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Kite Tales



Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 36 Number V

January 2002

Coming Attractions

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 RROS and accomplished birder. His trip to Alaska was the most recent birding adventure among numerous trips.

Richard began birding as a nine-year-old lad in Greenwich, Connecticut and Cape Cod, Massachusetts. He has birded widely in North America and has traveled to Saudi Arabia, Mexico and Costa Rica, accumulating a World List of over 900 species and an ABA area list of 625 species. All this travel doesn't mean that he has no roots, Richard has been a resident of Sonoma County for thirty years.

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

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

January 20th, Sunday - 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

January 25th, Friday - 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

February 14, Thursday, 7:30 PM - General Meeting

The Status of the Laguna de Santa Rosa

Bob Evans, member of the board of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, and RROS member, will speak to us on the current status of this great local resource and important part of our Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count.

February 16-18, Saturday-Monday - Field Trip to Tule Lake and Klamath Basin

We will explore this interesting area over Presidents' Day weekend. Details will appear in the February Kite Tales. Leader is Alan Wight. Please email or call Alan at 763-8572 (weekdays 7-9 pm or weekends any time) after January 8, 2002 for hotel or other trip information.

Are We a Little Tense or What?

A bird carrying a satellite tracking device has been arrested on suspicion of spying. (honest... I'm not making this up. *ed.*)

A South African stork, referred to by the name: Saturn, was detained by local police after crash landing in Burundi. The bird was part of a University of Cape Town study monitoring the migration patterns of birds.

Villagers in the area where Saturn landed were suspicious of the strange device strapped to the bird's back and handed him over to police.

After his address was found on the device, an e-mail was sent to Professor Les Underhill at the Cape Town university. Without further elaboration, it said the bird had been taken into custody.

The bird, who has an injured right wing, is being cared for by the police, reports the BBC.

Professor Underhill admitted: "The device looks pretty space age with an aerial and a little solar cell to charge the battery." He hopes the bird and device will eventually be returned unharmed. Another four birds also involved in the program died last February after encountering heavy rains in Mozambique.

Stopping by Woods on a CBC Morn

Whose woods these are I think I know,
His house is in the city though,
He will not see me stopping here
Beside his wood to count the crows.

My co-workers must think it queer
To brave the cold without a purpose clear,
To gaze at the nearly frozen lake,
These shortest and coldest days of the year.

They give their heads a shake
And ponder the meaning of "drake".
The only sound's the "zeep"
Of White-crowned Sparrows, now awake.

The crows are few and the owls are deep
In the wood. But I have fields and dumps to see
And species to tally before I sleep,
And species to tally before I sleep.

--- apologies to Robert Frost

Prez Ken Needs Your Help

Our President 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. No cookies! We can't have that!

Ken is also looking for a new editor for the Kite Tales. We need someone to take on the interesting task of assembling the calendar items, sightings, and field trip reports for publication. We've been told that this is a fun and exciting job and the old editor claims that he will be available as much as possible to help with the transition.

Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count

On December 16, 2001, on the annual Santa Rosa Christmas Count, 42 birders, in 14 parties, recorded 148 species and 29,700 individual birds.

In number of species recorded, this is probably among the top three Santa Rosa counts ever.

The most numerous species was American Robin, with 4,280 recorded, easily besting the runners-up which were European Starling with 2,282 and American Crow with 1,794. Top among waterfowl was Mallard with 1,544, with the nearest competitor being Ruddy Duck at 909. Killdeer topped the shorebirds with 152, followed by Greater Yellowlegs at 89.

Only one individual was seen of a number of species: Common Loon, Greater White-fronted Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, Cinnamon Teal, Peregrine Falcon, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Barn Swallow, American Dipper, California Thrasher, and Black-throated Gray Warbler.

Two species, Barn Swallow and Vesper Sparrow, were recorded for the first time in at least the past 25 years (available National Audubon records don't go further back).

Weather was good for birding: cloudy, cool (45-55 degrees), mostly calm and precipitation confined to some morning drizzle, except for rain after dark which negated evening owling.

Birders did note the increasing encroachment of housing and vineyards on bird habitat, which adversely affected counts of raptors and field birds while enhancing counts of people-friendly species such as robins, crows, and starlings.

~ Ted Eliot

2001 Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count Results

✓ 1	Common Loon	1114	American Coot	✓ 927	Bushtit
79	Pied-billed Grebe	152	Killdeer	✓ 2	Red-breasted Nuthatch
10	Bared Grebe	✓ 24	Black-necked Stilt	53	White-breasted Nuthatch
11	Western Grebe	✓ 3	American Avocet	22	Brown Creeper
37	American White Pelican	✓ 89	Greater Yellowlegs	37	Be wick's Wren
✓ 130	Double-crested Cormorant	3	Spotted Sandpiper	6	Winter Wren
✓ 3	American Bittern	63	Long-billed Curlew	33	Marsh Wren
45	Great Blue Heron	48	Least Sandpiper	✓ 1	American Dipper
120	Great Egret	6	Dunlin	189	Golden-crowned Kinglet
89	Snowy Egret	7	<i>Dowitcher sp.</i>	263	Ruby-crowned Kinglet
✓ 64	Cattle Egret	10	Common Snipe	174	Western Bluebird
✓ 11	Green Heron	116	Mew Gull	45	Hermit Thrush
3	Black-crowned Night-Heron	610	Ring-billed Gull	4280	American Robin
166	Turkey Vulture	649	California Gull	156	Varied Thrush
✓ 1	Greater White-fronted Goose	3	Herring Gull	21	Wrentit
✓ 2	Snow Goose	✓ 2	Thayer's Gull	93	Northern Mockingbird
✓ 340	Canada Goose	8	Western Gull	✓ 1	California Thrasher
✓ 55	Wood Duck	8	Glaucous-winged Gull	2282	European Starling
5	Gadwall	512	<i>Gull sp.</i>	128	American Pipit
✓ 1	Eurasian Wigeon	603	Rock Dove	136	Cedar Waxwing
✓ 180	American Wigeon	✓ 272	Band-tailed Pigeon	4	Orange-crowned Warbler
✓ 1544	Mallard	228	Mourning Dove	1	Yellow-rumped (Myrtle)
✓ 1	Cinnamon Teal	8	Western Screech-Owl	120	Yellow-rumped (Audubon's)
84	Northern Shoveler	15	Great Horned Owl	156	Yellow-rumped Warbler sp.
153	Northern Pintail	✓ 6	Northern Pygmy-Owl	✓ 1	Black-throated Gray Warbler
30	American Green-winged Teal	✓ 2	Spotted Owl	35	Townsend's Warbler
✓ 112	Canvasback	✓ 1	Short-eared Owl	✓ 2	Hermit Warbler
202	Ring-necked Duck	✓ 173	Anna's Hummingbird	2	Common Yellowthroat
20	Greater Scaup	32	Belted Kingfisher	117	Spotted Towhee
14	Lesser Scaup	166	Acorn Woodpecker	396	California Towhee
3	<i>Scaup sp.</i>	1	Red-breasted Sapsucker	5	Rufous-crowned Sparrow
201	Bufflehead	101	Nuttall's Woodpecker	✓ 3	Vesper Sparrow
24	Common Goldeneye	15	Downy Woodpecker	8	Lark Sparrow
7	Hooded Merganser	12	Hairy Woodpecker	44	Savannah Sparrow
✓ 64	Common Merganser	6	N. Flicker (Yellow-shafted)	41	Fox Sparrow
909	Ruddy Duck	80	N. Flicker (Red-shafted)	292	Song Sparrow
✓ 5	Osprey	31	<i>Northern Flicker sp.</i>	20	Lincoln's Sparrow
✓ 36	White-tailed Kite	6	Pileated Woodpecker	8	White-throated Sparrow
19	Northern Harrier	164	Black Phoebe	613	White-crowned Sparrow
5	Sharp-shinned Hawk	28	Say's Phoebe	591	Golden-crowned Sparrow
7	Cooper's Hawk	✓ 6	Loghead Shrike	1015	Dark-eyed Junco
52	Red-shouldered Hawk	34	Hutton's Vireo	779	Red-winged Blackbird
67	Red-tailed Hawk	44	Stellar's Jay	311	Western Meadowlark
75	American Kestrel	361	Western Scrub-Jay	1306	Brewer's Blackbird
2	Merlin	1794	American Crow	7	Brown-headed Cowbird
1	Peregrine Falcon	37	Common Raven	235	<i>Blackbird sp.</i>
36	Ring-necked Pheasant	✓ 10	Horned Lark	32	Purple Finch
36	Wild Turkey	✓ 18	Tree Swallow	764	House Finch
150	California Quail	✓ 31	Violet-green Swallow	30	Pine Siskin
10	Virginia Rail	✓ 1	Barn Swallow	292	Lesser Goldfinch
2	Sora	✓ 222	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	66	American Goldfinch
✓ 5	Common Moorhen	243	Oak Titmouse	149	House Sparrow

Ted Eliot and Bob Evans Compilers

Observations

Species	#	Date	Place	County	Who	Notes
Eurasian Wigeon	2	12/10	Doran Beach	SON	TE	
✓ Redhead	2	12/10	Bodega Harbor	SON	TE	
✓ Long-tailed Duck	3	12/11	Port Sonoma	SON	DA	
✓ Barrow's Goldeneye	5	12/11	Port Sonoma	SON	DA	all fem
Golden Eagle	2	12/14	Cordelia Junction	SOL	DA	adults
Peregrine Falcon	1	12/13	Monte Rio Boat Launch	SON	DB	
"	1	12/15	Adobe Canyon Road	SON	IM	imm.
✓ American Dipper	1	12/16	Sonoma Creek, Adobe Cyn.	SON	IM, LD	

Observers: Dennis Beall, Liz Donach, Ted Eliot, Ian Morrison,