

Kite Tales



Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 36 Number IV

December 2001

Coming Attractions

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 16th, 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.

December 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

December 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@mugele.net

January 10th, Thursday, 7:30 PM - General Meeting

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

Richard's Great Alaskan Birding Adventure - June 7th to June 22nd 2001 - Slides & Stories You Won't Believe!
Join us as we tag -along with Richard Merris as he ventures into the rugged bird infested Alaskan wilderness. Richard is a long time member of RRROS and an accomplished birder. His trip to Alaska was the most recent birding adventure among numerous trips for this seasoned world traveler.

January 12th, Saturday at 9:00 AM - Field Trip to Gray Lodge

Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the western intersection of West Butte Road and Pass Road in Sutter County. We will explore the area for waterfowl and land birds. Bring binoculars, scopes, field guides, lunch, water, and warm clothes. Leaders are Mike Parmeter and Alan Wight.

Please call Alan at 763-8572 (weekdays 7-9 pm or weekends any time) if you plan on going on this trip

Field Trip Report

Willow Creek Canyon

November 10, 2001

The highlight of the trip was finding four species of geese along the lower end of the Russian River: three Snow Geese, one Ross's Goose, two Greater White-fronted Geese, and several Canada Geese. A group of three Golden Eagles was seen soaring together and two Peregrine Falcons were vocalizing loudly and interacting over the lower end of Willow Creek Canyon.

The field trip participants were Linda Allen, Jim Clegg, Betty Groce, Jack Groce, Eric Lichtwardt, Mike Parmeter, Rhio Reigh, Carole Sunlight, and Alan Wight.

Birds observed: Red-throated Loon, Common Loon, Pied-billed Grebe, Western Grebe, Clark's Grebe, Brown Pelican, Double-crested Cormorant, Pelagic Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Greater White-fronted Goose, Snow Goose, Ross's Goose, Canada Goose, Mallard, Greater Scaup, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Merganser, Red-breasted Merganser, Turkey Vulture, White-tailed Kite, Northern Harrier, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, American Kestrel, Merlin, Peregrine Falcon, California Quail, Common Moorhen, American Coot, Killdeer, Black Oystercatcher, Heermann's Gull, Mew Gull, California Gull, Herring Gull, Thayer's Gull, Western Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, Anna's Hummingbird, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Pileated Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Western Scrub-Jay, American Crow, Common Raven, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Bushtit, Bewick's Wren, Winter Wren, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, American Robin, Varied Thrush, Wrentit, American Pipit, Cedar Waxwing, European Starling, Hutton's Vireo, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Spotted Towhee, Fox Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Purple Finch, Pine Siskin.

~ Alan Wight

RROS Needs a Social Chair

President Ken is seeking a volunteer to fill the role of Social Chair at our monthly meetings. 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.

Bombing Raid Reporting

In light of current world conditions we at *Kite Tales* wish to keep the membership informed of potential ongoing hazards.

August 17th at 9:45 AM, an incident occurred at the fire house in Libby, Texas, in which a Fire fighter, Todd Murray, was struck on the head while not wearing a hardhat. This was not a near miss incident.

It is a long standing Libby fire district policy to require the wearing of a hardhat when in the presence of aerial hazards, and Murray was wearing only his ball cap while loading equipment onto the fire truck in front of the office. Todd was preparing to patrol for lightning fires and was so pre-occupied with his task he failed to check for overhead hazards.

Todd recalls hearing a swooshing sound immediately before experiencing an impact across the top of his forehead. The blow stunned him, but did not knock him to the ground. He reported hearing strange high pitched screeching noises and seeing multiple shadows darting across the ground around him.

After the few moments needed to recover, Todd looked down to see a 2.5 lb - 18", fish at his feet. In disbelief, he looked skyward and saw an Osprey and two American Bald Eagles breaking off from an aerial "dogfight".

The mature eagle was apparently teaching it's fledgling to steal a meal from their raptor kin.

Todd was not seriously injured. The incident was witnessed by all six fire engine crew members and will, we're certain, become lore.

Bird Brains and Criminal Behavior

New research suggests birds' brains are more sophisticated than we thought.

Florida Scrub Jays with a history of petty theft are more concerned about being victims of crime than are innocent birds, new research shows. This suggests that the animals may use the past to predict the future and might put themselves in another's shoes - two mental feats so far attributed only to humans.

"Until recently we thought that animals were stuck in time," says Nicola Clayton, a psychologist at Cambridge University.

By observing captive jays bury and retrieve food in the presence and absence of fellow jays, Clayton and her behavioral scientist husband Nathan Emery find that the birds perform 'mental time-travel': they apply the lessons of past events to future behavior.

What's more, that only jay felons fear crime suggests the birds may have something akin to the human 'theory of mind' - an awareness that others think and of what they might think. There is no strong evidence for such awareness even in our cleverest, heavily studied cousins the chimpanzees. "Nothing like this has been shown in animals before," says Clayton.

Wild Scrub Jays (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*) bury food in soil for snacking later. Jays happily steal another's food if they see it being hidden, and are known to re-hide their own food.

Clayton and Emery find that pilfering, captive-reared jays return to rebury their food if they are watched hiding it. Jays without a criminal past are far more trusting. They leave their food in its original hiding place, watched or not.

"It's provocative research," says Sara Shettleworth, a psychologist at the University of Toronto who studies cognition. "Even in primates it's very controversial whether they understand the psychology of others, it's never even been suggested for a bird," she says.

Having spent their entire lives in the lab, the jays

might be behaving unnaturally; they may have learned to respond to cues in other birds' behavior. "This needs a heavy dose of skepticism" and more research in other animals to back it up, she says.

Others are more positive. "This doesn't allow us to say that the jays were aware of a causal relationship but they behave as though they are," says Alex Kacelnik, a behavior expert at the University of Oxford.

Just because jays appear to have a theory of mind doesn't mean the ability evolved in all animals a long time ago says Kacelnik. It may be specific to the survival needs of social birds such as jays. "These abilities may have appeared more than once in evolution," he says.

"I wouldn't dream of saying that scrub jays have a [human-like] theory of mind," says Clayton. "But I don't believe it evolved out of thin air." Given the number of birds and rodents, such as squirrels, that also stash food it shouldn't be hard for others to repeat and extend the work, she says

Man Smuggles Birds in his Pants

A Miami man is accused of smuggling 44 birds, including Cuban finches popular in Florida as pet songbirds, by strapping them to his body for a charter flight from Havana.

Carlos Rodriguez Avila was released last Thursday on \$50,000 bail after he was charged with lying on a customs declaration by denying he was bringing any wildlife into the United States.

Suspicious airport inspectors asked Rodriguez to raise his pant legs and saw something strapped to his legs when he arrived in Miami last Wednesday. A final count of 44 birds included some Cuban Melodious Finches.

The species is not endangered in its home range but is easily stressed by capture and smuggling, U.S. Fish and Wildlife agent John Rawls wrote in an affidavit supporting the criminal charge.

More 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
Clear Lake	Janet Swedberg 707-994-8860
Ukiah	Chuck Vaughn 707-462-8137

Monday, December 17th:

Benicia	Robin Leong 707-643-1287
Palo Alto	Matthew Dodder 650-858-0847
Monterey Bay	Debi Shearwater 831-637-8527

Tuesday, December 18th:

Marysville (Sutter/Yuba)	Tim Manolis 916-485-9009
--------------------------	-----------------------------

Wednesday, December 19th:

Mineral (Tehama county)	Steve Zachary 530-595-4444 x5132
Mt. Hamilton (Santa Clara)	Don Schmoldt 916-739-8821

Thursday, December 20th:

Peace Valley (Sutter county)	Bruce Deuel 530-527-9071
------------------------------	-----------------------------

Saturday, December 22nd:

East Contra Costa	Jimm Edgar 510-658-2330
-------------------	----------------------------

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
--------------------	------------------------------

Saturday, December 29th:

Southern Marin	Karen LeMay 415-924-9772
Mendocino Coast	Art Morley 707-964-2541
Pinnacles Nat'l. Mon.	Debi Shearwater 831-637-8527

Sunday, December 30th:

Año Nuevo	Al DeMartini 650-345-6988
Western Sonoma	Russ Agnew 707-823-7555
Panoche Valley	Debi Shearwater 831-637-8527

Tuesday, January 1st:

Angwin	Wendy Cole 707-963-2331
--------	----------------------------

Thursday, January 3rd:

Honey Lake	Bob Johnson 530-257-7027
------------	-----------------------------

Faster, Farther, Fatter

Migratory birds can travel great distances without stopping by overeating and flying in a V formation.

Researchers at Lund University in Sweden, measured the effect and the amount of food on metabolism, finding that birds fly more efficiently when they are carrying large stores of food.

Birds can double their body mass before a long-haul flight, but rather than weighing them down it makes them fly better and longer.

"The most likely explanation is that the efficiency with which metabolic power input is converted into mechanical output by flight muscles increases with fuel load," Anders Kvist said in his report.

Kvist and his team in Lund studied the metabolic rate of Red Knots while they were flying in wind tunnels. In a separate study, French scientists explained how flying in a V formation saves birds lots of energy.

Birds flying in the formation have lower pulse rates and wing beat frequencies than birds flying alone.

concluded on page 5

Observations

Species	#	Date	Place	County	Who	Notes
Red-necked Grebe	1	11/8	Doran Beach	SON	Dn, Tcn	
✓ Grtr-wht Fronted Goose	1	11/10	Hiway 1 at Hiway 116	SON	Aw, RROS	juv.
✓ " " " "	1	11/10	Willow Crk @ Russ. R.	SON	Aw, RROS	
✓ Snow Goose	3	11/10	Hiway 1 at Hiway 116	SON	Aw, RROS	1 juv.
✓ Ross' Goose	1	11/10	Penny Island, Russian R.	SON	Aw, RROS	adult
Eurasian Wigeon	1	Nov.	Bolinas Lagoon	MAR	M.Ob	
✓ Blue-winged Teal	2	11/1	Shollenberger Park	SON	Rr	both male
✓ " " "	10	11/22	Shollenberger Park	SON	Mf	6 maile
Harlequin Duck	1	Nov.	Chimney Rock, Pt Reyes	MAR	M.Ob	
✓ Hooded Merganser	7	11/8	Carmody Road Pond	SON	Dn, Tcn	
✓ " " "	2	11/22	Carmody Road Pond	SON	Mf	
✓ Osprey	1	11/22	Delta Pond	SON	Mf	
✓ Bald Eagle	1	11/22	Delta Pond	SON	Mf	ad. stealing from Osprey
Ferruginous Hawk	1	11/25	Flannery/Robinson Rds	SOL	Aw	
✓ Rough-legged Hawk	1	11/6	Stage Gulch Road	SON	Rr	light phase adult
✓ " " "	1	11/17	Bodega Head	SON	El	
Merlin	1	11/3	Lake Sonoma, visitor cen.	SON	Pl	
Peregrine Falcon	1	11/8	Doran Park	SON	Dn, Tcn	adult
" " "	2	11/9	SW side of Hood Mtn	SON	Gm, Lm	Peale's, pair?
Prairie Falcon	1	11/6	Rush Ranch	SON	Pl	
Mountain Plover	122	11/25	Flannery/Robinson Rds	SOL	Aw	
✓ Burrowing Owl	1	10/13	Blind Beach Overlook	SON	SDe	
" " "	1	10/13	Middle Two Rock Rd.	SON	Jg	
✓ Dusky-cappd Flycatcher	1	11/17	Bodega Head	SON	El	3rd county record?
✓ Tree or VG Swallow	6	11/18	Diekmann's Store	SON	El, Aw	
✓ Rufous-crownd Sparrow	2	11/9	Hood Mountain	SON	Gm, Lm	
✓ White-throated Sparrow	1	10/27	Sugarloaf SP	SON	Te	

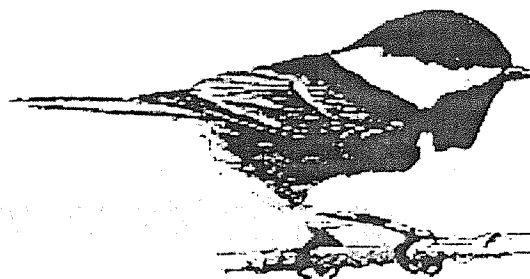
Observers:

Tyler Cannon-Nelson, Shona DeSilva, Ted Eliot, Mike Feighner, Joan Grosser, Peter Leveque, Eric Lichtwardt, Gerry Mugele, Lilly Mugele, Dan Nelson, RROS, Ruth Rudesill, Alan Wight,

Faster, Farther, Fatter (continued from page 4)

"Our results provide empirical evidence that, compared with solo flight, formation flight confers a significant aerodynamic advantage which allows birds to reduce their energy expenditure while flying at a similar speed," Henri Weimerskirch, of the National Center for Scientific Research, said.

"Taken together, these two sets of measurements add considerably to what we can say about the energetics of bird flight," Jeremy Rayner, of the University of Leeds in England, said in a commentary on the research.

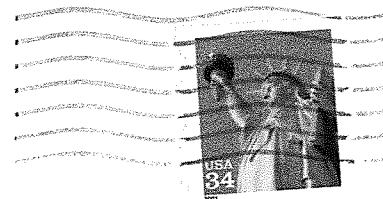


Redwood Region Ornithological Society was organized in 1962 "to encourage the study and conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their natural habitat." Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month, September through May. Regular general meetings (October through April) are held at 7:30 PM at 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, 6332 Stone Bridge Road, Santa Rosa CA 95409-5824	707 538-9194 E-Mail: lsallen@sonic.net
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 Bob Evans	707 935-3410 707 823-0609
Kite Tales:	Gerry Mugele, PO Box 813, Glen Ellen, Ca 95442-0813	707 938-2134 E-Mail: mewgull@Mugele.net

Gerald G. Mugele
PO Box 813
Glen Ellen, California 95442



Parmeter, BD & S, Fnd. Membrs
2500 Emerson St.
Napa CA 94558