported this year are a Ruff and two Mountain Plovers plus Pectoral and Baird's Sandpipers and a large variety of other shorebirds.

There is hope that Owens Lake will soon be returned to a semblance of its original state and we can all expect to hear a lot more about the wildlife sighted in the once magnificent Owens Valley  
 ~ Betty Burridge

**Whoopers from Wisconsin to Florida**

A flock of Whooping Cranes is being guided from Wisconsin to Florida by ultra light aircraft. The story, updated daily, is on the following web site: [www.operationmigration.org](http://www.operationmigration.org)

Click on "In the Field". The hope is that a second migratory flock will be established by this means.  
 ~ Ted Eliot

**Trivia Corner Redux** (re: ducks?)

To anyone wishing to know more about Georg Steller and Vitus Bering and their expeditionary voyage to Alaska and the surrounding islands in 1741-42, I highly recommend "Where the Sea Breaks Its Back" by Corey Ford.

Originally published in 1966 this book has been reprinted by Alaska Northwest Books, P.O. Box 10306 Portland, Oregon, (800)452-3032.

Described as an irascible genius, Steller was brilliant, insensitive to others and volatile. Bering, on the other hand, was stolid, senior and wanting one thing more than any other: to bring his ship and its crew safely back to Russia. Stellar made incredible discoveries, clashed with his captain and crew and suffered, along with the others, some of the most grueling experiences in the history of exploration.

~ Lang Stevenson

**Birds Go for the Glow:****Discerning Birds prefer Ultra Violet Light**

Birds just may choose ripe fruits because of the ultraviolet light they reflect, rather than being enticed by a particular color.

This might explain why fruits of one color aren't necessarily better than others at having their seeds dispersed by birds. In temperate regions, birds eat mostly black or red fruits. But tropical birds disperse the seeds of fruits with a riot of different colors.

Douglas Altshuler of Purdue University, studied fruits from 57 plant species on Barro Colorado Island in Panama. He found that fruits that reflect UV light were always conspicuous to birds against green leaves, whether in sunny or shady habitats. The more a fruit reflected UV light the better birds scattered the seeds.

Crucially, unripe fruit did not reflect UV light. "In fruits with UV color, it is a signal that the fruits are ripe and ready to be eaten," he says. "This is the first study to link a particular color, in this case UV, with specific dispersers."

To check his idea further, Altshuler and his team placed UV-absorbing filters high above a species of a low-growing plant called *Psychotria emetica*.

The plant's fruits strongly reflect UV light and are mainly eaten by a ground-foraging dove and migratory thrushes. They found that the birds removed nearly all the fruits from plants that were allowed to bask in UV light, but removed fewer than two-fifths of the fruits from plants that had no UV reaching them.

Researchers have known for 30 years that birds can see UV light, says Charles Janson, an evolutionary ecologist. "In addition to the difference in colors that we perceive, the birds may be perceiving yet another whole dimension of color that we are missing," he says.

**A Shaggy Dog Story**

A renowned birder arrived at the ABA convention with his dog Bob and was told that dogs aren't allowed in the hotel and he'll have to make other arrangements. He protests that his dog is an ornithological genius--and, furthermore, Bob can talk. He asks if he and his dog can be given a few minutes at the podium to prove his claim. The chair of the convention reluctantly agrees.

The birder and his dog take the stage. He explains that his dog is an authority on ornithology and can answer any question on the subject. The audience expresses doubt.

"Just watch. I'll throw a few questions at him, and you'll see. He really is a genius."

"Bob, where does a Brown Creeper find its food?" The dog scratches its head and says, "Bark!"

There are a few murmurings of disgust from the audience, along with a few boos.

"Okay, okay. That was an easy one. Bob, what unusual structural feature is found on the nest of the Ovenbird?" Bob says, "Roof!"

There are loud boos and hisses from the audience.

"All right, just give him one more chance. Bob, what Eurasian shorebird rarity occurs in widely scattered areas of North America?"

The dog says, "Ruff!"

The outraged audience threw the two out.

The birder and his dog flee out the back door. As the pair walk back to the parking lot, the dog looks up at his master and asks, "Should I have said Spotted Redshank?"

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November 2001

## Observations

<u>Species</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Pacific Loon	1	10/25	Library Park, Lakeport	LAK	Dw, Bw	
Red-necked Grebe	1	10/25	Library Park, Lakeport	LAK	Jw, Dw, Bw	
✓ Grtr-wht Fronted Goose	30	10/1	over Post St. Petaluma	SON	Dn	
✓ " " " "	?	10/2	Over Campbell Cove in fog	SON	Dn	Heard only
✓ " " " "	35+	10/2	Colman Valley Rd	SON	Dn	1 mile E of Hwy 1
✓ Blue-winged Teal	13	9/29	Shollenberger Park	SON	Aw, Rl, BDP, Dn	
✓ Redhead	2+	9/29	Shollenberger Park	SON	Aw, Rl, BDP, Dn	
✓ Rough-legged Hawk	1	10/27	Bodega Head	SON	MAS, Ro	juv.
✓ Peregrine Falcon	2	9/25	Lakeville Sewer Ponds	SON	BDP	
✓ Prairie Falcon	1	10/2	West of Valley Ford	SON	Dn	
✓ Blue Grouse	1	9/25	King Ridge Rd.	SON	BDP	
✓ Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1	10/7	Doran Mudflats	SON	Cc, Lh, Ds, Sw	
✓ Ruff	1	10/?	Doran Pond	SON	Dn, Mob	Continuing from Sept.
✓ Sabine's Gull	45	9/15	Offshore Sonoma Cnty	SON	MOA	
✓ " " "	1	9/28+	Lakeville Sewer Ponds !!	SON	Aw, Rl, BDP, Dn	juv.
✓ Arctic Tern	24	9/15	Offshore Sonoma Cnty	SON	MOA	
Marbled Murrelet	2	9/29	Jenner	SON	Aw, Rl, BDP, Dn	
✓ White-winged Dove	1	9/26+	Campbell Cove	SON	Dh, Dn	
✓ Common Poorwill	1	10/2	Sonoma Mtn.	SON	Te	calling
✓ Acorn Woodpecker	1	9/19	Owl Canyon	SON	Dh, Dn	out of place
✓ Lewis's Woodpecker	1?	9/30	King Ridge Rd.	SON	DNr, Gm, Lm	
✓ Great Crested Flycatcher	1	10/5	Owl Canyon	SON	El, BDP, Dn, et.al.	
✓ Tropical Kingbird	1	10/6	Nr Westside Park, Bodega	SON	Tl, DHr, Km, Mob	
✓ Philadelphia Vireo	1	9/17+	Campbell Cove	SON	Dn, Mob.	
✓ American Dipper	1	9/29	King Ridge Rd.	SON	Aw, Rl, BDP, Dn	
✓ Hermit Thrush	1	9/19	Campbell Cove	SON	Dn	1st arrival
✓ American Pipit	1	9/19	Campbell Cove	SON	Dn, BDP	1st arrival
✓ Tennessee Warbler	1	9/20+	Diekmann's Store	SON	Mob.	
✓ Northern Parula	1	10/2+	Owl Canyon	SON	Dn, DHr, Km	
✓ " " "	1	10/7	Owl Canyon	SON	Ds	
✓ Chestnut-sided Warbler	1	10/6	Owl Canyon	SON	DHr, Km, Mob.	
✓ Black-thrtd Blue Warbler	1	9/21+	Cambell Cove	SON	Dn, BDP	
✓ Yellow-rumped Warbler	1	9/16	Cambell Cove	SON	Dn	1st arrival
✓ Blackburnian Warbler	1	10/8	Pines at Owl Canyon	SON	Dn, Me, Dh	imm. female
✓ Yellow-throated Warbler	1	9/26	Pt. Reyes, Nunes Ranch	MAR	Jh	
✓ Palm Warbler	1	10/2	Cambell Cove	SON	Dn, Dh	
✓ Black & White Warbler	1	9/30	Coleman Valley Rd.	SON	Ds	
✓ Clay-colored Sparrow	1	10/9	Campbell Cove	SON	Dh	
✓ Vesper Sparrow	1	9/25	King Ridge Rd.	SON	BDP et.al.	
✓ " " "	1	10/8	Anderson Marsh SP	LAK	Dw	
✓ Fox Sparrow	2	9/18	Cambell Cove	SON	Dn	1st arrival
✓ Lincoln's Sparrow	1	9/14	Cambell Cove	SON	Dn	1st arrival
✓ White-throated Sparrow	1	9/15	Cazadero	SON	Db, Pc	1st arrival
✓ " " "	1	9/20	Cambell Cove	SON	Dn, BDP, Dh	
✓ " " "	1	9/30	Duncan's Mill	SON	DNr, Gm	
✓ Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	9/27	Campbell Cove	SON	Dn, BDP	imm. male
✓ Bobolink	1	9/10+	Cambell Cove	SON	Dn	continuing from Sept.

### Observers:

Dennis Beall, Pam Conley, Chris Corben, Mark Eaton, Ted Eliot, Deyea Harper (DHr), David Hoffman, Jim Holmes, Lisa Hug, Terry Law, Rick Lebaudour, Eric Lichtwardt, Madrone Audubon Society (MAS), Mollymawk Offshore (MOA), Gerry Mugele, Kathy Mugele, Dan Nelson, Dan Noreen (DNr), Rebecca Olsen, Mike Parmeter (BDP), Doug Shaw, Sophie Webb, Jerry White, Alan Wight, Brian Woodward, Dave Woodward

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.

**2001 - 2002 Officers:**

**President:** Ken Wilson, 8 Pine Tree Circle., Cotati, CA 94931 707 795-7547  
E-Mail: talontours@yahoo.com

**Vice President:** Ted Eliot, 5850 Grove St., Sonoma CA 95476-6095 707 935-3410  
E-Mail: patted@sonic.net

**Secretary:** Linda Allen

**Treasurer:** Betty Burrige, 1653 Arroyo Sierra Way, Santa Rosa CA 95405 707 527-0225  
E-Mail: bandm@monitor.net

**2001 - 2002 Chairs:**

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

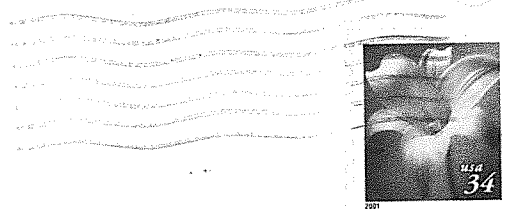
**Observations:** Ned Wynn, 129-B Powell Ave., Healdsburg CA 95448-3413 707 431-8412  
E-Mail: ekwynn@pon.net

**Social:** Position Open and seeking volunteers

**Christmas Count:** Ted Eliot, 5850 Grove St., Sonoma CA 95476-6095 707 935-3410  
Bob Evans 707 823-0609

**Kite Tales:** Gerry Mugele, PO Box 813, Glen Ellen, Ca 95442-0813 707 938-2134  
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