

KITE TALES

a monthly newsletter from the
Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 55, Number 5

January 2020



Ruby-crowned Kinglet // Courtesy of Rick LeBaudour



Next RROS General Meeting
January 8th // 7 pm



What's New on the RROS Website?
Check the Gallery frequently to see new
submissions from RROS members!

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SAVE THE DATE

Monthly Meeting: Wed, Jan 8th, First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr, Santa Rosa 7pm

This month's program: *The rescheduled presentation of John Sterling's Morocco adventures*

John will share highlights from his tours' adventures in Morocco. With its high mountains, high desert, low Sahara desert, agricultural plains, coastal lagoons, cork oak woodland, and coniferous forest, Morocco has much to offer birds and birders. Home to several endemic bird species as well as North Africa species not readily seen elsewhere, it is also along the major migratory pathway for European migrants including shorebirds, raptors, songbirds and others. Join us for virtual tour of the country's birds, landscapes and culture.



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.

UPCOMING RROS FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

- **Saturday, Feb 29 - Santa Rosa Creek Trail led by YAMS (Young Ancient Murrelets) - Santa Rosa 8:30 am**
Meet on Willowside Road at the Santa Rosa Creek Trailhead (near the Summerfield Waldorf School). Our Youth Group will lead the club down the Santa Rosa Creek Trail to Delta Pond. We will circle the pond and return to our cars around noon. Bring layered clothing, binoculars (scope if you are willing to carry it), water and snacks. See you then! *See page.4 of this newsletter for a roster of YAMS field trips for 2020!*
For more information please contact Lisa Hug - Lisahug@sonic.net

2019 Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count Recap

It was perfect conditions on Sunday morning, December 15th, when the eager participants in this year's CBC spread out over the 12 territories that make up our count circle. The clear, bright, cold weather was a classic Sonoma County winter day, perfect for birding! Reports during the day reflected the energy and enthusiasm of the counters.

At the compilation dinner that evening, at Mary's Pizza on Summerfield Rd, we totaled up the results, and ended with **140 species**, better than the past couple of years, and about the historical average. As the leaders of each area gave their daily reports, Area 2 came out ahead, with a terrific 101 species, including the elusive **Common Black Hawk**, which is still with us in the Laguna. Reports from the other areas were all excellent, as well. One of the more unusual birds was a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, spotted by Jack Harper, in Area 10.

Many thanks to all the dedicated members who came out again this year, and Happy Holidays to All!

- Bill Doyle, Santa Rosa CBC Coordinator

With Thanks

As Redwood Region Ornithological Society closes our 57th year, it's always good to reflect upon our mission. We have pursued the study, conservation, and enjoyment of birds, other wildlife and their natural habitat. We'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to making our club part of your life. Birders are the best.

2019 was a good year. We hope that you enjoy the benefits of your RROS membership which included:

Field trips led by the best birders in Sonoma County. One highlight was our trip to Modoc County led by **Ruth Rudesill**. A crowd of birders saw Sooty Grouse, Northern Goshawk, and Scissor-tailed Flycatcher as well as some beautiful country.

Three pelagic trips skippered by **Gene Hunn** were hugely successful. One even got Rob O'Donnell on to a boat after a 35-year hiatus!

We had truly wonderful presentations at our monthly meetings. Talks included studying penguins at the bottom of the earth, bird distribution and population in the Central Valley, tales of RROS members' trip to Oaxaca, Mexico, and little known great birding spots in Northern California, ethno-ornithology of the Zapotecs of Chiapas, Mexico and the Huna Tlingit of the Northwest, finally great potluck picnics in Sugarloaf State Park which almost always guarantees encounters with Common Poorwill and Owls! We hope that you'll make it to a fantastic lineup of speakers recruited by Gene Hunn. **Thanks, Gene.**

Lisa Hug does a wonderful job of educating, inspiring and corraling the next generation of birders, YAMS (Young Ancient Murrelet Society). In fact, next year a field trip will be led by these incredibly bright and enthusiastic young people. Be sure to check Kite Tales for details.

Your membership dues and donations enabled RROS to make financial contributions to:

**Audubon Canyon Ranch - Mountain Lion Project
Bird Rescue Center of Sonoma County
Native Songbird Care and Conservation**

Our monthly publication of Kite Tales keeps you current with observations compiled by **David Hofmann**, member photos, and **Mike's Fishing with Parmeter**. Ya gotta love it!

Thanks to the officers, our unsung heroes, for holding it all together.

We're grateful to **Miles and Teresa Tuffli** for producing our vibrant website: RROS.org. A special thank you to **Eva Valfer** for the amazing job of editing Kite Tales. Y'all rock!

Thank you to our members for renewing their memberships. In addition, the following members made charitable contributions for which we are truly grateful:

Richard Bertoli • Jack & Marilyn Jones • Will & Karen German • Mookie Fudemberg • John & Cynthia Rathkey • Dennis & Susan Fujita • James Frtizhand • Kathleen Mugele • Veronica Bower • Alan Wight • Charles Vaughn • Victoria Jackson • Rob & Anne O'Donnell • Andy LaCasse • Glo Wellman • Mark Butler & Mary Anne Rotella • Barbara Tomin • John Parmeter.

We'd like to recognize **Don Howard** and **Bob McLean** for their substantial contributions. **Dennis & Susan Fujita** and **Terry Haag** also made contributions in memory of **Gary Haag**.

Best wishes for the New Year and, of course, Good Birding!

What the YAMS Have Been Up To ...

We started out this Fall birding season with two field trips in September. First, we went to Bodega Bay on September 7. In addition to looking around the harbor and off Bodega Head, we also searched for the recently seen Black-throated Sparrow at Campbell Cove. We did not see it, but we did make a special trip up to Freezeout Canyon Road near Duncans Mills to look for the Gray Flycatcher found by the Tufflis the previous day. We had great luck with this bird and we had terrific views for quite a long time!

We also had a trip to Point Reyes National Seashore on September 15. There were not many eastern vagrants which we were hoping to see, but Beatrice and Clayton really wanted to see a Ferruginous Hawk that was reported. They spotted it themselves from the back seat of my car!

In October, we participated in the Rich Stallcup Point Blue Bird-a-thon fundraiser. We detected a total of 150 species and raised \$1130 for Point Blue Conservation Science. If you want to see a write-up of our day, go to <https://pointblue.securesweet.com/team-page.asp?fundid=836#.Xf2NyUdKilS>.

On November 17th, we took a walk around Riverfront Regional Park for the morning. This was a nice, casual birding day. I don't remember how many species we saw, but some highlights included a fast-flying Merlin (is there any other kind?) and a pair of Hooded Mergansers.

We participated in the Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count. Our area was area 7 – west Santa Rosa. For the first time ever, we split up into 2 teams. This strategy seemed to help lift our total species count from previous years. It was a fun group of older veteran birders and younger, sharp-eyed birders.

Future YAMS field trips will be:

January 18, 2020. Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility.

Meet at 8:30am in the Ellis Creek parking lot at 3890 Cypress Drive in Petaluma.

This will be documentation and drawing practice field trip. So bring a field notebook or drawing pad and pencils for drawing. You also should bring a small folding chair or something plastic or a towel to sit on. Don't worry we will also walk around the ponds to bird. As always, bring binoculars and field guide, water and snacks and layered clothing.

February 8 – Arrowhead Marsh in the East Bay.

Meet at the Petaluma Park and Ride at the intersection of Highway 116 and Highway 101 at 8:30am. We will carpool from there. There is a very high tide (7.8) at 10:54am on February 8. This means that it might be possible to see Ridgway's Rails and Black Rails. There might even be a chance of seeing a swamp sparrow or a Nelson's Sparrow. As always, bring binoculars and field guide, water and snacks and layered clothing.

February 29 – Santa Rosa Creek trail and Delta Pond 8:00am

YAMS will lead RROS field trip!

Meet on Willowside Road at the Santa Rosa Creek Trailhead (near the Summerfield Waldorf School). Our Youth Group will lead the club down the Santa Rosa Creek Trail to Delta Pond. We will circle the pond and return to our cars around noon. Bring layered clothing, binoculars (scope if you are willing to carry it), water and snacks.

~ Lisa Hug, YAMS Coordinator



PISHING with PARMETER

NEW GUINEA: KARAWORI RIVER (NORTH SIDE OF ISLAND)

The airstrip we landed at was 3 or 4 miles downstream from the lodge. We took a motorboat up to the base of the mountain where the lodge was located, then climbed a couple

hundred yards to our destination. Everything was quite commodious and clean, with a large central social room, a nice dining area, and well-kept gardens. We slept in small bungalow cabins in the garden.

Birding began shortly after arrival: Great Black Coucal, Yellow-gaped Meliphaga, Meyer's Friarbird, Long-billed Honeycreeper, Rufous-collared Monarch, Edward's Fig Parrot, Dusky Lory, and Red-throated Myzomela were found in the immediate vicinity of the lodge.

The following day, August 4, we took a short boat ride to a native village where the Twelve-wired Bird-of-Paradise was

staked out for us. Other birds seen here included Large-billed Gerygone, Hooded Monarch, Buff-faced Pygmy-Parrot, Puff-backed Meliphaga, Sulfur-crested Cockatoo, and White-eared Catbird.

A good part of one day was spent on a boat trip to a large lake upstream from the lodge, Lake Yimas. There were not many new birds here, but wonderful views of the wooded hillsides and thick riparian growth. The best bird on this trip was a Black Bittern. This bird spreads its wings over shallow water, then eats the fish which come to the shaded area. Other birds along the way included Azure Kingfisher, Sacred Kingfisher, Glossy-mantled Manucode (a bird-of-paradise), Whiskered Tern, Little Black Cormorant, Lotus Bird, Australian Darter, Great Egret, Purple Swamphen, White-breasted Sea-eagle, Whistling Kite, Dusky Lory, and Shining Flycatcher.

A few additional species seen in the lodge area were Chestnut-bellied Kookaburra, Brahminy Kite, White-bellied Cuckoo-Shrike, Eclectus Parrot, Blyth's Hornbill, and Golden-tailed Honeyeater.

OBSERVATIONS

November 21, 2019 to December 20, 2019 // COMPILED BY DAVID A. HOFMANN

Species	Date(s)	Location	Cty	#	Observer(s)
Redhead	11/23/19	Salmon Crk x Hwy 1 pond	SON	1m	AdH
Redhead	11/27/19	Bodega Farm pond	SON	1m	JoS photo
Redhead	12/13-18/19	Bodega harbor	SON	1m	JoS, KaM photos
Black Scoter	12/08/19	Goat Rock State Park	SON	1f	Ma&LuS, LuC
White-winged Scoter	11/27/19	Jenner Visitor Center	SON	1m	LiH
White-winged Scoter	12/08/19	Goat Rock State Park	SON	4	Ma&LuS, LuC
Lesser Black-backed Gull	11/23-12/20/19	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	NoA
Glaucous Gull	12/17/19	Bodega Head State Park	SON	1	GeF photos
Fork-tailed Storm-Petrel	11/28/19	Doran Regional Park	SON	1	JoS
White-faced Ibis	11/23-24/19	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	AdH, MarB
White-faced Ibis	12/13-14/19	Ellis Creek Ponds	SON	1	WiG, MaG photos
White-faced Ibis	12/20/19	Hudemann Slough ponds	SON	1	BDP, JP
Common Black Hawk	12/15/19	Georgetown	SON	1f	DoK, mob (WSCBC)
Short-eared Owl	11/22-24/19	Tolay Regional Park	SON	2	Je&EvV, MalB
Northern Saw-whet Owl	12/03/19	Valley Ford-Freestone Rd yard	SON	1	JoS heard only
Mountain Bluebird	11/23/19	Owl Canyon	SON	1f	AdH fly-over
Tropical Kingbird	11/24/19	Ellis Creek ponds	SON	1	StH photos
Tropical Kingbird	11/30/19	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	JaM, CoM
Evening Grosbeak	12/15/19	Roseland area of Santa Rosa	SON	1	Ma&LuS, LuC heard only
Swamp Sparrow	11/28/19	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	MiH
American Tree Sparrow	11/23-25/19	Owl Canyon-Campbell Cove State Beach	SON	1	AdH, MalB, DaLu, JoS, RiL, Je&EvV, EIL, DeF, MarB, CoM, AIW, AIL, BrO, mob photos
Black-and-White Warbler	11/20/19	Santa Rosa Crk Southeast Trail	SON	1f	BrW
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	12/01-06/19	Curtis Drive, Penngrove yard	SON	1m	LiS, JoS, MalB, EuH JeV, WeD, DaL, BrB, TeF photos
Scaly-breasted Munia	11/21-22/19	Valley Ford-Freestone Rd yard	SON	2	JoS photos



A diagnostic flash of red on a Rose-breasted Grosbeak // Private Residence, Rohnert Park // By Malcolm Blanchard

OBSERVERS FOR THIS PERIOD

Noah Arthur • Mario Balitbit • Malcolm Blanchard • Brian Browne • Lucas Corneliussen • Wendy Dandridge • Dea Freid • Teale Fristoe • Gerald Frost • Will German • Mary Grishaver • Mike Hansen • Adrian Hinkle • Eugene Hunn • Steven Hunter • Don Kirker • Rick LeBaudour • David Leland • Elizabeth Lewis • Albert Linkowski • David Lumpkin • Kaitlin Magoon • Colin Meusel • Cory Mitchell • Jake Mohlmann • Brook Oconnor • Benjamin D. "Mike" Parmeter • John Parmeter • Linda Schneider • Josh Snead • Mark & Lucas Stephanson • Jeff & Eva Valfer • Brian Webb • Alan Wight

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

PHOTO GALLERY



Peregrine Falcon dining on (an assumed) Mew Gull //
Doran Regional Park // By Malcolm Blanchard



American Kestrel // Section II, Santa Rosa CBC //
By Rick LeBaudour



Long-billed Curlew // Baylands, Palo Alto // By Dennis Luz



American Bittern // Spring Lake, Santa Rosa //By Dennis Luz



Townsend's Warbler // Tide's Wharf, Bodega Bay //
By Teresa Tuffli



Rock Sandpiper // San Francisco // By Rick LeBaudour

A glimpse into the Santa Rosa CBC



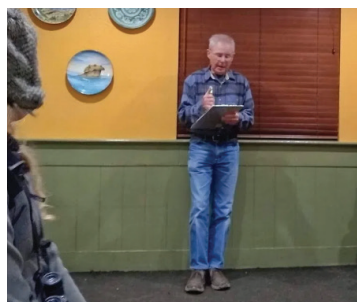
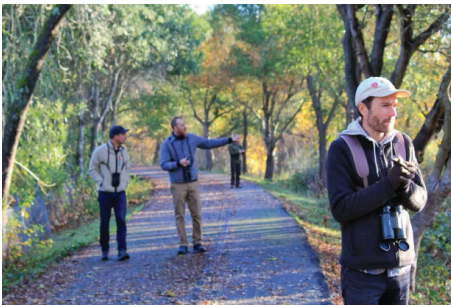
Rise and shine as Santa Rosa CBC'ers were up with the chilly winter sun! As we all know, the early bird(er) gets the birds!



A panoramic view from Foothill Ranch Road (Section 4)



The American Kestrel and Dark morph Red-tailed Hawk were both seen in Section 11, while the Brown Creeper was in Sec. 4



One of the tenants of any CBC is solid teamwork and camaraderie and Santa Rosa CBC had plenty of both. From the trails and roads to the compilation dinner, a monumental task was achieved with the vigor and dedication from our community of birders.

Photo Credits: Landscape, Brown Creeper, and people pictures courtesy of Teresa Tuffli. Kestrel and Dark morph Red-tailed Hawk courtesy of Rick LeBaudour



ABOUT RROS

Redwood Region Ornithological Society 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 October through April, at 7 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr, Santa Rosa.

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.