



Kite Tales

Volume 51 Number 4

December 2015



Red Crossbill, Spring Lake, by Ron Storey

**RROS General Meeting,
December 9, 2015 7:00 pm,
First United Methodist Church
1551 Montgomery Ave., Santa Rosa, CA**

Monthly Meeting, December 9, 2015: 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, RROS field trips and birding. In addition to our many fine photographers, RROS 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.

Save the date, January 13, 2016: Dr. Tessa Hill, Associate Professor in the Department of Geology at UC Davis Bodega Marine Lab, will give a presentation on ocean acidification and its consequences.

DINNER BEFORE MEETING: Join us at 5:30 p.m., at **Mary's Pizza Shack**, 535 Summerfield Rd., Santa Rosa, across from Howarth Park. From Hwy. 101 take Hwy. 12 east. Turn left on Farmer's Ln., right on Montgomery Dr. and right on Summerfield Rd. Mary's will be on your right. They do not accept reservations for groups smaller than 15, so when you arrive just ask to be seated with the RROS birders' group in the back room.

FIELD TRIPS -

December 20, 2015, Sunday: RROS, Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count. Though most of us are looking forward to some good rain this winter from the El Nino, let's hope for a dry day on Sunday, the 20th. Area Leaders should be confirming their groups, and anyone wishing to volunteer to join a team may contact Bill Doyle, Compiler, at shortbill@comcast.net. Coco's Restaurant, where we have had our Compilation Dinner in recent years, has closed. The site of this year's dinner will be **Adel's Restaurant**, on the corner of College and Mendocino, starting 5:00pm. Looking forward to a great count this year!

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS: Santa Rosa CBC sponsored by RROS, **Sunday, December 20**, Bill Doyle (shortbill@comcast.net), compiler. West Sonoma County CBC, **Sunday, December 27**, sponsored by Madrone Audubon Society. Contact Peter Leveque or Stacy Li (stacyli@sonic.net). Sonoma Valley CBC, sponsored by the Sonoma Valley Ecology Center and Sonoma Birding, **Wednesday, December 30**, Gene Hunn (enhunn323@comcast.net), compiler.

January 9, 2016, Saturday: Gulls of the Sonoma County coast. Meet at Bodega Bay, at the Equestrian Trail Head (large dirt lot) along Bay Flat Rd., at Westshore Rd. 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 en route. Heavy rains cancel.

January 22, 2016, Friday: Photography workshop- Rick LeBaudour, Leader, (sct-rick@vom.com). Meet at the Equestrian Trailhead (at the big dirt parking lot) on Westside Road at Bayflat Rd, 8:30 AM. Bring camera equipment. Heavy rains cancel.

February 6, 2016: Wintering Raptors and Waterfowl of the Central Valley: Terry Colborn, Leader (530.312.9947; TLCBirding@gmail.com), 8:00am - 4:00pm. The open agricultural lands of the Central Valley 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 habitats in search of wintering raptors. With some luck we may encounter a Ferruginous or Rough-legged Hawk; the uncommon Prairie Falcon and Merlin are also possibilities. We expect to see a representative sampling of the wintering waterfowl and a variety of shorebirds at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. If there is interest, and time permits, we could make the drive to Solano County in search of the elusive Mt. Plover, whose numbers have been in steady decline for the past decade. Meet Terry at 8:00am in South Davis at the Nugget Center parking lot behind Burger King (403 Mace, Blvd, Davis), on the corner on Mace and Chiles Road. Bring a lunch/snacks and liquids; dress in layers. This is a good outing for both beginners and experienced birders alike. Heavy rain cancels.

RROS field trip to San Pablo Bay sites, Saturday, October 31.

Thirteen of us checked four San Pablo Bay access points south of Highway 37 (a.k.a. "Death Alley" for its fearsome traffic). We began at the west end of Port of Sonoma, at the mouth of the Petaluma River. The tide was out, so we saw few shorebirds (which roost in numbers on the ruined docks here at high tide); just a few Black-necked Stilts. Highlight was a RIDGWAY'S RAIL (used to be Clapper), spotted by Peter Colasanti, as it snuck along between the mud and the underside of the ruined dock. Next stop was Reclamation Road (opposite the end on Lakeville at SR 37). We had permission from the Sonoma Land Trust to inspect the impact of the recent dike breaching that has reclaimed over 1000 acres of diked farmland for the tides. Thousands of birds lost no time enjoying this new habitat. The gull flocks included several hundred Ring-billed Gulls, and a smattering of Bonaparte's, always a pleasure to watch, plus hundreds of Black-bellied Plovers and many Dunlin, periodically flushed by a strafing Merlin and Peregrine. The big surprise here was not in the new salt marsh, but spotted crouching behind dirt clods in the plowed fields near the Reclamation Road parking lot: a few AMERICAN and PACIFIC GOLDEN-PLOVERS hanging out with several dozen Killdeer. Also noted in these plowed fields were Horned Larks and American Pipits. Our next stop was at the Tubbs Island Trail Head at the Tolay Creek estuary, south off SR 37, just east of the SR 121 junction. The broad mud flats visible from the parking lot host hundreds of American Avocets and Willets with a few Marbled Godwits, Dunlin, Least Sandpipers, and Long-billed Dowitchers. For sparrow fanciers the dike is productive: lots of Savannahs, Song, Fox, White-crowned, and Golden-crowned Sparrows. Our final stop was at the Skaggs Island turn around (across the county line in Solano and Napa). The road north to the high bridge here is blocked but the marshes west of the Skaggs Island Road supports large numbers of shorebirds (including Long-billed Curlews) and attracts many raptors. A surprise and frustration here was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher calling from the coyote brush which refused to show itself, though we were able to study a Common Yellowthroat here.

Observations: Oct 21-Nov 20, 2015

Compiled by David A. Hofmann

Species	Date/s	Location	County #	Observer/s
Grtr White-fronted Goose	10/27/15	Petaluma/Luchessi Pk	SON 1juv	EuH
Grtr White-fronted Goose	10/30/15	Hwy 1 x Jenner	SON 12	ScC
Grtr White-fronted Goose	11/09/15	Stony Pt x Wilfred Ave	SON 1ad	AIW
Snow Goose	10/24-30/15	Salmon Crk x Hwy 1	SON 1juv	DeH, mob
Snow Goose	11/05-11/15	Valley Ford x Hwy 1	SON 2	ScC, EuH (see above)
Snow Goose	11/09/15	Stony Pt x Wilfred Ave	SON 1	AIW
Snow Goose	11/12/15	Lake Raphine	SON 1	ScC
Eurasian Wigeon	11/11//15	Salmon Crk x Hwy 1	SON 1m	EuH, MaB
Blck-blld Whistling Duck	10/27-11/03/15	Petaluma/Luchessi Pk	SON 1	EuH, mob
Brown Booby	10/25/15	RRROS pelagic trip	SON 1	RRROS, mob photos
Northern Goshawk	11/05/15	Jenner Headlands	SON 1	LaB, mob
Prairie Falcon	10/25/15	Bloomfield area	SON 1	DoS
Sandhill Crane	10/28-11/16/15	Willowside/Delta Pond	SON 1	EuH, mob
American Golden Plover	10/23/15	Doran Regional Park	SON 1	LiH photos
American Golden Plover	10/31-11/03/15	Reclamation Road	SON 2juv	EuH, RRROS, mob
Pacific Golden Plover	10/31-11/13/15	Reclamation Road	SON 2-4	RRROS, mob
Pacific Golden Plover	11/04/15	Salmon Crk Beach	SON 1	Br&OrO, BiG
South Polar Skua	10/25/15	RRROS pelagic trip	SON 1	RRROS, mob photos
Ancient Murrelet	11/11/15	Bodega Head State Pk	SON 2	EuH, MaB
White-winged Dove	11/14/15	Salmon Crk Village	SON 1	PeC, Br&OrO photo
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	10/24-11/01/15	Owl Canyon	SON 1	WiA, RiL, mob photos
Burrowing Owl	10/31/15	Bodega Head State Pk	SON 1	DAH, mob
Common Nighthawk	10/22/15	Salmon Creek Road	SON 1	ScS
Lewis' Woodpecker	11/02-7/15	Crane Crk Regional Pk	SON 3	LiH, WeD, mob
Tropical Kingbird	10/23-28/15	Campbell Cove St. Pk	SON 1	DaNo, mob photos
Tropical Kingbird	11/02-04/15	Spud Point Marina	SON 1	RiE, DAH, AOD,
Yellow-green Vireo	10/31/15	Diekmann's Store	SON 1	GoB photos
Bell's Vireo	11/07/15	Owl Canyon	SON 1	ScH, LoR
Townsend's Solitaire	11/14/15	Mount St. Helena	SON 4	ScS, DoK
Magnolia Warbler	10/21-26/15	Diekmann's Store	SON 1	DeF, mob
Magnolia Warbler	11/08/15	Owl Canyon	SON 1	MaS, mob
Orchard Oriole	10/27-29/15	Diekmann's Store	SON 1	PeC, mob
Lawrence's Goldfinch	11/07/15	Willowside Delta Pond	SON 1f	BiD, mob

Observers for this period: Will Anderson, Mario Balitbit, Gordon Beebe, Larry Broderick, Scott Carey, Peter Colasanti, Peter Connors, Wendy Danridge, Rick Evets, Dea Freid, Bill Grummer, Denise Herzberg, David A. Hofmann, Scott Hoppe, Lisa Hug, Eugene Hunn, Don Kirker, Rick Lebadour, Dan Noreen, Brook & Orion O'Connor, Ann O'Donnell, Redwood Region Ornithological Society, Lou Regenmorter, Doug Shaw, Scott Sorby, Mark Stephenson, Alan Wight

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

IN LOVING MEMORY

RRROS member **Gary Haag** died peacefully in his sleep at home in Sebastopol, on November 7, 2015. Gary had a passion for the outdoors, enjoying birding, wildlife, hiking, camping and canoeing. He was a retired building contractor who has resided in Sonoma County since 1996.

Donations in honor of Gary Haag:

MARLENE WEIGEL of Elburn, IL **WILLIAM GIFFORD** of Elburn, IL

PETER LEVEQUE, of Santa Rosa **DON HOWARD**, of Petaluma

NORMA YEATES, of Naperville, IL

RROS welcomes new member, **Eric Scholtz**, of Petaluma.

Pishing with Parmeter~ RROS Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Counts

The first Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count was held on Dec. 22, 1960. The old courthouse in downtown Santa Rosa was selected as the center of the circle. Although the courthouse is no longer present, that same spot is still the center of the continuing counts. The count area extended west to include a goodly portion of the Laguna de Santa Rosa and Timber Hill. This was always Gordon Bolander's area, where he annually got over 90 species which constituted a strong start. The area extended north, to take in the Sonoma County Airport, and eastward to Los Alamos Road and the western front of Mt. Hood (where almost every year Ian Morrison finds Mt. Quail). The southern border took in the Santa Rosa Plain, nearly to Cotati, and additional portions of Laguna de Santa Rosa. There were 11 counters: Gordon Bolander, Ann Brockman, Pete Leveque, Natalie Mestechin, Docia Pagett, Marianne Shepard, Susan Shepard, Mr. & Mrs. George Titus, Aileen Trine, and myself (compiler).

The round-up was held at our home at 887 Strawberry Dr., off Chanate Road. At the time, I was spending 2 years as a resident physician at Sonoma County Hospital (now Community Hospital). Our daughter, Sarah, 2 mo. old, was at the round-up. It was at this get-together that the group decided to form a birdwatching club, the origin of RROS.

This first count recorded 106 species, which we considered an exciting result. Some interesting observations included the following: Canada Goose 3 (at that time not the common bird it has become), Wood Duck 54, Northern Shoveler 10 (much more common now), Ruddy Duck 524 (still common), Ring-necked Pheasant 11 (at that point the county was raising and releasing this species into the wild), Eared Grebe 1 (usually more now), Great Egret 1 (numbers now improved), Wilson's Snipe 161 (less habitat these days), Lewis's Woodpecker 5, Loggerhead Shrike 17 (numbers have steadily decreased over the years), Tree and Violet-green Swallows 4 and 1 (a few almost always winter over in the Laguna de Santa Rosa area), Golden-crowned Kinglet 46 (a good number), Varied Thrush 111 (a good year!), Northern Mockingbird 7 (now always higher; it likes suburbia), Red Crossbill (seen count week), and Evening Grosbeak 58 (species now greatly decreased in frequency).

The Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count has been carried out annually since its 1960 inaugural. This year will be our 56th count. See you at the round-up!

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 Wednesday of each month September through May, at 7:00 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 1515 Montgomery Ave, Santa Rosa California. Dues are \$20 per individual or family, and \$5 per student for a one-year membership. Send dues to RROS Treas. Don Howard, 979 Hogwarts Circle, Petaluma CA 94954.

RROS Officers

President – Ruth Rudesill	POB 371 Kenwood, CA 95452	ruthier@sonic.net	833-6026
Vice Pres - Terry Haag	1340 Big Plum Dr., Sebastopol 95472	teresitahaag@comcast.net	823-8527
Secretary – Rita Bevans	237 Deanna Pl. Windsor, Ca. 95492	ritanbill@comcast.net	
	484-3704		
Treasurer - Don Howard	979 Hogwarts Circle, Petaluma 94954	binkybunji2@comcast.net	637-0868

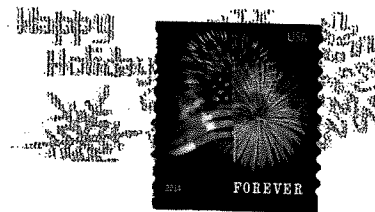
Committee Chairs

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
YAMS Coordinator – Lisa Hug,	Sebastopol	lisahug@sonic.net	535-9370

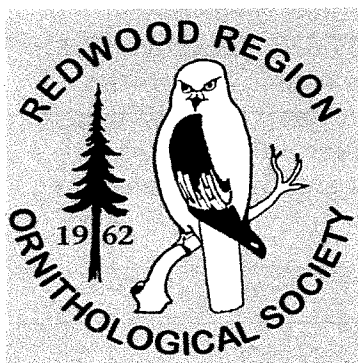
Kite Tales Deadlines: Submit observations to David Hofmann, all other items to Bill Doyle by the 20th of the month.

SAN FRANCISCO CA 940

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KITE TALES
979 Hogwarts Circle
Petaluma CA 94954



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

