



Kite Tales

Volume 50 Number 4

December 2014



Winter Evening, at Gray Lodge WMA, by Ken Wilson

**RROS General Meeting
December 11, 2014, 7p.m.
at Laguna Wastewater Treatment Facility,
4300 Llano Road, Santa Rosa**

Members' Media Night - Our December meeting will be members' media night. It is an opportunity for our members to show their images of birds, birders and birding. In addition to our many fine photographers, RROR has many talented artists who create sculptures and paintings of birds. We encourage all of our creative members to share their creations at this meeting.

IMPORTANT NOTICE~

This December 11, 2014 meeting will be our last meeting at the Llano Rd. Sewage Treatment Plant. Beginning with the first meeting of the New Year, January 14, 2015, we will be meeting at the hall of the First United Methodist Church, at 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa, between Talbot Ave. and California Ave. This is currently the monthly meeting place of Madrone Audubon. Directions from 101 will be provided in the January Kite Tales.

Save the Date:**Monthly Meeting for Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at 7 p.m.**

Colors in Birds~ Why are birds so brightly colored? Where does the color come from? What makes hummingbirds so special? Robert Lewis of Wingbeats will answer these questions and discuss feather structure, molt and bird behavior. His presentation will be illustrated with his outstanding photographs.

Directions to the DECEMBER 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 left.

Dinner Before the monthly 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.

FIELD TRIPS – Autumn 2014:

December 2014: Christmas Bird Counts. Santa Rosa, Sunday, December 14; Sonoma Valley, Friday, December 27; West Sonoma County Sunday, December 29.

January 10-11, Saturday and/or January 11, Sunday, 2015: January 10, Saturday: Walnut Grove/Thornton wintering waterfowl concentrations and the Consumnes River Reserve. Ken Wilson will lead. Meet at the junction of Stanly Road and State Highway 12/29 just south of Napa at 8 AM. We will then proceed through Fairfield on Highway 12 to State Highway 113, then north to Flannery Road to look for Mountain Plovers and Burrowing Owls. Then continue on Highway 12 to I-5, then north to Thornton (exit 493), then west to Staten Island Rd. where winter flocks of ducks, geese, swans, cranes, and ibis as well as winter raptors should be in force. Lunch at the Consumnes River Reserve north of Thornton. After lunch we will head north through Sacramento, then west to near Davis to watch for Short-eared Owls at sunset. If you have just one day free, you can head home from here on I-80. Otherwise, proceed north on State Highway 113 to Yuba City for the night. The Bonanza Inn in Yuba City is recommended. It might be a good idea to reserve a room early as it is hunting season. **January 11, Sunday:** Prime targets are the Gray Lodge State Wildlife Management Area and the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Expect a rather different mix of species here than near Thornton. If you stayed the night in Yuba City, after an early breakfast we will leave from the Bonanza Inn to bird the base of the Sutter Buttes. Otherwise, plan to meet at the entrance to Gray Lodge, on Almond Orchard-Pennington Rd. south from the Colusa Highway (6.5 miles w of Gridley), at 9:30 AM. If you are coming from home direct, it is approximately 2.5 hours from Santa Rosa via Clear Lake or from Petaluma via Vacaville. Leader TBA. For more info see <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/lands/wa/region2/graylodge/>

January 24, 2015, Saturday: Gulls of the Sonoma County coast. Meet at Bodega Bay at the large dirt lot along Bay Flat Rd. at Westshore Rd, at 8:00 am. We will check Bodega Bay, Bodega Head, Salmon Creek beach, and Goat Rock Beach (and points between) for roosting flocks of gulls (and other birds of interest). The usual suspects include (of all ages): Heermann's, Mew, Ring-billed, Western, California, Herring, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, and maybe Bonaparte's, with the slim possibility of rarities such as Glaucous, Black-legged Kittiwake, Iceland, and/or Slaty-backed (but don't hold your breath), plus hybrids (aarrgh!). There will be lots of non-gulls to look at also. Gene Hunn leads (enhunn323@comcast.net, 707-981-7301). Bring lunch or forage on route. Heavy rains cancel.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS:

Tolay Lake RP, Saturday, November 8th: The field trip was ably led by Andy Lacasse. Though bone dry out there, the raptors put on a good show, especially the Peregrine and Prairie Falcons herding massive murmurations of starlings (several thousand strong). Also noted, a quick flyby by a Merlin, lots of American Kestrels, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks, two Ferruginous Hawks (an adult and an immature), and three Golden Eagles (two adults with a youngster, no doubt locally raised). A Varied Thrush posed for photographers in the oak woodland on the trail towards the East Peak. Steller's Jays at the headquarters reflected this species seasonal wanderings, much noted elsewhere this fall. A flock of 20 Long-billed Curlews had arrived for the winter, despite the drought. Lots of Loggerhead Shrikes (the local resident family), and Say's Phoebes. We failed to find Burrowing Owls but heard rumors of one elsewhere in the park. Access to this Regional Park property is restricted to those who have "qualified" for a pass (by attending an orientation session), or to organized groups.

Lynch Canyon and Rush Ranch, Saturday, November, 22nd: A small but hardy crew of birders joined our leader Dave Barry on an invigorating morning hike in Lynch Canyon Open Space Park (Solano County), with an afternoon extension to Rush Ranch Open Space off Grizzly Island Road. We persevered through the tail end of the morning's rain to enjoy clearing skies and broad views with lots of raptors drying and stretching their wings.

Lots of Red-tailed Hawks of all phases and ages, lots of Northern Harriers and American Kestrels similarly various, several White-tailed Kites, a single PEREGRINE, in hot pursuit of a duck, a soaring ROUGH-LEGGED HAWK (Lynch Canyon) and a distant FERRUGINOUS HAWK (over Rush Ranch). Perhaps the raptorial highlight was three GOLDEN EAGLES out hunting (two at Lynch Canyon, one at Rush Ranch). Also a Loggerhead Shrike, three Barn Owls (Rush Ranch), various sparrows, tons of meadowlarks, lots of Say's and Black Phoebes, and to top it off at least 100 Long-billed Curlews along Grizzly Island Road and a colony of at least half a dozen LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS and a pair of ROCK WRENS, both on the North Ridge at Lynch Canyon.

Observations: Oct. 21, 2014-Nov. 20, 2014

Compiled by David A. Hofmann

Specie/s	Date/s	Location	County #	Observer/s
Grtr Wht-frntd Goose	10/26-11/7/14	widespread in county	SON 100's	mob
Cackling Goose	10/28-11/5/14	Salmon Crk estuary	SON 2	BiG,BrO,DAH,BDP
Tundra Swan	11/12/14	Bridgehaven	SON 8	BrO
Eurasian Wigeon	10/29-11/5/14	Salmon Crk estuary	SON 1	BrO,DAH,BDP
Eurasian Wigeon	11/14-18/14	Salmon Crk estuary	SON 1	EuH,MoF.DeH,WiG
White-winged Scoter	10/24/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON 1	ROD
White-winged Scoter	10/26/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON 1	EuH
White-winged Scoter	10/28/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON 1	RAR
White-winged Scoter	10/28/14	Salmon Crk estuary	SON 1	BiG photo
Black Scoter	11/12/14	Duncan's Landing	SON 1	BrO

Long-tailed Duck	10/28/14	Salmon Crk estuary	SON	1 m	BiG	photo
Red-necked Grebe	11/12/14	Duncan's Landing	SON	1	BrO	
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel	10/31/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON	10	ScC	
American Bittern	11/19/14	Foothill Reg. Park	SON	1	EuH	
Least Bittern	11/16-20/14	Foothill Reg. Park	SON	1	Cr&AnRo,RAR,DoK	
Ferruginous Hawk	10/21/14	Shorttail Gulch Trail	SON	1	LiH	
Ferruginous Hawk	11/8/14	Tolay Lake Reg. Pk	SON	2	AnL, mob	
Ferruginous Hawk	11/14/14	Hwy 37 X Lakeville	SON	2	MiB	photos
Ferruginous Hawk	11/15/14	East Railroad Ave.	SON	1	AIW	
Ferruginous Hawk	11/15/14	Ellis Creek Ponds	SON	1	BrO	
Merlin	11/7/14	Rail Ponds	SON	1	MiH	
Merlin	11/8/14	Tolay Lake Reg. Pk	SON	1	AnL, mob	
Merlin	11/15/14	Ellis Creek Ponds	SON	1	BrO	
Prairie Falcon	11/8/14	Tolay Lake Reg. Pk	SON	1	AnL, mob	
Snowy Plover	11/9/14	Doran Regional Park	SON	10	BoL, mob	
Lesser Yellowlegs	11/3/14	Shollenberger Park	SON	2	EuH	
Long-billed Curlew	11/3/14	Shollenberger Park	SON	2	EuH	
Spotted Sandpiper	10/27-11/7/14	Diekmann's Store	SON	1	BrO, MiH	
Red Knot	10/28-11/8/14	Doran Regional Park	SON	1	RAR, ChD, mob	
Marbled Murrelet	11/7-8/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON	1	BrO, RuS, mob	
Ancient Murrelet	11/8/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON	4	RuS, mob	
Cassin's Auklet	11/2/14	Salmon Creek Beach	SON	6	JaS	photos
Cassin's Auklet	11/4/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON	1	LiH	
Cassin's Auklet	11/5/14	Doran Regional Park	SON	1	DAH, BDP	photos
Cassin's Auklet	11/8-9/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON	1	ChD, BoL, mob	
Burrowing Owl	10/29/14	Bodega Head St. Pk	SON	1	BrO	
Poorwill	11/6/14	Bodega Marine Lab	SON	1	JaS	photos
Lewis's Woodpecker	11/2/14	Thorn Rd/Sebastopol	SON	1	WeP	
Hammond's Flycatcher	9/26/14	Owl Canyon	SON	1	LaS	
Tropical Kingbird	10/21/14	Shorttail Gulch Trail	SON	1-2	DeF, EuH, LiH	
Tropical Kingbird	10/24/14	Hwy #1 X Birdwalk Pk	SON	1	BrO	
Nashville Warbler	11/2/14	Diekmann's Store	SON	1	BrO	
Palm Warbler	10/21-22/14	Shorttail Gulch Trail	SON	1	LiH, RAR	
Palm Warbler	11/15/14	Reclamation Road	SON	1	BrO	
Yellow-breasted Chat	11/7/14	Rail Ponds/Bayflat Rd	SON	1	MiH	
Harris's Sparrow	11/20-21/14	Bird Walk Reg. Park	SON	1	DeH, WiG, DeF	

Observers for this period: Michael Berry, Scott Carey, Chris Dunford, Dea Freid, Mookie Fudenberg, Will German, Bill Grummer, Mike Heffernon, Denise Herzberg, David A. Hofmann, Lisa Hugg, Eugene Hunn, Don Kirker, Andy LaCasse, Bob Lewis, Brook O'Connor, Rob O'Donnel, Benjamin D. Parmeter, Wendy Peterson, Craig & Annette Roth, Ruth Ann Rudesill, Rusty Scalf, Jackie Sones, Lang Stevenson, Alan Wight

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

Pishing with Parmeter~ The "Big" Big Day

On 4/30/83, I was part of a Big Day team with the objective to set a new North American Big Day record. The existing record number at that time was 235 in Texas. Our team consisted of Laurie Binford, Geri Langham, Don Roberson, John Parmeter, Roger Tory Peterson, and I. National Audubon sponsored us, putting us on a two engine plane, with a pilot at our disposal.

The count was to be completed within California. We started at midnight on the west side of the Colorado River at Yuma. Our first stop was at a place called West Pond where we got all the rails and several other species. By daybreak we had a list of about 25. We then flew to Salton Sea where, at the south end of the sea, we knew a spot to see Yellow-footed Gull. The pilot took the plane down to within a few hundred feet of land, banked at an island in

the sea, and the gull was visible to all. Then, we were on to Yucca Valley where a waiting vehicle took us to Big Morongo. I recall that at Big Morongo we were all gazing at a Hammond's Flycatcher when a photographer got in front of us and took a photo of our group. The flash caused temporary blindness for all of us. We next flew to Big Bear in the San Bernardino Mts. where we searched for mountain species. Then it was back in the plane for a flight to Monterey, where we spent the remainder of the day. We took in Point Pinos, Carmel River, and other known birding sites. I remember seeing Canada Goose (which was still a scarce bird then) by flashlight. We ended up in Upper Carmel Valley owling, where we got all the regular owls. Throughout the day, the count had been announced periodically. After owling, the count was 235. We had tied the record. Went to Monterey Pier where we hoped to see or hear a Black-crowned Night Heron, but no luck. 235 was the total count. I recollect my son, John, saying to me at midnight, "The day count is zero."

The next month there was an article in Birding Magazine by the Texas team which had seen 235 species. The article mentioned the team hearing a Groove-billed Ani across the Rio Grande River in Mexico (this was illegal according to ABA Big Day rules). The following month there were several letters to the editor of the magazine pointing out this error. Their count had to be reduced to 234. The succeeding month the magazine published a brief article declaring our team the holder of the U.S. Big Day record! *Mike~*

Letters to Santa Claus

From a Duck...

Dear Santa, please bring lots of rain,
'Cuz dabbling in dirt goes against the grain,
And all my buds who get food by diving,
Need deep water to keep on thriving.

From an Eagle...

Dear Santa, I just love to soar,
In a crystal sky where the air is pure,
Don't make me cough and wheeze in a fog,
Of car exhausts and urban smog.

From a Snowy Plover...

Santa, I'll tell you one damned thing,
I'm sick and tired of wearing bling,
So in twenty-fifteen here's what I beg,
Let no one put bracelets on my leg.

From a Brown Pelican...

Dear Santa, here's my Christmas wish,
For a healthy ocean full of fish,
And that I never again would crash,
Into a raft of floating trash.

From a Turkey...

Santa, I ask on bended knees,
For an upgrade to my image please,
Instead of your average barnyard fowl,
Make me just as smart as the wisest owl,
And I've got just one more request,
Have folks stop staring at my breast.

Terry Haag~

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 RRROS Treas. Don Howard, 979 Hogwarts Circle, Petaluma CA 94954.

RRROS Officers

President – Bill Doyle	1966 Belmont Ct., Santa Rosa, 95404	shortbill@comcast.net	483-8773
Vice Pres - Terry Haag	1340 Big Plum Dr., Sebastopol 95472	teresitahaag@comcast.net	823-8527
Secretary – Rita Bevins	237 Deanna Pl. Windsor, Ca. 95492	ritanbill@comcast.net	484-3704
Treasurer - Don Howard	979 Hogwarts Circle, Petaluma 94954	binkybunji2@comcast.net	637-0868

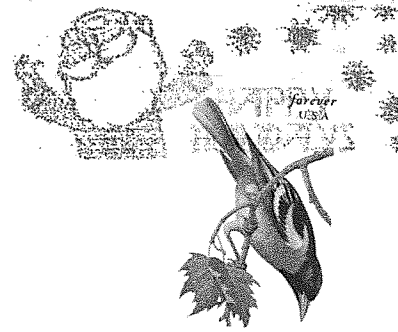
Committee Chairs

Field Trips – Gene Hunn,	204 Fair Ave., Petaluma, 94954	enhunn323@comcast.net	981-7301
Observations- David Hofmann	2021 Pioneer Wy #47 Santa Rosa 95403	nnamfoh@comcast.net	546-0325
Christmas Count – Bill Doyle	1966 Belmont Ct., SRosa, 95404	shortbill@comcast.net	483-8773
Kite Tales - - Bill Doyle	1966 Belmont Ct., SRosa, 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.

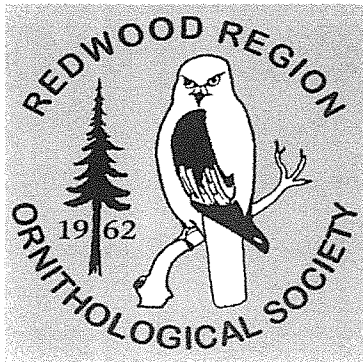
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Baltimore Oriole

KITE TALES
979 Hogwarts Circle
Petaluma CA 94954



Benjamin D. Parmeter, MD
2500 Emerson St
Napa. CA 94558

