



Kite Tales

Volume 49 Number 6

February 2014

**RROS General Meeting
February 13, 2014, 7:00pm
Laguna Wastewater Treatment Plant**

“Costa Rica: A perspective~”

February 13, 2014

Gordon Beebe traveled to Costa Rica photographing wildlife and scenery in this country so famous for its biodiversity. He will share his images and tell us about strategies to protect wildlife and habitat in the region. He will also speak about ecotourism in Costa Rica.

Directions to the monthly meeting:

From Hwy 101, take Hwy 116 west toward Sebastopol. Turn right (north) on Llano Rd. and go ~ 1 mile to **Laguna Wastewater Treatment Plant at 4300 Llano Rd, Santa Rosa**. Look for an open gate on right. Proceed to Administration Bldg. at SE corner of the plant. From Hwy 12, take Llano Rd. south about 3 miles. Plant is on the left.



**“Big Stretch”, Great-horned Owl,
with fledglings, at Spring Lake, by
Tom Reynolds**

Dinner before February General Meeting : This month, join us at **5:30pm** at the **Outback Steakhouse**, 4619 Redwood Dr., Rohnert Park. Take the Golf Course Exit from Highway 101. The restaurant is located at the north end of the Wal-Mart Center just west of Hwy 101.

Save the Date: March 13, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Tom Reynolds will show videos and still photos of birds and other wildlife. He will also discuss photography techniques and equipment.

FIELD TRIPS – February 2014, and beyond:

February 1, Saturday: Wintering Raptors and Waterfowl of Solano and Yolo, 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM, Terry Colborn, leader. The open agricultural lands of Solano and Yolo Counties provide excellent foraging habitat for scores of wintering raptors, while the wetlands of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area are the winter home for thousands of waterfowl including ducks, geese, Swans, and many shorebirds. This all-day field trip will visit several local winter habitats, in search of Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Burrowing, Barn and Great-horned Owls, Long-billed Curlews, as well as the elusive and threatened Mountain Plover. We also expect to see a representative sampling of waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, a.k.a. the Vic Fazio Refuge. Participants meet the leader at 8:00 AM in Dixon, in the southwest corner of the Wal-Mart parking lot, located on East Dorset Drive, at the Hwy 113 exit off I-80. Bring a lunch/snacks and liquids; dress in layers. Heavy rains cancel. For questions or more info, contact Terry Colborn, field trip leader at 916.705.8991; www.TLCBirding.com.

February 15, Saturday: San Pablo Bay shore sites. Restoration of key habitat along Sonoma County's San Pablo Bay coastline is underway. There are large winter concentrations of waterfowl (including perhaps Barrow's Goldeneye), shorebirds, and raptors (maybe a Rough-legged Hawk or Short-eared Owl) to be pursued, plus flocks of sparrows (maybe Clay-colored) and other species of plowed fields (pipits, Horned Larks) and hedgerows (shrikes). We will meet at 8:00am at the Port of Sonoma Marina parking lot, to check the mouth of the Petaluma River, before heading east to Reclamation Road, the Sonoma River bridge, and the Skaggs Island spur. Finish by 3 PM. Bring your lunch, dress for the weather. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Lisa Hug

March 21-23, Friday through Sunday: Honey Lake Sage Grouse plus winter birds of the Great Basin and east side of the Sierra. **Rick Le Baudour** leads. (707-974-0004). We will spend the better part of three days birding the Susanville area in Lassen County. The main focus of this trip is to see Greater Sage-grouse on the lek. That means leaving the hotel at about 4:15 AM on Saturday. Depending on weather and road conditions, some walking (a mile or so) may be required to get to the lek. We will also explore both units of the Honey Lake Wildlife Refuge, Janesville grade for mountain birds, and various other stops along the way. Other specialty birds seen in the past include Northern Goshawk, Prairie Falcon, Lewis's Woodpecker, Northern Shrike, the newly recognized Sagebrush Sparrow, American Tree Sparrow, Harris sparrow, etc. The River Inn is the hotel we have used in the past (530 257-6051). There is also a Super 8 in town (530-257-2782). The trip begins officially on Friday morning at 8:30 in the parking lot at The River Inn. Bring your optics, especially spotting scopes, food for lunches and lots of layers of warm clothing. The temperature at the lek can be in the mid-teens. We will dine out for breakfast and dinner. Feel free to call with any questions regarding this trip. Please check with Rick in case weather affects plans at the last minute. Approximate driving time is 5 to 5½ hours, birding not included. If you plan to drive up Friday morning call Rick to find out where to meet later on Friday.

April 12, Saturday: Mines Rd and Del Valle in Livermore, Alameda County: Leader: Ruthie Rudesill, 707-833-6026, evenings. ruthier@sonic.net There is potential for some very interesting birds including Roadrunner, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Phainopepla, Rufous-crowned Sparrow. This will be an all day excursion. Bring binoculars, scopes, layers of clothing, lunch and beverages. There is an entrance fee to Del Valle Reservoir Park. It was \$6 last year (+ Bridge Toll for the Benicia Bridge). Car pooling is encouraged. Meet at the Park n Ride at Hwy 116 x 121 in south Sonoma at 7am. Heavy rain cancels.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

RROS Mendocino Coast field trip, January 11, 2014, Ron LeValley leading:

Despite a forecast for steady rain (an ambivalent blessing for our parched region), over 20 dedicated birders turned out for this exploration of our neighboring county to the north. Ten of us met at 7:30 AM at the PG&E Park&Ride, just north of Santa Rosa, to carpool, then headed for Point Arena, our planned rendezvous with our leader, Ron LeValley. There we met another dozen birders, most well attired in rain gear against the now-steady cold rain.

A Peregrine Falcon had just taken some prey and was perched on a nearby sea cliff within scope range. Unfortunately, Big Al (or, Big Alice?), the stray Laysan Albatross, failed to appear this year, after 18 years of reliable visits. Perhaps this confirmed bachelor(ette) found a mate at last? A gang of Black Oystercatchers and several Red-breasted Mergansers got our bird list off to a decent start.

Our grand caravan then proceeded north to the scenic Point Arena lighthouse in search of rock shorebirds. The rain let up and a spot of blue sky showed offshore, raising hopes for a nicer day. We spotted a Black Turnstone or two and two Least Sandpipers. Next stop was an obscure pond off Stoneboro Road in Manchester State Park. Lots of coots and a few ducks and an uncommon Common Yellowthroat kept our attention until someone spotted an apparently non-red-tailed hawk drop into a pine with just its head exposed. This bird and/or a second similar raptor generated vigorous debate, as it spread its wings slightly to dry showing what appeared to some of us to be a classic Rough-legged Hawk underwing. That species is not frequent on the Mendocino coast so the identification was greeted with some skepticism. Nevertheless, we list it. Incontrovertible was the stunning adult Ferruginous Hawk standing in a field just down the road. As our caravan straggled north, an Osprey, a Sharp-shinned, and a Cooper's Hawk were spotted by one or another vehicle, while a couple of dozen kestrels lined the wires along our route north.

Next stop was the Navarro River mouth. We arrived to shouts of "KITTIWAKE" and all were able to spot this rarity as the gulls flew up and circled over the estuary before landing on a distant offshore rock. The gull flock here included, in addition, the usual suspects: Mew, Western, California, Glaucous-winged, and a smattering of Herring and Thayer's Gulls. The team added Common Goldeneyes and a Common Merganser to the duck list, plus a Belted Kingfisher fishing.

Next, a stop at Caspar Pond: more ducks, coots, and a sparrow flock. A Wilson's Snipe flushed as we arrived. Stomachs growling, we arrived at the Little River mouth at Van Damme State Park for our picnic lunch. A River Otter in close got our attention. More oystercatchers plus Eared, Horned, and Western Grebes frolicked in the surf. We passed up

the chance to chase the elusive coastal Gray Jays that have often been found here (though apparently not so often recently) in order to have more time to explore MacKerricher State Park and Lake Cleone just north of Fort Bragg, hoping to spot two rare species found here over Christmas, a Black-capped Chickadee, not previously recorded south of Humboldt County, and a Black-and-White Warbler spotted on the Fort Bragg Christmas Bird Count. Flooding and the ravages of time have taken a toll on the lakeside boardwalk, but with care we were able to explore the target area along the lake shore and soon heard tell-tale chickadee sounds and spotted not just one but perhaps as many as three or four (by my optimistic estimation) of this north coast chickadee, possibly scouting a new southernmost West Coast breeding location. In that same flock was the female Black-and-White Warbler, always a treat for us on the West Coast, along with both kinglets, and an Orange-crowned Warbler. Further entertainment was provided by another Peregrine taking a surplus coot before our startled eyes. Acorn, Downy, and a Hairy Woodpecker worked the lakeside woods, the Hairy with an odd yellow breast and tail, a rare genetic anomaly, apparently. The lake hosted a few new ducks for our trip list: American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, and Greater Scaup.

The sea-watch here and at nearby Glass Beach turned up Black-bellied Plovers and Surfbirds and a hat-trick of cormorants, but, curiously, no scoters at all. As the evening came on we noted a few stray rain drops, wet bookends to a glorious winter day.

Our final stop was at Ron's photo gallery in Fort Bragg. Ron and his partners have captured the essence of this rugged coastline landscape and its iconic wildlife in stunning images. My favorite was the eyeball-to-eyeball flying Tufted Puffin.

A long day, but thanks to Ron for a most informative introduction to the north coast.

Gene Hunn, Field Trips Coordinator

Observations: 12/21/2013 – 1/20/2014

Compiled by David A. Hofmann

Species	Date/s	Location	County.	#	Observer/s	Notes
Grtr White-frntd Goose	1/08/14	Lakeville Ponds	SON	6	EuH	
Snow Goose	1/02/14	Casa Grande High	SON	2	DaB	
Snow Goose	1/04/14	Hudeman Slough	SON	4	AIW	
Cackling Goose	1/09/14	Ellis Creek Ponds	SON	3	BeB	
Trumpeter Swan	12/25/13-1/02/14	Vacaville area	SOL	6	DaD.PBC,BDP	
Eurasian Wigeon	1/12/14	Salmon Creek	SON	1 m	RoM	
Redhead	1/05-10/14	Ellis Creek Ponds	SON	1-2 f	ChS, BoD	
Long-tailed Duck	12/29/13	Bodega Marine Lab	SON	1	JaS, Bi&PaL	
Barrow's Goldeneye	1/02-04/14	Port Sonoma	SON	6m 1f	BiL, AIW	
Red-necked Grebe	1/05/14	Duncan's Landing	SON	3	AIW	
Red-tld Hawk (Harlan's)	1/16-20/14	Bird Walk Reg. Park	SON	1	LiH, DeF, DaB	
Ferruginous Hawk	12/21/13	Fedrick Ranch Road	SON	1	RAR	
Ferruginous Hawk	1/04/14	Stage Gulch Road	SON	1 im	AIW	
Ferruginous Hawk	1/12/14	Colman Valley Road	SON	1	RoM	
Rough-legged Hawk	1/19/14	Tolay Lake Reg. Pk	SON	1	DaB	
Merlin	1/19/14	Tolay Lake Reg. Pk	SON	1	DaB	
Merlin	12/21/13	Fedrick Ranch Road	SON	1	RAR	

Prairie Falcon	1/04/14	Skaggs Island Road	SON	1	AIW
Prairie Falcon	1/19/14	Tolay Lake Reg. Pk	SON	1	DaB
Pacific Golden Plover	12/25-28/13	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	JoP,BDP,DAH,EuH
Snowy Plover	1/05/14	Doran Regional Park	SON	21	AIW
Lesser Yellowlegs	12/29/13-1/04/14	Hudeman Slough	SON	2-6	DoM,EuH,AIW
Stilt Sandpiper	12/21/13-1/10/14	Hudeman Slough	SON	1	MuB,PBC,BiL,mob
Iceland Gull (Kumlien's)	12/28/13	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	EuH t/b revd CBRC
Black-legged Kittiwake	12/29/13	near shore pelagic	SON	2	EuH
Ancient Murrelet	1/04/14	Bodega Head St.Park	SON	11	PBC
Burrowing Owl	12/29/13	Bodega Head St.Park	SON	1	DAH
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	12/27-28/13	Kenwood yard	SON	1	RAR
Red-naped Sapsucker	12/28/13	Sonoma yard	SON	1	EuH
Northern Shrike	1/7-18/14	Huichica Wetlands	NAP	1 im	MuB, De&DaH,mob
Barn Swallow	12/29/13	Bodega Head St.Park	SON	4	DaN,BDP,JoP,DAH
Mountain Bluebird	12/29/13	Duncan's Mill area	SON	1	RiK, MiH
Nashville Warbler	12/26/13-1/17/14	Diekmann's Store	SON	1	DeF,RAR,DeH,mob
Palm Warbler	12/21/13	Old Lakeville Hwy #3	SON	1	RAR
Northern Waterthrush	12/29/13-1/12/14	Diekmann's Store	SON	1	MaD,RAR,PBC,mob
Clay-colored Sparrow	12/21/13	Old Lakeville Hwy #3	SON	1	RAR
Swamp Sparrow	1/20/14	Spring Lake Reg. Pk	SON	3	TeC, mob
Orchard Oriole	12/26-29/13	Diekmann's Store	SON	1 f	DeF, RAR, mob
Orchard Oriole	1/04-17/14	Diekmann's Store	SON	1 f	BDP,MaB,DAH,ROD

Observers for this period: Dave Barry, Margaret Barson, Murray Berner, Betty Burrige, Peter B. Colasanti, Terry Colborn, David Diller, Matthew Dodder, Bob Dyer, Dea Freid, Denise & Dave Hamilton, Mike Heffernon, Denise Herzberg, David A. Hofmann, Eugene Hunn, Richard Kuehn, Bill Lenarz, Bill & Paget Lenarz, Roger Marlowe, Dominik Mosur, Dan Nelson, Rob O'Donnel, Benjamin D. Parmeter, John Parmeter, Ruth Ann Rudesill, Chris Selvig, Jackie Sones, Alan Wight

The compiler apologizes and takes full responsibility for omissions or errors regarding this list.

"PISHING with PARMETER"

There was an incursion of Bohemian Waxwings into Sonoma County during the early spring of 1969. Any large flock of Cedar Waxwings encountered usually had a few Bohemians in the mix. They are easily picked out by size and call differences. Natalie Mestichen, a librarian at the Santa Rosa library and a charter member of RROS, was the first to report the species. Very soon all the birders were recording them. Ken Jewett took me out to Jaylee Lane near Santa Rosa and showed me my life Sonoma County bird on 3/8/69. There were 15 Bohemians in a mixed flock with Cedar Waxwings. I was living in Cotati at the time, and on 4/12 & 13/69, there were 6 and 11 birds, respectively, at my home there. The bird was widespread in all Sonoma County at this time. The birds were present until mid-April, or for about 5 weeks, before they departed. Ken Ackerman and Gerry Muegle reported 2 birds present in a flock of Cedar Waxwings on 1/25/05 at Oakmont. Let's hope for another big influx. *Mike~*

RROS welcomes new members **Mookie Fudenberg** of Sebastopol, and **Gordon Beebe**, of Santa Rosa.

We thank **Jackie Sones** for her very generous gift of all her time and effort in producing and presenting her wonderful **History of Bodega Head**, at the January meeting.

Thank you also to **Jack and Marilyn Jones**, and **Andy LaCasse** for their donations.

Leonid Meteor Shower (18 Nov 2001)
Anza Borrego Desert

Not being owls,
we took in the whole
bowl of sky
facing opposite poles,
so unlike us otherwise,
yet prerequisite that night
for counting flares
of cosmic ice supposed
to emanate from Leo
north-northeast, but
sizzling everywhere
unmindful of the rules.

Meanwhile the owl
kept her eyes on the ground
and considered what
she knew of humankind
(who rarely lay in lawn chairs
after midnight staring up),
called us twice, then launched
herself like stealth,
great dark wings
gliding backlit through the palms
and rivaling
the splendid show behind.

Sarita Eastman

"Our Father..."

Alexander Wilson, who was born in Scotland in 1766, and emigrated to America at the age of 28, is rightly called "the father of American ornithology". When the genus *Wilsonia* is included, there are more birds named after Wilson than any other early American naturalist. He was the first to study American birds systematically in the field, and to describe them

from experience, rather than hearsay. While working as a teacher in southern Pennsylvania, during his first years in America, he scoured the surrounding countryside, observing, collecting, and describing the birds he encountered, about even the most common of which little was known. (Wilson was the first to describe the parasitic behavior of the Brown Headed Cowbird).

From 1803 till the end of his life, Wilson devoted himself completely to describing and cataloging the country's birds in his nine volume work, *American Ornithology*. On three monumental collecting journeys, from 1804 through 1810, Wilson covered most of the area of the original thirteen states, as well much of the western territories. More than two thousand miles of his travel was on foot...difficult to imagine today. He was an extremely energetic man, who combined great vigor and tolerance of hardship, with a fine scientific mind. He was also a compelling and highly productive writer, with a clear, colorful prose style. On each return from the field, he devoted himself, day and night, to elegant descriptions of the birds he had collected and observed. In addition, much of his time, as was the case with Audubon, was spent travelling in search of subscribers, at the rate of \$125 each, for complete editions of *American Ornithology*. As well as funding his research with these subscriptions, he used his travels to accumulate a huge network of friends and collaborators, who sent him both interesting species and behavioral descriptions, from areas in which he was unable to spend collecting time himself. As the volumes of *American Ornithology* were produced, Wilson included descriptions of specimens collected on further explorations of America, such as that of Lewis and Clark, from which he noted Lewis's Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker, and Western Tanager.

American Ornithology was lavishly illustrated with engravings based on Wilson's own drawings (he was a fine artist too), which were painstakingly hand colored after printing. Much of Audubon's famous, later work was based on Wilson's, even including the poses and backgrounds of many of his birds.

The outbreak of the War of 1812 was very hard on Wilson, as it dried up new financial commitments, and threatened contracts already made. Lack of funds, and the very small pool of colorists from which he could draw, forced Wilson to take on the tedious task of coloring the engravings of the final volumes himself, keeping him from the field, and wearing him down emotionally. He complained to his friend George Ord that the intense application to the task of dunning subscribers for their commitments, and hand producing each volume of his work, was sapping his strength, and keeping him from the field, which had always been the source of his great energy. He finished the eighth volume of A.O. in July of 1813, and hoped to complete and publish the final volume by the following April. However, weakened by the constant stress, he contracted dysentery in August of 1812, from which he died. He was buried in the graveyard of Old Swede's Church, in Philadelphia. He was 47 years old.

The final volume of *American Ornithology* was completed by George Ord, from Wilson's notes and drawings, and was supplemented by Ord's own observations and records.

The completion of *American Ornithology* set a new standard for the scientific study of birds, and was a basis for all that followed, from Audubon to the present. It really was the first "modern" guide to birds. *Ed.~*

Redwood Region Ornithological Society (www.rros.org) 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, at 7:00 pm at the Laguna Waste Water Treatment Plant, 4300 Llano Road, Santa Rosa California, unless otherwise announced. Dues are \$20 per family, \$15 per individual or \$5 per student for a one-year membership. Send dues to RROS Treas. Don Howard, 979 Hogwarts Circle, Petaluma CA 94954.

RROS Officers

President - Bill Doyle- 1966 Belmont Ct, Santa Rosa, 95404	shortbill@comcast.net	483-877
Vice Pres. - Terry Haag- 1340 Big Plum Dr., Sebastopol, 95472	teresitahaag@comcast.net	823-85
Secretary - Mike Nelligan- 4663 Sullivan Way, Santa Rosa, 95409	mnbudymn@sonic.net	539-1897
Treasurer - Don Howard- 979 Hogwarts Circle, Petaluma, 94954	binkybunji2@comcast.net	637-0868

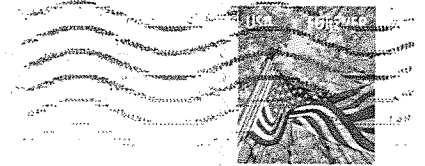
Committee Chairs

Field Trips - Gene Hunn Petaluma, 94954.....	enhunn323@comcast.net	981-7301
Observations- David Hofmann 2021 Pioneer Wy #47, Santa Rosa, 95403	nnamfoh@comcast.net	546-0325
Christmas Bird Count - Bill Doyle- 1966 Belmont Ct, SRosa, 95404	shortbill@comcast.net	483-8773
Kite Tales - Bill Doyle 1966 Belmont Ct, Santa Rosa, 95404	shortbill@comcast.net	483-8773

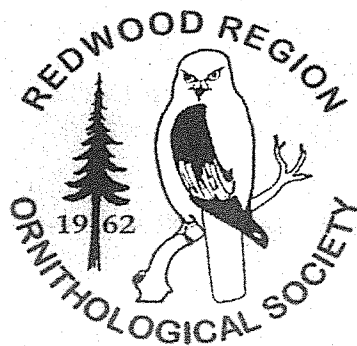
Kite Tales Deadlines: Submit observations to David Hofmann, all other items to Bill Doyle by the 20th of the month.

OAKLAND CA 946

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