



# White-tailed Kite

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

DECEMBER 2015 / JANUARY 2016

## 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.*

### December

Monday, December 14, 2015 6:30 p.m.  
Chico Creek Nature Center

### January

Wednesday - Sunday, January 27 - 31, 2016  
Chico, California

## MEMBERS' SLIDE SHOW



December is a special month and we will celebrate it at the Altacal Program by inviting members and friends to share some photos they have

taken over the past year. Our annual Members' Slide Show is a favorite program for many. There are always some great new, and sometimes old, pictures to see and tales of how they were gotten, to hear. Join in and bring a few of your own photos of birds/wildlife/nature (on disk or memory stick). We will have plenty of time for all who want to participate.

Also at this program we will hear about plans for the annual Chico and Oroville Christmas Bird Counts taking place over the following two weekends. Call or email Jennifer Patten, 530 345-9356 (jpchico@sbcglobal.net) so we know ahead of time how many will be showing photos.

Standing flock by Steve McDonald

## The 17th Annual SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL of the Pacific Flyway

Altacal Audubon is having their biggest program of the year! All sorts of wonders are in store for birders and outdoor enthusiasts of all skills and ages at the 17th Annual Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway, Wednesday-Sunday, January 27-31, 2016.

There are things to do - take a hike, stroll along a river and see a White-tailed Kite. Learn a duck call, view a swan, and hear the cranes calling on and on. Snow Geese galore, people don't get bored, when you see thousands take off and soar! Eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls,- raptors are what they're called.

With over 60 field trips, workshops and presentations, free family activities, exhibits, vendors, and the amazing Pacific Flyway Art Exhibit in downtown Chico, the festival is a great opportunity to spend the day or all five-days learning about the natural wonders of the Pacific Flyway and its inhabitants.

(continued on page 2.)



## ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

### Board of Directors

President	STEVE OVERLOCK 530 828-0966 stephenoverlock@sbcglobal.net
Vice President	KEN SOBON 530 592-3350 ksobon@thermalito.org
Secretary	KATE BRICE 773 206-0876 bricekc7@gmail.com
Treasurer / Finance	LEANN MCCONNELL 530 893-4703 leannmc2006@sbcglobal.net
Membership	CATHY CARTER 530 342-9152 scarab4ever@gmail.com
Publications / Newsletter	DENISE DEVINE 530 345-8444 dsrdevine@hotmail.com
Publicity / Web Site	WAYLAND AUGUR 519-4724 wba@acm.org
Field Trips	MATT FORSTER 619 347-2269 findforster@yahoo.com
Sanctuary / Lands / Refuge	KEN SOBON 530 592-3350 ksobon@thermalito.org
Conservation Co-chair	DAWN GARCIA 872-2165 avifan59@gmail.com
Education	VACANT
Programs	JENNIFER PATTEN 345-9356 jpchico@sbcglobal.net
Sac NWR Bookstore	LEANN MCCONNELL 530 893-4703 leannmc2006@sbcglobal.net
Director - at-Large	KATHRYN HOOD 321-2852 verdant44@gmail.com
Director - at-Large	MARILYN GAMETTE 343-3154 gamettec@aol.com
Director - at-Large	DEREK DUNN 414 698-3851 derekwdunn@gmail.com

## January (continued from page 1.)

GEORGE LEPP, joins the Festival this year as our Keynote Speaker at the "Gathering of Wings" Banquet & Silent Auction. George will share some of his greatest bird photography success stories, and some very funny failures, as he employs creative tactics and techniques to get the winning shot in locations around the world in "True Confessions of a Wild Bird Photographer". Don't miss this special event!



Visit our website for program and registration information. For early notification of our exciting field trip and workshop schedule, be sure you are on our email list and "like" us on Facebook as that is a great source for instant Festival information and updates.

snowgoosefestival.org  
info@snowgoosefestival.org  
530-345-1865  
Snow Goose Festival, P. O. Box 1063  
Chico, CA 95927



Altacal Audubon Society's booth

## 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*

# ALTACAL Christmas Gifts

Don't forget your favorite local birding organization in your gift choices to friends and family



## MEMBERSHIP - SUPER AFFORDABLE!!

Altacal members enjoy the benefit of receiving six issues a year of the *White-tailed Kite* newsletter and up-to-date information on chapter activities. Your financial contribution supports Altacal's many conservation initiatives including protecting birds and important bird areas, monitoring bird populations, connecting with local youth, conducting outreach and education, sponsoring local events and field trips, and so much more. Starting at \$15 for student, \$25 regular. [altacal.org/become-a-member/](http://altacal.org/become-a-member/)

## GO NATIVE - NATIVE HABITAT CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Make a little native patch in your yard, and take your friends with you. Help AAS create a wildlife corridor through our region with drought tolerant blooms and a really cool sign your neighbors will want to have. \$12 resource packet, \$5 sign. [altacal.org/neighborhood-habitat-certification-program/](http://altacal.org/neighborhood-habitat-certification-program/)



## BIRDS AND BEANS BEST COFFEE FOR BIRDS, PEOPLE, THE PLANET

Support shade grown, fair-traded, organic, bird friendly coffee. It's certified! I mean come on, this is the best-tasting and good for all coffee, perfect giving for the holiday season. We even have decaf. \$12 a bag goes to delicious coffee and supporting fair practices. Available at our November and December programs. Or email LeAnn for special pick-up. [leanmc2006@sbcglobal.net](mailto:leanmc2006@sbcglobal.net).

## ADOPT AN OWL

Support Altacal's Northern Saw-whet Owl fall migration monitoring program, now in its 10th year of long-term monitoring! Receive a guardian certificate with a picture of one of the adorable owls banded during our project. \$30, what a great gift for budding conservationists! For all owl info go to our director's blog. [birdbling.blogspot.com](http://birdbling.blogspot.com)

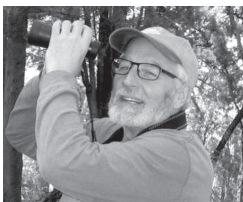


## OWL GREETING CARDS

Supporting the owl project, local artist donated her skill and time to create a fun and colorful packet of 6 different owl species that we can see in the area. \$10 a pack, on recycled paper. Available at our November and December programs. Here's the Northern Pygmy Owl.

from the  
*President*

STEVE OVERLOCK



With the Snow Goose Festival just around the corner it's a good time to extend a sincere dose of gratitude to all the Altacal Officers and Members who play such critical roles in making this Festival the premier event it is. Altacal is fortunate to have many birders who possess such pertinent and thorough knowledge about our birds and their habitat, and these folks are so willing and able to share that knowledge with nature lovers of all levels.

Altacal thanks each and every one of them as I am sure you will. Altacal is likewise so fortunate and indebted to Jennifer Patten, SGF Coordinator, Kathy Trevino and all the members of the Steering Committee for their time, talents and dedication. It is already shaping up to be another exceptional Festival celebrating the Pacific Flyway and all that it entails.

There is lots to be positive about as we progress into the second half of the decade. For instance: there is now a National Monument ([berrypassnowmountain.org](http://berrypassnowmountain.org)) in our backyard; also the pipeline will not be built - for now anyway; and Dawn's Saw-whet Owl monitoring efforts finished a most successful year of banding back at the BCCER; plus, Altacal has some great bird friendly coffee to offer, to name just a few.

Wishing all of us a wonderful, wet, winter with still many hours of Happy Birding.

# UPCOMING *Birding Trips*

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

January 16, Saturday

## **INDIAN FISHERIES AND WASHOUT**

Trip Leader: Matt Forster

Meet at Indian Fisheries parking lot at the intersection of W. Sacramento Ave and River Rd at 8:30 am. We'll walk the short trail and see lots of woodpeckers, resident titmice, nuthatches, herons and egrets. Then we'll drive over to the washout to see if we can find some shorebirds and maybe some diving ducks. Contact Matt Forster at 619-347-2269 or findforster@yahoo.com.

## **LLANO SECO UNIT REOPENED**

See page 5. Photos by Steve McDonald



# *Christmas* BIRD COUNTS

December 19, Saturday

## **CHICO CBC**

COMPILER: Mary Muchowski

530-228-0625 or mmuchowski@earthlink.net

All levels of birders are welcome. Bring warm clothes, hiking shoes, lunch, bird books and binoculars. You will be assigned an area and spend the day counting birds in this area.

RSVPs encouraged!

MEET at 7:30 am

Chico Creek Nature Center,  
1968 East 8th Street, Chico

COMPILATION DINNER 4:30 pm TBA



January 3, Sunday

## **OROVILLE CBC**

COMPILER: Gaylord Grams

530-533-1624 or gg2canoe@yahoo.com

All levels of birders are welcome. Beginners will be paired up with experienced birders. You will be assigned an area and spend the day counting birds in this area. Bring warm clothes, hiking shoes, lunch, bird books and binoculars. To do a half-day, contact Gaylord Grams ahead of time.

MEET at 7:30 am

Butte County Ag Commissioners Office,  
316 Nelson Ave, Oroville east of Hwy 70 across from Home Depot.

COMPILATION DINNER 4:30 pm at 2330 Nevada Ave

January 3, Sunday

## **RED BLUFF CBC**

COMPILER: Karen Scheuermann,

Cottonwood, Tehama Co, CA

530-347-1687 or karens2020@gmail.com

Please let Karen know if you plan to join the count

## Get to know YOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES!



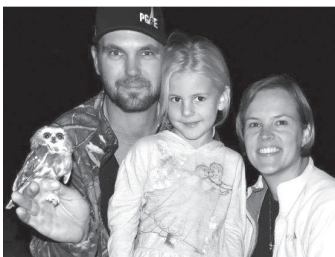
by LORA HALLER, Visitor Services Manager

The **LLANO SECO UNIT** reopened on November 2, 2015 after renovations over the summer. A formal grand opening ceremony will this winter occur for the public with family activities. The first platform was rebuilt to enhance wildlife viewing and increase access for disabled visitors. Other upgrades include a new ADA restroom, and a solar security light at the parking area. In addition, the second platform along the trail was replaced with an elevated earthen mound to view wildlife on the interior of the Unit. (see page 4.)

The Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) will be offering a variety of free weekend programs through the winter. The programs include birding tram tours, fly-offs, naturalist at the platform, owl prowls and more will be offered. New for this year will include a variety of activities for families and kids during the holiday break from December 19 - January 3.

by DAWN GARCIA, Owl Monitoring Project Director

Altacal's Northern Saw-whet Owl (NSWO) monitoring project was up and running this Oct - Nov 2015 due to the resolve of new Research Foundation Reserve Director, Jamie Visinoni. She managed to work through the entanglement of problems from an earlier accident that closed the Reserve to research in the 2014 season. Our banding team was very excited to have Jamie and family see our project, now in its 10th year. We think daughter Izzy brought us a good number of owls that night and she got to release three of them, naming one owl Crystal as she sent her off into the night.



We had an influx of talented new volunteers this season (Navit, Wyatt, Erika and Julie), and returning veterans (Steve, Sheila, Ken). We said

goodbye to right-hand-woman Raina King and volunteer Tyler (to Idaho), and on sabbatical (in Costa Rica!) Mike Fisher. Volunteer Ken Sobon brought his family and while we waited 2 hours for the first owl (followed by 5!), we were entertained by the Taurid meteor showers, lighting up a dark and starry sky, and Ken's kids, full of life and dreams, fun! Then the owls came, inspiring their creativity. This cool poster-art was the result of their encounter with owls.

These free and unique programs provide exciting opportunities for families to learn and experience some of the incredible and memorable things that the Refuge has to offer. On tram tours, a refuge guide will assist visitors with bird viewing and identification along the 6-mile auto tour. Come see and learn about the fly-off as thousands of ducks and geese fly off about 30 minutes after the sun sets.

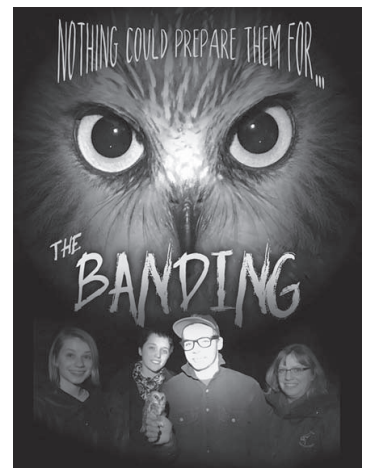
Looking for something to do with the kids over the holiday break? Bring the whole family to the visitor center for educational opportunities! Learn to draw a duck or goose, sketch beaks and feet, make a journal and get information about the Junior Duck Stamp program. The Complex's new Junior Refuge Ranger booklet will be available for children to earn collector's cards featuring different animals or plants.

### *Banding*

As of this article we are finishing up the season and have currently banded and released 40 NSWO, including one recapture from October 20, 2014. The recapture owl let us know that she had survived another year and uses the resources (rodents and roosting sites!) on the Reserve and as a 2 year old, she survived her first year of life- the most difficult for any bird! Other captures include 2 new Western Screech Owls (WESO) and 3 Pallid Bats.

Volunteers are what makes the project work. This season they are Steve King, Sheila Frisk, Ken Sobon, Julie Newman, Navit Reid, Jo Arroyo, Wyatt Hersey, and Erika Iacona. Steve King, thank you for your generous donation for 4 new nets, and the new tooter, upgrading our broadcast level significantly! Sheila donated an Ipad to upgrade the project picture taking capacity and bird related apps. Ken Sobon donated an iPod complete with NSWO toots and made a carrier for our new tooter. As of this letter we are in great standing with project and tech equipment. Thanks all!

For the season fun and NSWO banding info, see <http://birdbling.blogspot.com/>



# Bird Walk and Birding Trip REPORTS

September 11-13, 2015

## PT. REYES WEEKEND CAMPING TRIP

Trip Leaders: Jennifer Patten and Mary Muchowski

We all arrived at varying times at the Olema Campground and after chatting for a bit, we headed to the White House Pools trail to do a little birding before dark. It was a nice walk, not super birdy, but we did get a great look at a **Merlin** as it flew right over our heads. At the campground we got the adorable **Pygmy Nuthatches**, a couple of **Hairy Woodpeckers**, a **Great Horned Owl** and a large flock of noisy **American Crows**. The next day we got **Yellow-headed, Brewers**, and **Tri-colored Blackbirds**, several **American Kestrels** and a **Northern Harrier** on the way out to the Fish Docks. We stopped at the Historic B Ranch and picked up **Horned Grebe**, **Yellow Warbler** and a pair of Great Horned Owls that we showed to passers-by (when they stopped to ask what we were looking at) who were delighted to get such close-up views.

It was a foggy and windy day at the Fish Docks, but the birding was good - there were over 100 **Elegant Terns** flying around and most got to see **Parasitic Jaegers** dive-bombing and harassing the terns; a few of the Jaegers seemed to be much larger and were possibly Pomarine Jaegers. At the cypress trees we spent quite awhile trying to convince ourselves that we had a Pine Warbler, but it turned out to be a juvenile **Yellow-Rumped Warbler** that did not have a yellow rump (a professor who teaches Master Birding helped). **Common Murres** were seen in the bay and two were seen on land near the Dock House. **Heerman's Gulls** were joined by one or two **Bonaparte's Gulls**, and there were several **Pacific Loons**, **Black Turnstones**, a **Red Phalarope** and an **Eared Grebe** close to the docks. We took a walk out to Chimney Rock where we all got great looks at a couple of **Peregrine Falcons**. At the parking lot we watched a coyote pounce on and eat several gophers, mice or voles. We then ventured over to Drakes Bay to try for a Chestnut-sided Warbler that someone had told us about and quickly located it in a small flock of **Yellow Warblers** and a **Common Yellowthroat**. We also picked up **Marbled Godwits**, **Sanderlings**, **Surf Scoters**, and **California, Western, and Ring-billed Gulls** from the beach.

On Sunday we decided to head over to Abbott's Lagoon where we saw several **Red-tailed Hawks**, a **White-tailed Kite**, and **Bewick's Wrens**, and heard several **Wrentits** singing in the shrubs along the trail. At the Lagoon, we got to watch a female **Bobolink** foraging in the rushes close to the shore.



Elegant Terns and Heerman's Gull at Drakes Bay by Mary Muchowski

Close to the bridge, there were about 15 **Red-necked Phalaropes** with one **Red Phalarope**, along with a mixed flock of **Semi-palmated Plovers**, a couple **Black-bellied Plovers**, **Western Sandpipers** and **Sanderlings**. Across the Lagoon we observed about 45 **American White Pelicans** joining the usual **Brown Pelicans**, and more **Marbled Godwits** with one **Willet** and one **Black-necked Stilt**.

It was a pretty laid back trip this year; we didn't even venture out to the Lighthouse because of the wind and fog, but we did enjoy more time hanging out at camp where we ate delicious potluck meals and BBQed Oysters, and birded from our camp chairs.

November 7, 2015

## GRAY LODGE WILDLIFE AREA

Trip Leaders: Gaylord Grams and Kathy Trevino

A group of twenty people showed up to explore the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area on this beautiful fall day. The mosquitos were about as bad as most of us had experienced there, but armed with bug repellent, we traversed the walking Wetland Loop Trail and then over to the viewing platform, before returning to parking lot #14 for lunch. Afterwards, many opted to also drive the 3-mile auto-tour loop.

Highlights of the trip included **Varied Thrush**, **Virginia Rail**, two **Great-horned Owls**, **Peregrine Falcon**, **American Bittern**, **Wilson's Snipe**, a good variety of ducks and geese, several **American River Otters**, and a good number of **Sandhill Cranes** seen from the auto-tour loop. The latter is unusual for November at Gray Lodge according to the ranger. She said it was due to less water on the refuge this year. A total of 58 avian species were found.



Red-shouldered Hawk eating a crayfish by Joyce Bond

# 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/](http://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](mailto: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

- |                                       |   |  |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Basic   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family      | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student / Low Income   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Sponsor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustaining | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Additional Donation |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |                                     |                                  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Save Paper! Send me an email only             | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift |
| <input type="checkbox"/> email me <i>Altacal in Action Alerts</i>      |                                     |                                  |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would be interested in volunteering to help | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash       | <input type="checkbox"/> 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/](http://www.audubon.org/)

Please make check payable to ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY  
Mail to AAS, P.O. BOX 3671, CHICO, CA 95927-3671

ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC  
POST OFFICE BOX 3671  
CHICO, CA 95927-3671

Requested  
In-home Delivery  
11/30 - 12/2/2015  
3-Day Window

Non-Profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 86  
Chico, Calif. 95927

CURRENT RESIDENT



see page 3. & 5.

## White-tailed Kite

DECEMBER 2015 / JANUARY 2016

### DATES TO REMEMBER

Nov	29	Llano Seco
Dec	14	Program - <i>Member's Slide Show</i>
Dec	19	Chico Christmas Bird Count
Jan	3	Red Bluff Christmas Bird Count
Jan	3	Oroville Christmas Bird Count
Jan	16	Indian Fisheries
Jan	27 - 31	SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL

For updated information check the Altacal website  
[altacal.org](http://altacal.org)

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

## ALTACAL Program



Dec 14

**Members' Slide Show**

Jan 27 - 31

**Snow Goose Festival**

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# ALTACAL

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