


KITE TALES

a monthly newsletter from the
Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 56 Number 5

January 2021



Prairie Falcon  Malcolm Blanchard



Next RROS General Meeting
January 13th // 7:00 pm



What's New on the RROS Website?

If you missed December's RROS "Member Sharing" meeting, watch it now online - chock full of photography, audio recordings, artwork, and a bird vocalization quiz!

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SAVE THE DATE

January Virtual Membership Meeting: Wednesday, January 13th via Zoom , 7 pm

This month's presentation will be streamed live to all members with internet access. Streaming via Zoom will allow virtual attendance for many who otherwise could not attend in person, even pre-COVID!

This month's virtual program: **Birding through Paraguay and Argentina with John Sterling**



John will talk about his adventures on a research trip and co-leading two tours through Paraguay with visits to Argentina's Iguazu Falls area. From the dry Chaco in the west to the Atlantic Rainforests of the east, this country will soon be on the map for international birders. John was the team leader that developed a curriculum for training birding guides in Paraguay, Belize, Guatemala and The Bahamas for the National Audubon Society and the Inter American Development Bank. He was able to bird with several of the graduates of the Advanced Training Course. John will talk about the new opportunities for birding ecotourism and will illustrate his talk with some of his thousands of photos.

About the speaker: John has been a hard core birder in California since he was shown a Pileated Woodpecker in 5th grade camp in 1971. He is a professional ornithologist and has worked for the Smithsonian Institution, US Forest Service research stations, HT Harvey & Associates, Arizona and Oregon state universities among other organizations since 1981. John has traveled extensively throughout California learning about local bird distribution and is an authority on that state's avifauna. In 2015 he set the California's new big year record with 501 species and has many big day records as well. He has traveled internationally as a guide and ornithologist for many institutions including projects as a Smithsonian ornithologist to Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, The Philippines, Sumatra, Canada and Russia. John currently has his own company, Sterling Wildlife Biology (www.sterlingbirds.com), specializing in tours, birding classes, research and environmental consulting for The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon's International Alliance Program, CA Dept. of Water Resources among other organizations.

TO "JOIN" THE ZOOM MEETING

- 1) click on the "Join Zoom Meeting" link provided in the email sent by RROS. To protect the security of the meeting, this link will not be posted on the RROS website. The meeting is open to both RROS members and non-members. A non-member **MUST** contact Anne O'Donnell (auodonnell@gmail.com) to "register" their email contact info for the meeting (will be used **ONLY** for the purpose of verifying a friendly person).
- 2) Follow the prompts to download and run ZOOM and/or to ensure that you have the current version of the ZOOM app.
- 3) Enter the meeting ID NUMBER*, if prompted. Enter the PASSCODE*, if prompted.
- 4) Click to "join the audio conference". Once in the meeting, you may click on the "START VIDEO" or "JOIN VIDEO" button to Zoom yourself into the conference.
- 5) Once the presentation starts, please select the "mute" button to block audio from your station. At any time during and/or at the conclusion of the presentation, click on the "CHAT" button at the bottom of the screen to type in any comments or questions.

Trouble Shooting:

If the presenter and slides are blocked by the "windows" of other participants, click on "hide video panel", on the TOP RIGHT of your screen.

If you find that you've reached the "waiting room" and can't get into the meeting, or if you've been dropped from the meeting, PLEASE contact Rob O'Donnell, identify yourself and we'll try to make sure you can join.

*More specific info will be sent in an email to all RROS members between now and the meeting time.

UPCOMING RROS FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

RROS Field Trips in the Time of COVID-19

RROS is committed to making our field trips as safe as possible and to comply with current COVID-19 regulations. One of which is to limit gatherings to twelve people or fewer. In order to guarantee that, we will be requiring reservations to attend field trips. Spaces will be allocated on a first-come basis. Priority will go to RROS members; non-members are welcome, if space allows. In addition, face masks and/or social distancing will be required.

RSVP's can be made by sending a request to Malcolm Blanchard via email at mab@mabco.com, or by texting or phoning him at (707) 480-2210.

January 9, 2021, Colusa National Wildlife Refuge

Peter Colasanti will lead us on a tour of this fabulous wintering spot on the Pacific Flyway. Expect large numbers of waterfowl, including huge numbers of Snow Geese (both white and dark morphs) and Ross's Geese. We should see a variety of ducks and other wetland species, including White-faced Ibis. Exact time and place to meet will be provided when you sign up. Bring a facemask and lunch. Some of us may stop by the Maxwell Cemetery afterwards to search for the regularly overwintering Vermilion Flycatcher.

To RSVP or more information, contact Malcolm Blanchard at (707) 480-2210.

January 23, 2021, Tolay Regional Park Short-eared Owls at Dusk

We'll spend the late afternoon observing local raptors, as we wait for sun-down and for Short-eared Owls to replace Northern Harriers in their shared hunting niche. These owls are magnificent creatures that glide silently over the marsh in the diminishing light of the day. Exact time and place to meet will be provided when you sign up.

To RSVP or more information, contact Malcolm Blanchard at (707) 480-2210.

February 13, 2021, Skaggs Island with Murray Berner

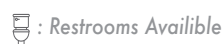
Skaggs Island is part of the San Pablo Bay NWR. It currently is not open to the public and may only be visited on specially arranged field trips, such as this one. The island is a former naval base grown up in grassland and coyote brush. Diurnal raptors are the primary attraction. Among the dozens of harriers, kites and red-tails we will look for Prairie Falcon, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle and Burrowing Owl. Ferruginous Hawk and Short-eared Owl are possible. Marsh, brush and eucalyptus at the abandoned housing site hosts local wintering songbirds, the newly arrived Allen's Hummingbird, and Merlin. Black Rail is sometimes heard from the tidal slough. We will loop the island in our vehicles. There will be a short walk along the Second Napa Slough levee. Bring a face mask.

For more information contact Malcolm Blanchard (707) 480-2210.

February 27, 2021, Huichica Creek with Lucas Stephenson

Huichica Creek is a unit of the Napa-Sonoma Wildlife Area in Napa County on the border with Sonoma County. It hosts an abundance of wintering water fowl. We will be lead by Lucas Stephenson, one of the top young birders in the North Bay. Bring a mask.

For more information contact Malcolm Blanchard (707) 480-2210.



RROS Field Trip Report, Hudeman Slough, November 28th, Rob O'Donnell, leading.

Ten birders met under clear a November sky and a chilly start at Hudeman Slough. The first target bird, Great Horned Owl, was nowhere to be found. As we began our loop, the seasonal pond looked very seasonal. Drought conditions made for a very small pond with one Goldeneye on it. There were plenty of passerines seen, including Loggerhead Shrike. The two effluent basins were more productive with a good mixture of ducks. Raptors included White-tailed Kites chasing a Red-tail, and a Merlin. The water levels were higher than last week so the peeps and White-faced Ibis were feeding elsewhere. A quick stop at the pond just west of Hudeman provided looks at Bonaparte's Gulls. The last stop at Ramal Rd. Pond was a bonus where there was a dozen Hooded Mergansers. The last bird of the day was the first bird we looked for. Gene Hunn found a Great Horned Owl! We finished the morning with a respectable 64 species.

YAMS Field Trip – Lucas Valley Water Treatment Ponds, November 7, 2020

On November 7th, we gathered at Lucas Valley Treatment Facility for a fun walk around the ponds. Participants were father and daughter Tony and Bea Pezzolo, parents and son Beth, Mike and Nolan Work, and mother and daughter Autumn and Aubrey Phipps.

On our way in to the Facility, we stopped briefly at McInnis Park to look through a flock of Canada Geese. As we were there, each of the young birders was pointing out birds left and right, such as Lesser Goldfinches, Anna's Hummingbirds, and Northern Mockingbird and on it went....

As we arrived in the parking lot of the Treatment Plant, I was perplexed at how long it took to get the group gathered. I then realized that it wasn't because they had a distant parking spot, or were getting themselves organized for the day. It was because they had already slipped over the berm, down to the channel and were watching the Green-winged Teal. I had to catch up!

We had the most pleasant weather anyone could dream of and we circled the first 2 ponds in about 3 hours. We managed to accumulate 52 species – eleven of which were ducks. Some of our highlights included a Green Heron, hearing a Sora, and stunning views of the adorable Common Yellowthroat.

We finished with a socially-distanced picnic and went over our list of birds together. Aubrey Phipps, our newest member took several photos along the way (some of which are featured in this month's photo gallery!)

We all had a great time! *Lisa Hug – YAMS coordinator*

YAMS FIELD TRIPS - times and meeting places will be given after emailing Lisa Hug for a reservation. Covid-19 protocols will be followed.

January 16 - Tolay Regional Park

This will be an afternoon and evening field trip. It is the same trip that is planned for the regular RROS members the following weekend. We look for raptors and other birds in the afternoon and then stay until dark to watch for owls. There is a good chance that we might see Short-eared Owls hunting over the marshlands, and possibly Great-horned and Barn Owl. No matter what we see or don't see, it is sure to be a lot of fun! Bring layers of warm clothing, water, snacks, boots or waterproof shoes, binoculars and a bird book. There is a \$7 per car entrance fee without an annual pass.

February 6 - Bodega Bay

Winter is a great time to bird at Bodega Bay. It is the season with the most Brant, ducks, loons and grebes. We will also search for shorebirds and look around for anything else that we can find! Bring layers of warm clothing, water, lunch, comfortable shoes, binoculars and a bird book. There is a \$7 per car entrance fee into Doran County Park without an annual pass.

March 6 – Cloverdale River Park

This County Park has a surprising diversity of bird species. It has a pleasant, flat walking trail and beautiful views of the Russian River. We will explore along the walking trail and river and see what we might find! Bring layers of warm clothing, water, lunch, comfortable shoes, binoculars and a bird book. There is a \$7 per car entrance fee without an annual pass.

OBSERVATIONS

November 21, 2020 to December 20, 2020 // COMPILED BY DAVID A. HOFMANN

Snow Goose	12/14/20	Jenner Beach	SON	1	MarB, TaS	
Ross's Goose	12/20/20	Ludwig Ave & S. Wright Road	SON	1	DaN	SRCBC
Redhead	12/12-16/20	San Pablo Bay NWR	SON	1	KeD, MiF	
Barrow's Goldeneye	11/28/20	Port Sonoma-Petaluma River	SON	1m 1f	LiH	
Black Scoter	11/24/20	Bodega Head State Park	SON	1m	MarB	
White-winged Scoter	11/30/20	Bird Walk Coastal Access	SON	1	LiH, MarB	
White-winged Scoter	12/20/20	Sea Ranch—Shell Beach Trl	SON	3	IrD	
Sandhill Crane	12/07/20	Stewart's Point	SON	1	EIT	
Sandhill Crane	12/14-19/20	San Pablo Bay NWR-Tubbs Is	SON	4	PhA, MalB, Ro&AnO, Eu&NaH, MiF, CoM, Ev&JeV	photos
Pacific Golden-Plover	12/20/20	S. Salmon Creek Beach	SON	3	BrD	
Pectoral Sandpiper	11/29/20	Valley Ford Wetlands	SON	2	ZeS	photo
Marbled Murrelet	11/24/20	Bodega Head State Park	SON	2	MarB	
Ancient Murrelet	11/21/20	Duncan's Landing	SON	2	ScC	
Lesser Black-backed Gull	11/28-12/04/20	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	NoA, LuC, DaE, CoM, EuH, LiH, JaH, mob	photos
Common Black Hawk	12/16/20	Vine Hill Road	SON	1f	ChO	
Long-eared Owl	11/22/20	Kenwood yard	SON	1	RAR	
Long-eared Owl	12/20/20	Riebli Road near DePaul Road	SON	1	RAR heard only	SRCBC
Northern Saw-whet Owl	12/20/20	Riebli Road near DePaul Road	SON	1	RAR heard only	SRCBC
Red-naped Sapsucker	11/28/20	Bartholomew Park-Sonoma	SON	1	EaO, IsR	photos
Red-naped Sapsucker	12/04/20	Salmon Creek Road	SON	1	RoS	photos
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11/22/20	Santa Rosa Crk Trail-Delta Pd	SON	1	RoS	photo
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	12/16/20	Champlain House-Cloverdale	SON	1	GaN	
Lewis's Woodpecker	12/19/20	Vine Hill Road	SON	1	ChO	
Prairie Falcon	12/02-14/20	Tolay Regional Park	SON	1	CoM, EuH, WiA	
Prairie Falcon	12/15-16/20	San Pablo Bay NWR-Tubbs Is	SON	1	MalB, Eu&NaH	photos
Prairie Falcon	12/20/20	S. Laguna Discovery Trail	SON	1	MarB	SRCBC
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	12/20/20	Santa Rosa Crk Trail-Delta Pd	SON	1	BrW, DoK, GoB	photos SRCBC
Hammond's Flycatcher	12/01/20	Tolay Regional Park	SON	1	Ev&JeV, JoL	photos
Tropical Kingbird	12/12/20	Ellis Creek Ponds	SON	1	GeG	photo
Mountain Bluebird	11/30-12/20/20	Tolay Regional Park	SON	12	RoS, RoO, Ev&JeV, JoL, AIW, MarB, JoS, LiH, Eu&NaH, CoM, WeD, GaP, FrO, Mal&BeB, ChN, DoK, DaB, JaS, ReM, AnL, LaN, ScC, BeO, KeW, BoB, EzG, KEM, ScB, RAR, Ro&AnO, MaG, EIC, BaK, MeF, DaT, Ri&AmB, ToW, Te&MiT, BiD, HeK, WiA, ScS, ReC, BoB, WeB, JoC, mob	photos

Townsend's Solitaire	12/02/20	Robert Louis Stevenson St.Pk	SON	I	LuS
Lawrence's Goldfinch	12/18/20	Pine Flat Road	SON	I	EuH
Tri-colored Blackbird	11/21/20	Chanslor Ranch	SON	20	ScC
Tri-colored Blackbird	12/11-15/20	Pepper Rd—Devil Mtn marsh	SON	1m	LiH, CoM, RAR, JeV

OBSERVERS FOR THIS PERIOD

Philip Aguiar • Dorian Anderson • Will Anderson • Noah Arthur • Mario Balitbit • Dave Barry • Bob Battagin • Gordon Beebe • Wendy Beers • Rick & Ami Bergstrom • Malcolm & Beatrice Blanchard • Scott Buchanan • Scott Carey • John Coddling • Reef Comer • Lucas Corneliussen • Elizabeth Crouthamel • Wendy Dandridge • Brock Dolman • Bill Doyle • Iryna Dronova • Kevin Durso • Daniel Edelstein • Michaela Figari • Mel Frisk • Ezra Garfield • George Gibbs • Mary Grishaver • Jack Hayden • Derek & Cris Heins • Lisa Hug • Eugene Hunn • Eugene & Nancy Hunn • Barbara Kendrick • Donald Kirker • Helen Kochenderfer • Elizabeth Lewis • Ann Linder • Jim Lomax • John Luther • Kate E. Magoon • Rebecca Matsubara • Colin Meusel • Ethan Monk • David Moring • Christian Naventi • Gary Nicholson • Larry Nigro • Eamon O'Byrne • Rob O'Donnell • Rob & Ann O'Donnell • Fances Oliver • Rebecca Olsen • Chris Orsine • Benjamin D. "Mike" Parmeter • Garrett Pierce • Isabelle Reddy • Ruth Ann Rudesill • Zeke Smith • Josh Snead • Jackie Sones • Scott Sorby • Taylour Stephens • Lucas Stephenson • Ron Storey • David Tomb • Eli Tompkins • Teresa & Miles Tuffli • Eva & Jeff Valfer • Brian Webb • Alan Wight • Ken Wilson • Tom Wysham



PISHING with PARMETER

PICHINDE, NEAR CALI, COLOMBIA : JULY 6-7, 1975

One more note on western Columbia – our group of birders (10 people) was staying at the Ariste Hotel in downtown

Cali. We had been given directions to a good birding spot near the city. On 6 July 1975 we got up well before dawn and left for our birding destination (Pichinde), a 90-minute drive.

The first bird we saw was in the middle of the paved road as we approached the birding area. It was a caprimulgid which stayed in our headlights for several minutes while we keyed it out. It was a **White-tailed Nightjar** – *Caprimulgus cayannensis* – a good start to the day and a lifer for all of us!

Pichinde turned out to be a deep canyon with a rushing rocky stream at the bottom. The sides of the canyon were well wooded. My next lifer was a **White-capped Dipper** (*Cinclus leucocephalus*), a member of the same genus as our American Dipper.

We saw many additional species: **Slate-throated Redstart**, **Yellow-olive Tyrannulet**, **White-tailed Hillstar** (a hummingbird), **Eared Dove**, **Barred Becard**, **Rusty Flowerpiercer**, **Slaty Spinetail**, **Streaked Xenops**, **Russet-crowned Warbler**, **Booted Racket-tail** and **Long-tailed Sylph** (two more hummers), **Acorn Woodpecker** (the same species as at home), **Squirrel Cuckoo**, **Green-and-black Fruiteater**, **Tropical Mockingbird**, **Red-headed Barbet**, **Chestnut-collared Swift**, **Band-tailed Pigeon** (another familiar bird), **Spotted Woodcreeper**, **Southern House Wren** (now considered conspecific with our House Wren), **Blue-and-white Swallow**, **Black Vulture** (seen recently at Bodega Bay!), **Yellow-bellied Seed-eater**, **Bananaquit**, **Common Tidy-Flycatcher**, and **Lesser Elaenia**.

We returned to this spot the following day, 7 July 1975. More lifers included **White-lined Tanager**, **Blue-hooded Euphonia**, **Crested Quetzal**, **Black-capped Tanager**, **Collared Trogon**, **Bar-crested Antshrike**, **Yellow-vented Woodpecker**, **White-vented Puffbird**, **Emerald Toucanet**, **Black-capped Chlorophonia**, and **Black-winged Saltator**.

These were two excellent days of birding. In the evening we called the list over dinner at a fancy restaurant – great food!

2020. A year unlike many of us has seen before...

Despite all the challenges this past year has presented, **hope endures**. As members of RR0S, we find joy in our love of birds. Whether we're out hiking or looking through our windows, seeing a bird allows us to be in the moment. No worries about yesterday or tomorrow. Just right now. You and a gift of nature.

With that in mind, it's time to remember why we are members of Redwood Region Ornithological Society. 2020 was the 58th year since the club was formed to encourage the study and conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their natural environment.

We hope that you enjoyed some of the events and the benefits of being an RR0S member. These included:

We had 12 field trips this year which included a May overnight trip to the High Sierras in Fresno County led by Peter Colasanti. Some of the highlights were Williamson's Sapsucker, White-headed Woodpecker, Mountain Quail, Black-chinned and Calliope Hummingbirds, several Flycatchers, White-throated Swift, and nesting Dippers. Josh Snead's daughter, Effie, brought smiles to everyone's face. Beginning the Fall Season, **Malcolm Blanchard** stepped up and did a great job coordinating our field trips. With social distancing, participants are limited to 12 birders. This will continue for the foreseeable future. Be sure to call Malcolm if you plan to go on our field trips!

With COVID, we were unable to sponsor our annual pelagic trips. Gene Hunn led an independent trip. It turned out to be one of the best trips that Gene had ever been on.

We had great presentations at our monthly meetings.

Notable speakers were John Sterling's Morocco Adventures; Ruth Rudesill's Little Known Great Birding Spots in Northern California; Point Blue's Matt Clark's Soundscapes to Landscapes; Ken Wilson's Uganda: The Jewel of Africa. In the Fall, Anne O'Donnell emceed our ZOOM meetings. Mario Balitbit's A Trip to SE Farallon Island; Veronica Bowers's Wildscaping in your Backyard; and finally, our members shared their favorite photo and art projects.

Lisa Hug continued to educate, inspire, and corral the youngest members of RR0S, aka Young Ancients Murrelet Society (YAMS). If you have a chance to bird with them, you may find yourself being educated and inspired by these talented young people.

Your dues and donations help to support us. In addition, **RR0S made charitable contributions to:**

Audubon Canyon Ranch, Modini Preserve
Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County
Native Songbird Care & Conservation
Birdlife Australia, which was devastated by the bushfires
Tierra de Aves, our Oaxacan amigos who have one of the largest bird banding programs in Mexico.

Welcome to new Members: Peggy Albright, Chris Bekins, Rick & Ami Bergstrom, Kathy Bransletter, Peter & Tracy Delvalle, Beth Ann Mathews, William Perry, Aubrey Phipps-Parnay, Alison Quoyeser, Clayton Rucker, Greig Shepard, Sue Snodgrass, John Urbanski & Lisa Neuson, Liza Vekony.

Thanks to the following members who were kind enough to make charitable contributions this year:

Tom McCuller, Iris Lombard, Don Howard, Barbara Tomin, Jim Rosso, Suzanne Reta, Karen Nagel, Carolyn Metz, David Leland, Will & Karen German, Jim Fritzhand, Geri Brown, Janet Bosshard, Kathleen Mugele, Andy LaCasse, Jack & Marilyn Jones, Rob & Anne O'Donnell, Mark Butler & Mary Anne Rotella, Rick & Ami Bergstrom, Josh Snead, Rhio Reigh, John Klobas, Al & Glo Wellman, Chris Bekins, Veronica Bowers & Lance Goodry, and Terry Haag.

Donations were made in memory of Bill Bevans and Gary Haag.

Special thanks go to the members who contribute their time and energy to keep it all flying:

Our Officers:

President, Anne O'Donnell
Vice-President & CBC Coordinator, Gene Hunn
Treasurer/Membership Coordinator, Rob O'Donnell
Secretary, Peter Colasanti
Kite Tales Editor, Eva Valfer
Website Editors, Miles & Teresa Tuffli
YAMS Coordinator, Lisa Hug
Field Trips Coordinator, Malcolm Blanchard
Observations Coordinator, David Hofmann
Founder & Chief "Pisher", Mike Parmeter

And as we look forward to the New Year, to our members, thank you and, of course, good birding!

PHOTO GALLERY



A pair of Mountain Blue Birds // Tolay RP // Malcolm Blanchard



Can you spot the Least Bittern? // Ellis Creek // Teresa Tufli



American Pipit // Valley Ford Wetlands // Teresa Tufli



Hermit Warbler // Guernville Yard // Teresa Tufli

YAMS PHOTO SUBMISSIONS



Red-winged Blackbird // Lucas Valley WTF // Aubrey Phipps



Wilson's Snipe // Lucas Valley WTF // Aubrey Phipps



ABOUT RROS

Redwood Region Ornithological Society was organized in 1962 “to encourage the study and conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their natural habitat.”

In compliance with local Sonoma County Covid-19 guidelines, meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month October through April, at 7 pm virtually via Zoom.

Sept & May meetings are held outside at 5:30pm.

Annual dues are \$20 per individual, \$25 per family, and \$5 per student.

Dues can be sent to RROS Treasurer Rob O'Donnell, 421 St. Mary Place, Santa Rosa, CA 95409

Visit us on the web at www.RROS.org

RROS STAFF

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Kite Tales deadline is the 20th of each month. Observations may be sent to David A. Hofmann.

All other content may be sent to Eva Valfer.