

KITE TALES

a monthly newsletter from the
Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 56 Number 9

May 2021



Mountain Quail • Pine Flat Road  Rick LeBaudour



Next RROS General Meeting
May 12th // 5:30 pm
@ Sugarloaf State Park



What's New on the RROS Website?

If you missed April's RROS meeting featuring Tom Reynolds' photography presentation, watch it all now at our "Virtual Meetings" page!

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SAVE THE DATE

May Membership Meeting: Wednesday, May 12th Sugarloaf State Park , 5:30 pm

THIS IN-PERSON POTLUCK MEETING IS TENTATIVE, COVID RESTRICTIONS PERMITTING. THE DETAILS BELOW ARE TENTATIVE...

Meet at Sugarloaf at the picnic tables on the right, just past the entrance kiosk and across from the main parking lot. Come earlier for late afternoon birding and/or stay after dinner for a late evening bird walk out towards the observatory.

Where: Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.

Directions: From Hwy 12 East, about 6 miles beyond Calistoga Road, take a left on Adobe Rd. Follow Adobe Rd to its end in the park. Main parking lot is on the left, past the entrance kiosk.

What to Know: State Park entrance fee is \$10 per car / \$8 for senior or student. Covered with California State Parks pass.

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.

... Saturday, May 1, 2021, Riverfront Regional Park (led by Malcolm Blanchard)

Join Malcolm Blanchard for a morning of birding Riverfront Regional Park. We'll have the potential for many passerine species, including migrant songbirds. Riverfront Regional offers mostly flat trails traversing multiple habitats - redwoods, a large pond, riparian vegetation, and Russian River access. On this spring day, we'll also listen to a lovely soundscape of birdsong and we'll be on the lookout for nesting activity. Park bathrooms are available. Heavy rain cancels. Bring a face mask, layers, water, lunch or snacks, and sunscreen. **Note: There is a \$7 parking fee, unless you have a Sonoma County Regional Parks pass.**

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

... Saturday, May 8, 2021, YAMS Trip to Pine Flat Road

We will travel up Pine Flat Road an 11-mile uphill climb to the unique chaparral habitat of the northeastern corner of the county. Along the way, we will look for Grasshopper Sparrows, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, California Thrashers and many colorful spring migrants such as Western Tanagers and Lazuli Buntings. At the top we will hope for Mountain Quail (usually heard but not seen) and if we are very lucky, Bell's Sparrow. You may also want to bring wildflower and butterfly books or apps.

YAMS FIELD TRIPS: times and meeting places will be given after emailing Lisa Hug at lisahug@sonic.net for a reservation. COVID-19 protocols will be followed.

Saturday, May 22, 2021 YAMS Trip to Sonoma Valley Regional Park   

We will again explore the eastern part of the county which always comes alive in the spring! This time we will do some leisurely hiking and hope for some spring specialties such as Ash-throated Flycatchers and Black-headed Grosbeaks. This is also a prime destination for spring wildflowers.

YAMS FIELD TRIPS: times and meeting places will be given after emailing Lisa Hug at lisahug@sonic.net for a reservation. COVID-19 protocols will be followed.

RROS Summer Weekend Field Trip: Humboldt County / Arcata , June 4 - 6 , 2021

This year's overnight RROS field trip will be to Humboldt County, centered on Arcata. Ruthie Rudesill, who knows these environs well, will lead. We will be birding Friday, Saturday, and Sunday (on our way out), June 4-6. There will be camping opportunities at Patrick's Point State Park. Also, motels near Arcata will be available. This trip will be limited to 15 participants. More details available as we near the date.

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



Field Trip Reports

YAMS Explore Cloverdale River Park

On March 6, 2021, YAMS (Young Ancient Murrelets) took a trip to Cloverdale River Park in northern Sonoma County. Highlights were a non-stop singing **California Thrasher** in the riparian vegetation near the parking lot. We also began the day with a close-up **Merlin** in the parking lot. We then hiked the 1-mile trail along the river and explored the cemetery at the end of the trail. A **Pileated Woodpecker** visited us along this hike. We also saw a **White-throated Sparrow** in the cemetery. On the walk back, we saw 3 fly-over **Bald Eagles** and an **Osprey** frequently flew over (the Osprey nest at the Highway 101/West 128 intersection is occupied). When we returned to the parking lot, the California Thrasher was sitting up singing and accompanied us during lunch. It was a great morning.

If you know a birder (or are a birder) between the ages of 10 and 18 and would like to join our Youth Group, the Young Ancient Murrelets (YAMS), contact Lisa Hug at Lisahug@sonic.net.

-Lisa Hug

King Ridge Field Trip Report (Part II)

Due to the popularity of our King Ridge field trip in the Spring, a second one was added on April 3rd. Eleven birders began a full day covering almost 20 miles in 6 and 1/2 hours. Weather-wise, it was a perfect day with temperatures in the low 50's in the morning, warming to the 70's under clear skies. Spring arrivals did not disappoint. We had three **Vireos: Hutton's, Cassin's, and Warbling**; five **Warblers: Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, Wilson's**. Other highlights included **Northern Pygmy-Owl, Mountain Quail**, four **Pileated Woodpeckers, Western Tanager, Lark, and Chipping Sparrows**. Sooty Grouse? Nope. We were lucky to have Ruth Rudesill, Jeff Valfer, and Malcolm Blanchard on the trip. Their excellent ears helped as many of the birds were singing but challenging to see.

New members, Dave and Heidi Horvitz, provided local insight into the natural and human history of King Ridge Road. Johnny Urbanski, Lisa Neuson, BJ Blanchard, Rob & Anne O'Donnell made sure that no bird was left behind. Our eBird reports had 37 species each for both the lower and upper sections of King Ridge Road. We ended the day with 52 species.

See the complete bird list here: <https://www.rros.org/ebird>

Pine Flat Road - April 10th

Twelve RROS birders headed up Pine Flat Road on a beautiful spring day Saturday, April 10. Wildflowers were fantastic. Classic fields of California Poppy and Lupin. Entire hillsides painted pink by Claytonia. Views to the ocean. And there were birds. Not at first. Ferguson Spring was disappointing. On the way up the hill, we got glimpses of Purple Martin, but not much else. At the top, it took a while before we heard California Thrasher, Mountain Quail and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Eventually, we also heard the elusive Bell's Sparrow. Never did see it. Heading back down the hill we found a Rufous-crowned Sparrow by the shipping container singing its heart out. We stopped where we had seen the Purple Martins on the way up, about a quarter mile north of the bridge over Little Sulphur Creek. Turned out to be one of the best spots of the day as a Piliated Woodpecker flew by on his way to his nest hole where he joined his mate. Purple Martins were also in abundance. At our lunch stop at Little Sulphur Creek, we were joined by a rare Thick-billed Fox Sparrow to top off our day. This general area was devastated by fires in the last few years. But, life finds a way.



PISHING *with* PARMETER

QUEBRADA TUCHUCHIRA (AMAZON BASIN) : JULY 17, 1975

The word “quebrada” means branch. It was a small branch of the main Amazon River that we spent the day of 17 July, 1975 birding.

It was near Monkey Island, where we were staying. We left early in our three dugout canoes. I again took the paddler's seat in the front of the boat.

We immediately began seeing new species of birds. Some birds seen were **Muscovy Duck**, **Pale-vented Pigeon**, **Laughing Falcon**, **Great Kiskadee**, **Tui Parakeet**, **Ringed Kingfisher**, **Ocellated Woodcreeper**, **Wattled Jacana**, **Bright-rumped Attila**, **Large-billed Tern**, **Russet-backed Oropendola**, **Great Egret** (same species as here in Sonoma County), **White-eyed Parakeet**, **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Black-capped Mockingthrush** (then considered a thrasher; now called **Black-capped Donacobius** and in a monotypic family), **Red-capped Cardinal**, **Spot-breasted Woodcreeper**, **Yellow-rumped Cacique**, **Plumbeous Pigeon**, **Bare-necked Fruitcrow**, and **Plumbeous Kite**.

Other species included **Crimson-crested Woodpecker**, **Troupial**, **Plum-throated Cotinga**, **Scarlet-crowned Barbet**, **Dark-billed Cuckoo**, **Horned Screamer**, **Tropical Mockingbird**, **Greater Yellow-headed Vulture**, **Thrush-like Wren**, **Black-tailed Trogon**, **Yellow-bellied Dacnis**, **Black-collared Hawk**, **Purple-throated Euphonia**, **Scarlet Macaw (!)**, **Blue-and-gold macaw**, **Cuvier's Toucan**, and **Black-banded Woodcreeper**.

After heading back to Monkey Island for lunch, I added several lifers in the afternoon: **Ash-breasted Antbird**, **Blue-winged Parrotlet**, **Little Cuckoo**, **Hoatzin** (a bizarre-looking bird that lives in and eats stream-side leaves), and **Chestnut-bellied Heron**. It is interesting that in Amazonia some species live almost exclusively on river islands. **Hooded Tanager** is such a bird, found regularly on the islands but very scarce elsewhere.

Before returning to Leticia the following day, we squeezed in a bit more birding on Monkey Island. Some birds noted included **Swainson's Flycatcher**, **Undulated Tinamou** (this was a life family for me), **Yellow-green Vireo** (which I have now seen at Bodega Bay!), and **Social Flycatcher**.

Coming Soon...

A digital archive of RROS' entire catalog of *Kite Tales* is in the works. Once complete, you will be able to access it anytime on the web at www.RROS.org/newsletter

A big thank you to Eugene Hunn, Jeff Valfer, and Miles & Teresa Tuffli for this effort!

OBSERVATIONS

March 21, 2020 to April 20, 2021 // COMPILED BY DAVID A. HOFMANN

Species	Date(s)	Location	Cty	#	Observer(s)
Eurasian Wigeon	03/21-27/21	Doran Regional Park	SON	1m	AIW, DeH, DoA, GoB
White-winged Scoter	03/21/21	Bodega Head State Park	SON	1f	ErE
White-winged Scoter	04/01/21	Duncans Landing State Park	SON	4	LiH
Black Scoter	04/03/21	Bodega Head State Park	SON	1m	DoK
Sooty Grouse	03/27/21	King Ridge Road	SON	2	DoK, RROS F/T (10) heard only
Sandhill Crane	03/27/21	Laguna de Santa Rosa	SON	1	BrW photos
Pacific Golden-Plover	03/28/21	South Salmon Crk State Beach	SON	1	EdV photo
Solitary Sandpiper	04/20-21/21	Sebastopol Community Center	SON	1	LiH, JiC photos
Red Knot	04/17-20/21	Porto Bodega	SON	2	DanB, JaS photos
Glaucous Gull	04/12/21	Salmon Creek mouth	SON	1	ScC photos
Swainson's Hawk	03/23/21	Boyes Hot Springs	SON	1	JeV
Swainson's Hawk	03/29/21 - 04/16/21	Santa Rosa Creek Trail	SON	1	BrW photo
Swainson's Hawk	04/10/21	Sonoma-Leveroni x Arnold	SON	1	MiC
Swainson's Hawk	04/18/21	Ellis Creek Ponds	SON	1	DaB
Swainson's Hawk	04/17/21	Joe Rodota Trail east of Sebastopol	SON	2	ZaM, ThB
Swainson's Hawk	04/17/21	Sonoma Valley-possible migration	SON	7	RiL
Hammond's Flycatcher	03/25/21	Tolay Lake Regional Park	SON	1	LaN
Evening Grosbeak	03/29/21	Riverfront Regional Park	SON	2	GoB
Lawrence's Goldfinch	04/15/21	Petaluma-Paula Lane yard	SON	1m	DaN photo
Bell's Sparrow	04/10/21	Pine Flat Road	SON	1	RROS F/T (12) heard only
Hermit Warbler	03/24-27/21	King Ridge Road	SON	1m	LiH, RROS F/T (10) heard only
Hermit Warbler	04/18/21	Laguna de Santa Rosa	SON	1m	DaM
Summer Tanager	03/25/21 - 04/08/21	A Place to Play Park	SON	1f	PeD, LiH, MaLB, MarB, ScC, JoS, Ro&AnO, DaB, BrW, DoK, LaN, JeV, RAR, BaK, DaL, TiE, KEM, MaG, JiC, DaB, EuH, KaM, CaR, DaF, ChN, CoM, AIW, DeH, WiG, NoO, MiH photos



OBSERVERS FOR THIS PERIOD

Dorian Anderson • Mario Balitbit • David Barry • Gordon Beebe • Dave Bengston • Malcolm Blanchard • Theodora Block • Dan Brown • Scott Carey • Mike Carozza • Jim Crumpler • Peter Dellavalle • Erik Enbody • Tiffany Erikson • Dawna Foreman • Will German • Mary Grishaver • Michael Hawk • Denise Herzberg • Lisa Hug • Eugene Hunn • Barbara Kendrick • Don Kirker • Rick LeBaudour • David Leland • Kate E. Magoon • Karen Meredith • Colin Meusel • Zack Mikalonis • David Moring • Christian Naventi • Dan Nelson • Larry Nigro • Rob & Anne O'Donnell • Norm Ortman • Carolyn Rich • RuthAnn Rudesill • Josh Snead • Jackie Sones • Jeff Valfer • Ed Vermeulen • Brian Webb • Alan Wight

It's a Wrap!

So very many strange things happened this last year. Let's take a moment to celebrate doing the best with what we had.

September started off with a small meeting, held outdoors, normal practice for the start of a new year. By October, with COVID cases increasing, meetings shifted to a virtual platform. With the hope that "Zoom" would be a temporary fix, and thanks in no small part to our first "virtual presenter", **Mario Balitbit**, we succeeded with virtual meeting #1. We were treated to stunning shots of Farallon birds and an inside look at research done on the island. Mario is a brilliant birder, thanks to many of you who mentored him from the get go until he headed to Humboldt State (Congratulations, graduate!!). Mario is also "techie" enough to help me pull off this first virtual meeting from his screen in Santa Rosa, that was hosted in San Francisco, moderated by the president beaming in from Portland, Oregon, and watched by over 30 participants who streamed through outer space and/or watched a recording of the presentation accessed from the RROS website (RROS.org – thanks to Teresa and Miles Tuffli) !! We were off to a good start.

In November, with the joyous participation of **Veronica Bowers** (Native Songbird Care and Conservation), we learned about "Wildscaping for Songbirds", all safely distanced following SoCo guidelines. December was one of the best "members share" nights I can remember with a most entertaining variety of avian audio recordings, dazzling photos, and artwork from both young (very young) and old (-er). January we were generously re-visited by John Sterling who toured us through Paraguay, a dream birding destination that may be reality as travel restrictions lift. February, **Lisa Hug** prepped us for the spring with an excellent lesson on ID'ng female ducks, and in March, **Manuel Grosselet** Zoomed in from Oaxaca, Mexico, welcoming members back to the lands visited by an RROS group a few years ago. Finally we arrived in April, still distanced but happily soothed by **Tom Reynolds**, who shared shots of favorite birds and not often seen mammals, most of which were photographed in this special place we call home.

While RROS survived this year, so many of our friends, including many who helped us with virtual presentations this year, lost significant sources of income as in-person tours, classes and other bird-guide services were cancelled. Please consider donating extra or employing their services as you think about the birding community this coming year.

Though not as good as in-person meetings, the virtual substitutes and their recordings, were a gift and serve as reminder of what we can do when the odds may seem against us. Thank you to all who helped to make this challenging year a success.

Looking forward to 2021-22 and seeing us back at face-to-face gatherings!


Outgoing President, Anne O'Donnell

We would like to thank Anne O'Donnell for her past 3 years of service as RROS President. From overseeing the launch of the new website to navigating a year unlike any other, we'd like to express our gratitude for everything she has done. Thanks Anne!!

Eugene Hunn will be stepping up as RROS President with Jeff Valfer taking on the role of VP. We would like to extend a warm welcome to both of them and look forward to an exciting 2021-22 year and beyond.

PHOTO GALLERY




Pac-slope Flycatcher • Santa Rosa Creek Trail  Teresa Tuffi



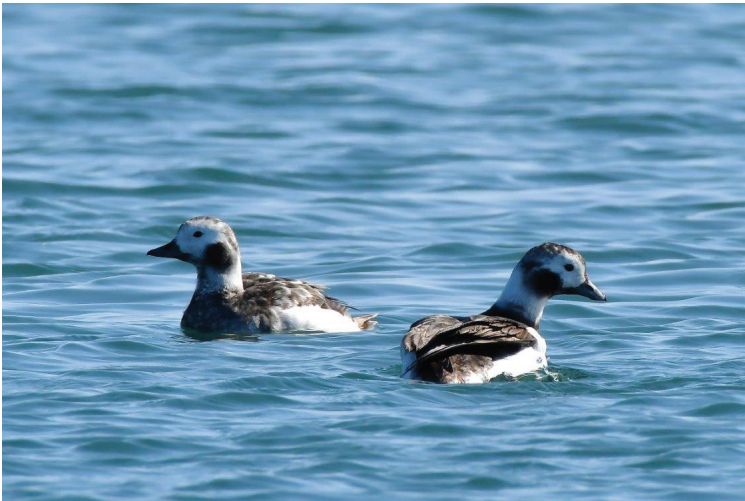
Grasshopper Sparrow • Taylor Mountain  Malcolm Blanchard



A scene from the King Ridge Road Field Trip on April 3rd  Jeff Valfer



Acorn Woodpeckers doing their thing • Pine Flat Road •  Rick LeBaudour



Long-tailed Ducks • Bodega Bay  Rick LeBaudour



Western Meadowlark • Tolay RP  Jeff Valfer



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

OFFICERS

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 Website: Teresa & Miles Tuffli.....milestuffli@gmail.com // 707-331-2709

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.