



White-tailed Kite

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

Chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties of Northern California

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2015

ALTACAL Programs

Programs for the general community are normally held on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Chico Creek Nature Center, 1968 E. 8th St. Chico.

In December the program is held on the second Monday and in July and August there are no programs.

September

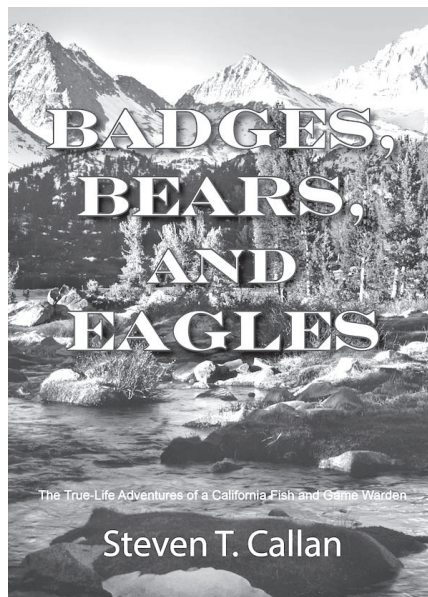
Monday, September 21, 2015 6:30 p.m. Chico Creek Nature Center

BADGES, BEARS, AND EAGLES

The True-Life Adventures of a California Fish and Game Warden

Presented by STEVEN T. CALLAN

Award-winning author and retired Fish and Game patrol lieutenant Steven T. Callan recounts his adventures during his thirty-year career in *Badges, Bears, and Eagles*, a "Book of the Year" finalist. One of Steve's most important cases begins with a slain Bald Eagle dropped on the doorstep of the Redding Fish and Game office, along with a note threatening the life of a fellow warden. Throughout his career, one of Callan's proudest achievements was leading an effort to save a beloved wildlife sanctuary from development. Passionate about the environment, this Chico State graduate and his wife, Kathy, are avid birders and members of National Audubon. Don't miss this presentation covering this local author and his hit book. The book will be available for purchase and signing after the presentation.



Steve grew up in the small Northern California farm town of Orland. With an insatiable interest in wildlife, he never missed an opportunity to ride along on patrol with his father, a California Fish and Game warden. Steve went on to graduate from CSU, Chico, and attended graduate school at CSU, Sacramento. Hired by the California Department of Fish and Game in 1974, he began his career as a game warden near the Colorado River, promoted to patrol lieutenant in the Riverside/San Bernardino area, and spent the remainder of his thirty-year enforcement career in Shasta County. Callan has earned numerous awards for his work in wildlife protection. He also recently received the "Best Outdoor Magazine Column" award for the second year in a row

from the Outdoor Writers Association of California.

ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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from the President

by STEVE OVERLOCK

Just a couple quick notes then on to an excellent article about the work Melinda Teves has done locally with the Certified Neighborhood Habitat Program. She has recently been awarded another grant from the City of Chico. Frankly, no surprises there, just wonderful news.



Please consider visiting the link from Audubon re: Duke Energy and the MBTA. It seems their answer to being fined for taking birds (some Eagles, in fact) at two of their solar farms is to support Congressmen who will vote to do away with the MBTA altogether. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act has been around since 1918 and has served its purpose well, as recently as the horrific BP spill of 2010, in fact. So why not put effort and money into developing technologies that will help protect birds at wind farms. Tell Duke Energy: Stop Killing Birds and the Laws That Protect Them – <http://tinyurl.com/qf9r4wg> and for more history: www.audubon.org/news/duke-energy-looking-payback

(Just received notice that the MBTA will NOT be rescinded at this time. Still, the fact it was even an issue speaks volumes. Please consider voicing your concern.)

See you on the trail and again at the September Program, which is also our Annual Members Meeting. Though we are not voting this year, we will be requesting approval from the Membership to a few changes in the bylaws. Detailed information about this will be posted on the web page and via an email. Do consider your input to be sincerely solicited and valued.

Altacal is participating in the Annie B's Community Drive again this year. And even though we represent just one of a large number of worthy, participating organizations, we sincerely hope you will carefully consider making a contribution to our work learning about, protecting and appreciating our Birds and their habitats.

Thank You, very much.



BOARD MEETINGS

5:15 p.m.

2nd Wednesday of each month

Altacal Audubon Society / Snow Goose Festival Office
635 Flume Street, Chico

Altacal Audubon Members are welcome to attend

NOW IS THE TIME

by MELINDA TEVES, Project Director

Having a clean, and safely placed, bird bath is more important now than ever. Severe drought conditions have diminished natural water resources. And positive water conservation efforts have reduced yard and street puddles for birds and bees. By placing bird baths in our yards, we can conserve water and still help thirsty wildlife.



NOW IS A PERFECT TIME TO 'RETHINK' OUR FRONT YARDS

And there are a couple of great programs out there to support residents, making exciting changes ... the kinds of changes that can help us restore needed habitat and protect our precious water.

Cal Water recently introduced a Turf Rebate Program that can help its customers with the cost of replacing thirsty lawns with drought-tolerant landscaping. Cal Water also offers a variety of coupons and rebates to help with household water efficiency. Visit their website for details on these programs: calwater.com

And Altacal Audubon's Neighborhood Habitat Certification Program provides many resources to help guide these choices. Recommendations for bird-favorite native plants, nursery coupons, access to local experts and workshops, and much more is provided in our Neighborhood Habitat Resource Packets. Summer months are perfect for making plans and putting in hardscape changes. September and October are ideal for planting native plants.

Over 100 local residents have signed up to participate in the Neighborhood Habitat Certification Program. We are working together to link our yards, and to create a thriving wildlife corridor in our own community. We have the power to make changes. And every yard counts!

Please visit the Neighborhood Habitat Certification Program link at our new Altacal website to view our photo gallery of local efforts, or to join today.

altacal.org/neighborhood-habitat-certification-program/



UPCOMING

Bird Walks and Birding Trips

*All of our field trips are open to beginning birders.
Anyone with a sense of wonder is welcome to participate.*

August 1, Saturday **THERMALITO AFTERBAY KAYAKING TRIP**

Trip Leader: Matt Forster

Meet the Grebes! Join us for a morning out on the Afterbay. We will get a close up look at Western and Clark's Grebes in their breeding grounds. Please contact me if anyone would like to join without a kayak. I may be able to locate a few. We will also be on the lookout for Least Bittern, Peregrine Falcon, and Common Loon. Anything can show up at the Afterbay! There have been many sightings of Bonaparte's Gulls over the years. After kayaking we will head over to the Causeway on Hwy 162 and scope the Afterbay for more birds. Bring lots of water, sunscreen, and snacks. Meet at the Larkin Rd Boat Launch at southeast corner of lake south of Hwy 162. We will launch at 8 am. Rain cancels. Contact: Matthew Forster, findforster@yahoo.com, 619-347-2269

August 16, Sunday **CHICO OXIDATION PONDS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY BEGINNER BIRDING**

Trip Leaders: Matt Forster and Diego Bustamante

We will get a personal and up-close view of the Fall shorebird migration at the Oxidation Ponds Wildlife Sanctuary at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, west of Chico. Yellow-headed black-birds, Great-tailed Grackle, plover, rails, yellowlegs, sandpipers, dowitchers, returning waterfowl and possibly some unexpected migrants. The walk is under 2 miles and about 3 hours. This is great for beginner and veteran birders! The walk is flat and pretty easy going. Meet at the Oxidation Pond parking lot at 7 am. This will allow us to beat the heat! We should be back to the lot by 10 am. To get to the Oxidation Ponds, go west on W 5th St from Hwy 32 in Chico. Follow W 5th St, which becomes Chico River Rd, for 3.9 miles. The wildlife viewing parking area is 300 yards past the main entrance to the water treatment plant, on the left. Bring binoculars, spotting scopes, water, walking shoes and proper clothing for the expected weather conditions. There is a chemical toilet on the way out to the viewing area. Rain cancels. Contact: Matthew Forster, findforster@yahoo.com, 619-347-2269

August 19 and 26, Wednesday **CHICO OXIDATION PONDS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY WEDNESDAY EVENING TRIPS**

Trip Leader: Matt Forster

Join us for four Wednesdays in a row. This is the absolute height of shorebird migration. Last year we had Common, Forster's and Caspian Tern, Long and Short-billed Dowitcher, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral, Solitary, and Baird's Sandpiper and many more migrants. Please bring lots of water and sunscreen. Dress according to the weather! We will meet at 5:30 pm at the Oxidation Ponds parking lot. Go west on W 5th St from Hwy 32 in Chico. Follow W 5th St, which becomes Chico River Rd, for 3.9 miles. The wildlife viewing parking area is 300 yards past the main entrance to the water treatment plant, on the left. There is a chemical toilet on the way out to the viewing area. Rain cancels. Contact: Matthew Forster, findforster@yahoo.com, 619-347-2269

August 29 - 30, Saturday - Sunday **EL DORADO COUNTY BIG WEEKEND**

Trip Leader: Scott Huber

El Dorado County begins in the valley at Folsom Lake and terminates at Lake Tahoe and the Nevada State line. This elevation range will provide many different habitat types to explore and a wide range of birds to observe. Scott Huber will lead a two-day trip to El Dorado County to try to see as many birds in the county as possible. Great for those who keep county lists. Where possible we will try to enlist the assistance of local experts from that county to join us or help in planning our route. Plan on leaving early Saturday morning, camping Saturday night (campground TBA, near Tahoe). Please sign up early to assist us in planning. Plan on bringing all food needed for the weekend, we will cook dinner at our campsite on Saturday night. Bring tents, sleeping bags, an adventurous spirit and good sense of humor. Scott has extra camping gear if needed. Prepare for the possibility of rain. Car-pooling encouraged. Please contact Scott if you are planning to attend 530 321-5579 or wmscotthuber@gmail.com.

Get to know YOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES!



by LORA HALLER, Visitor Services Manager

September 2 and 9, Wednesday **CHICO OXIDATION PONDS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY WEDNESDAY EVENING TRIPS**

Trip Leader: Matt Forster

This is the absolute height of Shorebird Migration. Last year we had Common, Forster's and Caspian Tern, Long and Short-billed Dowitcher, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral, Solitary, and Baird's Sandpiper and many more migrants. Please bring lots of water and sunscreen. Dress according to the weather! We will meet at 5:30 pm at the Oxidation Ponds parking lot. There is a chemical toilet on the way out to the viewing area. Rain cancels. Contact Matthew Forster, findforster@yahoo.com, 619-347-2269

September 11 - 13, Friday - Sunday **POINT REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE**

Trip Leader: Jennifer Patten and Mary Muchowski

Point Reyes National Seashore is well-known for its excellent birding. The seashore and surrounding areas offer many different habitats from grasslands, estuaries, and coastal scrub to forests. The projection of the Point Reyes peninsula some 10 miles seaward from the "mainland" makes Point Reyes National Seashore a landing spot for many vagrants - birds that may have made errors in navigation and thus are unexpected in this area. Each fall these vagrants seek out resting spots along the peninsula on their way south. Some of these rarities have included Black-throated Blue Warbler, American Redstart, White-throated Sparrow, Palm Warbler and Prothonotary Warbler. We will visit these vagrant traps (resting spots), such as the Fish Docks, the lighthouse rocks and cliff areas, Abbott's Lagoon, Tomales Bay, Drake's Beach, Bear Valley, Olema Marsh and the famous historic ranches along the way. We will camp Friday and Saturday night at Olema Campground. Tent Camping only. If you have an RV or trailer, you'll need to make your own reservations. Please contact Jennifer at 530-345-9356 or jpchico@sbcglobal.net or Mary Muchowski at 530-882-0625, mmuchowski@earthlink.net if you are interested in going. Trip is limited to 12

Things look a little different at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex during the summer. Here are a few tidbits of what is happening around the Complex. In July, approximately 20,000 tricolored blackbirds were nesting at the south end of **Delevan National Wildlife Refuge (NWR)** which is exciting since no tricolors nested last year on the Complex.



The **Llano Seco Unit** of the North Central Valley Wildlife Management Area along 7 Mile Road will be temporarily closed while improvements and upgrades to the outdated visitor services facilities take place. The closure will be in effect through early October. The popular viewing area receives over 21,000 visitors annually. Replacement and upgrades will include a new viewing platform, new ADA restroom, and a solar security light at the parking area. In addition, the second platform along the trail will be removed and staff will be constructing an elevated earthen mound to view wildlife on the interior of the Unit. Construction work should be completed by early October. Staff anticipates reopening the new facilities prior to wetland flood up which will occur in late October or early November.

The **Sacramento NWR** has had a 1.5 mile extension on the auto tour open this summer. With the majority of the refuge dry during the summer, the Pool 2 Extension allows visitors to see a unit that is flooded. Visitors have been able to see a variety of grebes, ruddy ducks, mallards, Canada geese, river otters, bald eagles and more. Pool 2 is a deep pond along the south side of the auto tour approximately one mile west of the viewing platform. Staff plan to have this extension open seasonally during the spring and close on August 30.

Bird Walk and *Birding Trip* REPORTS

June 6, 2015

PINE CREEK, INDIAN FISHERIES AND WASHOUT

Trip Leader: Matt Forster

We started the day early at the Pine Creek Unit in search of the elusive Yellow-billed Cuckoo. Although we were not able to locate a cuckoo, we did enjoy a beautiful day with many other great birds. During the 3 mile round-trip walk we encountered 36 total species. Highlights included: **Wild Turkey, Downy Woodpecker, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting.**

Our next stop was Indian Fisheries and the 'not-so-well-known' trail back through the old orchard and out to the river. On our walk we were able to see a total of 31 species, including a nesting **Osprey**, a soaring **Swainson's Hawk**, numerous **House** and **Bewick's Wren**, many **Bullock's Oriole**, and roughly 50 **Bank Swallows** in both Glenn and Butte County!

We ended the day at the Washout. There were 8 **American White Pelican** resting on the island and 6 **Forster's Terns** flying up and down the river. We were also able to locate a **Green Heron**, 2 **Spotted Sandpiper**, and a flying/calling **Lesser Nighthawk** that ended up landing on a snag giving us amazing looks and photo opportunities! Last, but certainly not least, we found Diego a singing **Blue Grosbeak** (a lifer for him!). Although we did not locate a Yellow-billed Cuckoo the day was filled with beautiful birds and great company!



White-headed Woodpeckers

June 13 - 14, 2015

SHASTA COUNTY BIG WEEKEND

Trip Leader: Scott Huber

Ellie Schafer, Billie Sommerfeld and Joyce Bond joined trip leader Scott Huber and our guest hosts Bob and Carol Yutzys of Redding on a two day exploration of the birding hotspots of Shasta County. The county is huge and under the expert guidance of the Yutzys **110 species** of birds were detected. Some of the standout detections included: a **Black Swift** on its nest behind Burney Falls, nesting **Mountain Bluebirds** in Lassen Park, **White-headed Woodpecker** feeding a nestling near Shingletown, and many others. All of the participants were able to add a number of species to their life lists!

The group camped at Manzanita Lake where they set up tents and cooked dinner over a campfire. The trip was a terrific way to experience parts of California many of the group had never seen before. The County BIG WEEKEND series continues in late July with a Placer County Trip and in August with an El Dorado County trip. These trips are an ideal way to see new country and lots of birds!

June 19 -21, 2015

WARNER VALLEY CAMPING, LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK

Trip Leaders: Joseph O'Neil and Gaylord Grams



Photos by Lisa Winslow



Bird Walk and *Birding Trip* REPORTS

June 26 – 28, 2015

WINTU, REDBUD, REDWOOD, ALTACAL CAMP-OUT, LASSEN VOLCANIC NATIONAL PARK

Trip Leaders: Mary Muchowski and Jennifer Patten

A group of nine Altacal Audubon folks met up with some birders from the Wintu and Redbud Audubon chapters at the Lost Creek Campground on Friday. It was still pretty warm up there, but definitely not as hot as down in the valley. That evening, Larry Jordan from Wintu, showed several of us a **Williamson's Sapsucker** nest that he had known about and we all drove over near Summit Lake where we got looks at the female and male feeding the nestlings. There was also a **Mountain Chickadee** nest in a log nearby. At this site we also saw a pair of **Western Tanagers** with a couple of fledglings following them around, and saw a beautiful male **Cassin's Finch**. At the campsite, we heard the fast, cheery song of a **Townsend's Solitaire**, had a pair of **White-headed Woodpeckers** carrying food to a nest somewhere near campsite #3, heard **Evening Grosbeaks**, and had about 5 **Common Nighthawks** flying over calling and booming. Across the road from the campground, Jennifer Patten, Ruth Paz and I got the treat of seeing a blond yearling bear. The bear saw us, but continued his business of ripping a log apart.



Saturday, we hiked around Manzanita Lake where we saw quite a few fledgling birds with their parents, including **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, **Orange-crowned Warblers**, **American Coots**, **Buffleheads**, **Pied-billed Grebes**, **Dark-eyed Juncos** and **Green-tailed Towhees**. We located a **Downy Woodpecker** nest right beside the trail and a **White-headed Woodpecker** nest too. An **American Dipper** juvenile was hiding under a log across the creek and a fledgling **Brown-headed Cowbird** which was on its own confused us for awhile as it had such a yellowish wash on its chest. We also saw a couple of **Vaux's Swifts**, **Hermit Warblers** and Fox Sparrows. Walking towards the Visitor Center, we spotted a **Peregrine Falcon**, which circled overhead a dozen times giving us great looks! We shared a nice potluck dinner with everyone at the campsite that evening, enjoying birding stories and listening to the **Common Nighthawks** flying around.



Bufflehead family at Manzanita Lake, Lassen NVP

Sunday we decided to just walk around the Hat Creek Lake area where we saw a **Spotted Sandpiper** and saw a male **Warbling Vireo** that was singing from its nest in a cottonwood tree right near the parking area! We walked down the service road where we saw a pair of **Chipping Sparrows** and heard the **Olive-sided flycatchers** and **Townsend's Solitaires** calling from the tops of the dead trees. Down past the creek we located a pair of **Black-backed Woodpeckers**, heard a couple of **Pacific Wrens** singing and two **Clark's Nutcrackers** calling. On the way back up the road we heard then saw several **Red Crossbills**, a nice treat. While near Hat Creek on the Service Road, we came across a female black-tailed deer licking her newborn which was already standing. They both watched us, but the doe was intent on getting the fawn clean as soon as possible and they did not move from this spot while we snapped pictures.

Local Chapter Membership Application

Please join us!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP WILL HELP
ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
CONTINUE ITS IMPORTANT WORK.

Altacal Audubon Society (AAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. AAS is a separately incorporated non-profit organization with a local chapter membership. 100% of membership dues goes to support local projects and activities. AAS is an all-volunteer organization that conducts all of its programs with unpaid staff.

We offer regularly scheduled **field trips** that focus on birds and bird habitats; membership **programs** with media presentations on birds and related topics; a bi-monthly **newsletter**, the White-tailed Kite; **website** www.altacal.org/; and **advocacy** to protect and conserve local habitats as well as special projects and programs.

Submission of Articles to the *White-tailed Kite*

Articles for publication should be sent to Denise Devine by email to dsrdevine@hotmail.com on the first of the month, prior to the next issue.

THANKS to all of you who contribute regularly by sending in reports, articles and photos for the White-tailed Kite – Denise, Editor.



OTHER ALTACAL ACTIVITIES

Major sponsor, participant and fiscal agent for the annual
SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL

Founder and ongoing supporter of the
CHICO CREEK NATURE CENTER

Sponsor of the City of Chico
OXIDATION PONDS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Leading annual **CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS**
in Chico and Oroville for over 55 years

Focusing on our **YOUTH** through
SCHOLARSHIPS and **ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Advocating for **BIRDS** and **WILDLIFE**
when they are threatened

Conducting surveys and participating in
AVIAN RESEARCH PROJECTS

ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- \$25 Basic \$35 Family \$15 Student / Low Income
 \$50 Sponsor \$100 Sustaining \$_____ Additional Donation

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

- Save Paper! Send me an email only New Member Renewal Gift
 email me *Altacal in Action Alerts*
 I would be interested in volunteering to help Cash Check Date _____

IMPORTANT: Membership in Altacal Audubon Society does not include membership in the National Audubon Society. We encourage you to also support National Audubon in their important education and lobbying efforts. To join the National Audubon Society contact them at their website www.audubon.org/

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7/27 - 29/2015
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Chico, Calif. 95927

CURRENT RESIDENT



White-tailed Kite

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2015

DATES TO REMEMBER

Aug	1	Thermalito Afterbay
Aug	16	Oxidation Ponds
Aug	19	Oxidation Ponds Wed Eve
Aug	26	Oxidation Ponds Wed Eve
Aug	29-30	El Dorado Co Big Weekend
Sep	2	Oxidation Ponds Wed Eve
Sep	9	Oxidation Ponds Wed Eve
Sep	11-13	Point Reyes
Sep	21	Program - <i>Badges Bears & Eagles</i>

For updated information check the Altacal website
altacal.org

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

ALTACAL Program

September 21

BADGES, BEARS, AND EAGLES

ALTACAL

Mission: To promote the awareness, appreciation and protection of native birds and their habitats through education, research and environmental activities.