



White-tailed Kite

NEWSLETTER OF THE ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2014

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.

February

Monday, February 17, 2014 6:30 p.m.
Chico Creek Nature Center

ISHI SECRETS about the Natural World

Presented by RICHARD BURRILL

Ishi (not his tribal name) was likely the last Yahi speaker when he died in 1916. His band held out for twenty-two years longer than Geronimo's band of Apaches. Ishi had remarkable skills in "animal talk" and what was ahead on the trail when bow hunting.

Join Richard Burrill to learn more about this last free Yahi-Yana caregiver and woodsman who hid for safety along Deer Creek, Mill Creek, and Big Antelope Creek, with his tiny band of Yahi warriors in the foothill country located just north of Chico along our now familiar Cohasset Road. Also, find out more about this gentle and generous man and two bird species that were special doctor birds for Ishi: Wood Duck and Killdeer. What were these secrets?

(Continued on page 2.)



March

Monday, March 17, 2014 6:30 p.m.
Chico Creek Nature Center

Exploring COSTA RICA

Presented by MIKE FISHER



On September 25, 2013, Mike Fisher set out on what he hoped to be an adventure of a lifetime. His goal seemed simple; to see as much of the small country of Costa Rica as he could in three months. He traveled alone and stayed in motels, hotels, hostels, cabinas, B&Bs, lodges, resorts, and research stations. He was constantly on the move so every meal was either supplied by the place He was staying or eaten in restaurants or on the street. He traveled by air, car, bus, van, boat, taxi, motorcycle and foot. Budget: \$50 per day.

(Continued on page 2.)

ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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Director - at-Large	KATHRYN HOOD 321-2852 verdant44@gmail.com

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 Programs



February (Continued from page 1.)

Richard Burrill (above) is an author and anthropology educator and presenter in Northern California. He is an enthusiastic teacher of American culture and archaeology and has become one of the foremost scholars on Ishi, having published several books on the man which include *Ishi Rediscovered* and *Ishi in His Second World*, and *Ishi's Return Home: The 1914 Anthropological Expedition Story*.

March (Continued from page 1.)

Join Mike Fisher (below) as he relives this experience through the photos he took and a daily blog he wrote. He will share with you some of his most memorable experiences both good and bad. Marvel at his lucky finds and laugh at his silly mistakes. You will be awed by some of the most amazing birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and breathtaking flora you can imagine. By night's end you will leave with new insights into this small but hugely diverse country and know why it is called; the rich coast, Costa Rica.



from the (Vice) President

by STEVE OVERLOCK, Vice President / Membership Chair



Already February and Altacal is geared up for a busy, full adventurous year.

First, a huge THANK YOU to Jennifer Patten, John Merz and Kathy Trevino for organizing another successful Snow Goose Festival, and the rest of the Steering Committee members for another successful SGF. And I know they are the first to thank the Steering Committee members along with every person who helped in any way. It is truly an amazing Festival and group that Jennifer, as coordinator, has put together.

Going forward our priorities this year include continuing the ever popular monthly programs and field trips; expanding our roles with the Sacramento Refuge Complex, the Chico Creek Nature Center and other conservation groups; as well as extending our educational outreach to schools and students. Altacal will also keep you abreast of pertinent conservation issues, both local and national.

It promises to be a year of goals and accomplishments fulfilling Altacal's mission of improving bird populations and the habitats they live in.

Remember our new membership renewal process starts in March. Watch your mailbox and message box for renewal information as we initiate our new streamlined renewal method. This new system will give us all more time to partake of the activities described above and the important work that remains.

Altacal still has Board positions available. Please consider a full or co-chair position in Field Trips, Membership, Conservation, Education, or President. These positions can be tailored to fit your schedule. The only requirement is a desire and there are many rewards. For more information please contact any Board member.

Wishing everyone a 'Big Year' of Birding in 2014



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.*

February 8, Saturday **SECOND SATURDAY UPPER BIDWELL PARK**

Trip Leaders: Raina King and Steve King

Our *Second Saturday* field trip in February will be in Upper Bidwell Park. Some of the many birds we see are Western Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Golden-crown Sparrow, Oak Titmouse, lots of Acorn Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch, and Nuttall's Woodpecker.

After birding Horseshoe Lake and the area around the parking lot, we will head up the canyon to the Yahi Trail head. There, we will follow the Yahi Trail along Big Chico Creek, as far as time permits (2-3 mi round trip). The Christmas Bird Count saw 4 Hooded Mergansers in Big Chico Creek. Maybe the Mergansers will still be there in February! We usually turn around at the Day Camp parking lot and follow the Middle Trail back to the cars. We try to be back to the cars before 12:30 pm.

Let's meet at 9 am at the parking lot on the left just past the gun club and Horseshoe Lake. Follow Wildwood Ave for 1.75 miles and turn left into the parking area just before the gate. Bring binoculars, water, snacks, walking shoes and proper clothing for the expected weather conditions. Rain cancels. Contact Steve King 530 566-6136.

March 1, Saturday **BOBELAINE AUDUBON SANCTUARY**

Trip leaders: Joseph O'Neil and Kathy Trevino

Join us for a 3 mile hike at the Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary. Located along the Feather River South of Yuba City. This 430 acre wildlife sanctuary is maintained by volunteers of the Sacramento Audubon Society. It was donated to National Audubon in 1975 by Bob & Elaine Crandall. The preserve is a rare remnant of the riparian forests that once spread up to five miles on either side of most rivers in the Sacramento Valley.

We will be enjoying the views of Lake Crandall, the confluence of the Feather and Bear Rivers, and also the Sutter Buttes off in the distance. Among the trees we will see are really giant Sycamores, Valley Oaks, and Cottonwoods.

Over 190 species of birds have been observed here, including Western Bluebird, Green Heron, Yellow-billed Magpie, White-breasted Nuthatch, Black-



crowned Night-Herons, Wood Ducks, Swainson's Hawks, and many different warbler species. Deer, turtles, river otters, and possibly the fabled wild ram may grace us with their presence.

There are over 4.5 mi of connected trails that Joseph has hiked. Kind of daunting if you go by yourself unguided. Join us to enjoy this registered State Ecological Preserve. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 8 am and return by 3 pm. Contact Kathy Trevino at kathytre@sbcglobal.net or 530-872-8837

Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary by Marc Hoshovsky

March 8, Saturday **SECOND SATURDAY CHICO OXIDATION PONDS WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

Trip Leaders: Raina King and Steve King

For the March "Second Saturday", Steve and his daughter Raina will be at the Chico Oxidation Ponds, behind the Waste Water Treatment Plant. For waterfowl in the winter, and only four miles from Chico, this place is hard to beat. The walk is a little under two miles and lasts a little under three hours. If you prefer to keep the walk shorter, you may leave the group anytime. The walk to the back ponds is about a mile round trip. The full walk is about 2 miles on a good flat path.

Meet at 2 pm, the afternoon keeps the sun at our back and the temperatures warmer. Back to the parking lot before 5 pm. To get to the Oxidation Ponds, go west on W. 5th St from Highway 32 in Chico. Follow W 5th St, which becomes Chico River Rd, for four 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 blind. Rain cancels. Contact Steve King at 530 566-6136.

Get to know YOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES!

PART 7 - FEBRUARY / MARCH



by LORA HALLER, Visitor Services Manager

From February 15 through June 30, additional trails open on the Sacramento and Sutter National Wildlife Refuges (NWR). Access to the Logan Creek Trails on the Sacramento NWR is off of Road 68 approximately 2.5 miles east of 99W and Interstate-5. There are six miles of walking trails and eight in-ground pit blinds.

As water is drawn down in February and March, migrating shorebirds are attracted to the mud-flats to feed. Bring your waders and camouflage to the Logan Creek Trails and try your hand at photographing flocks of shorebirds from the blinds. In March and April, this is also a prime spot to see American Bitterns as they croak their breeding calls to each other. All winter visitors ask us where to find the bitterns. This is THE spot! I usually see over a dozen in a 2-3 mile walk.



On Sutter NWR, over six miles of trails open within the Sutter Bypass and it provides fantastic spring birding. This can be accessed from Parking Area B about 1/2 mile north of O'Banion Road. The parking area is on the east side of the Sutter Bypass. See our website and brochure for detailed driving directions.

I birded along the riparian section of the trail at Sutter NWR a couple years ago and spent 2 hours birding in less than a mile! Flycatchers, warblers, swallows, wrens, Great Horned Owls, and even a Phainopepla appeared. It is a great spot in the morning.

For information, brochures, and pictures of these trails, visit our website at: http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Sacramento/visitor_activities/trails.html

American Bittern by Lora Haller

The *Conservation Corner*

Port-o-potty's Are Death Traps For Wildlife

by JO ANNA ARROYO

Wildlife Biologist Feather River Ranger District, Plumas National Forest

The Plumas National Forest recently funded a project that will effectively save many cavity nesting birds from dying needlessly. A simple vent screen over the port-o-potty's vent stack will prevent birds from using the open pipes as nesting or roosting sites. Altacal Audubon Society, a concerned ally will join the effort volunteering their time to help install the vent screens.

A cavity-nester, such as an owl goes into the open vent pipe that leads to the vaulted toilet looking for a potential cavity, but they can't get out! The 12" diameter open vent is a trap because it corresponds closely with the cavity size preferred by many cavity-nesting species. Every year thousands of cavity-nesting species, particularly birds become entrapped and die in vaulted toilets across the United States.

The Teton Raptor Center, in Wilson WY initiated the "Port-o-Potty Project" and designed a screen that covers the vent stack and effectively prevents wildlife from entering. The fix is simple and not costly! Hikers can help wildlife species by identifying vaulted toilets in your area that do not already have vent screen coverings and contact the appropriate agency (i.e. City, State, Federal lands) and tell them to cover their vaulted toilet vents! For additional information on ordering screen covers contact the Teton Raptor Center at 307-203-2551 or raptors@tetonraptorcenter.org or <http://www.tetonraptorcenter.org/poo-poo-screen-order-form.htm>

Bird Walk and *Birding Trip* REPORTS



Gray Lodge Wildlife Area Nov 16, 2013 by Annette Carey

November 9, 2013

SECOND SATURDAY

BIRDING THE CHICO OXIDATION PONDS

Trip Leaders: Steve King and Raina King

For our November *Second Saturday* field trip, we headed to the Chico Oxidation Ponds Wildlife Sanctuary. We started this field trip at 2 pm to keep the sun behind us and take advantage of warmer afternoon temperatures. There were about 20 of us total that showed up for the field trip. It really was a perfect afternoon with temperatures in the high 60s.

Before reaching the ponds behind the water treatment plant, we tallied **White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Yellow-billed Magpie, Lesser Goldfinch, House Finch, Black Phoebe, Brewers Blackbird, Red-tailed Hawk**, and more. The **Belted Kingfisher** was at its usual place on the wires along the canal.

The east pond was not super abundant with waterfowl but we had more than enough for a good selection and picked up **Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck** and **Bufflehead**. Both **Eared Grebe** and **Pied-billed Grebe** were also in this pond. We heard both **Sora** and **Virginia Rail** but never saw either of these secretive birds. From between the ponds, we walked back to the south end of the sanctuary. We saw **Lesser Goldfinch, American Goldfinch, California Towhee, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Red-winged Blackbird** and a **Wilson's Snipe**.

My checklist showed 37 species of birds but another person keeping tally got 40, so I missed a couple. What a great afternoon! Great group of birders!

November 16, 2013

GRAY LODGE WILDLIFE AREA

Trip Leaders: Gaylord Grams and Kathy Trevino

This turned out to be an absolutely beautiful fall day and a great day to see lots of waterfowl and other birds at Gray Lodge. Eighteen people showed up to walk around the ponds and view the large variety of avian species found here. The group included Dave Hall, Jerry Dirnberger, Scott Huber, Steve Overlock, Mike Boyd, Jon Aull, Annette Carey, Nancy Nelson, Ellen Caldwell, Laurel Heath, Janice Newton, Richard Burrill, Margaret Rader, and Steve Crump, as well as Rudy Bustamante and his son, Diego.

With 57 species seen, this was a fun day to be birding. We had many experienced birders along and several scopes, so this helped us find many different species. Highlights included these sightings - **Hooded Merganser**, an immature eagle (species not determined), **Redhead**, blue or dark morph **Snow Geese**, **Greater Scaup, Black-necked Stilt**, and hearing **Sandhill Cranes** flying overhead. Another fun thing was Diego getting his first sighting of a **Fox Sparrow**. The numbers of geese and other waterfowl was also impressive.

Gray Lodge has a couple of very nice blinds from which to view the birds on the water. It was while approaching one of these blinds that we had a memorable experience. Something caused lots of geese to lift off the water not far from us, and the sight and especially the sound of all those wings was awe-inspiring. For me, it was a rare and wonderful experience.

Here is the complete list of species seen – **Pied-billed Grebe, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Green Heron, Bufflehead, Canvasback, Ring-necked Duck, Ruddy Duck, Gadwall, Greater White-fronted Goose, Ross's Goose, Snow Goose, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Northern Shoveler, Cinnamon Teal, Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel, Turkey Vulture, American Coot, Belted Kingfisher, Northern Flicker, Acorn Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Western Scrub Jay, Bushtit, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren, Marsh Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Northern Mockingbird, American Pipit, Loggerhead Shrike, European Starling, Orange-crowned Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Song Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, California Towhee, Red-winged Blackbird, Western Meadowlark, and American Goldfinch.**

Christmas BIRD COUNT RESULTS



December 14, 2013 **CHICO** CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

COMPILER: Mary Muchowski

Forty awesome souls came out to participate in the Chico Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, December 14, 2013. We had BEAUTIFUL weather all day. Some highlights include four

White-throated Sparrows (left) and a **bobcat** (right) seen by Rick Wulbern's group, a **Burrowing Owl** seen on Chico-Oro Highway and a **California Thrasher** seen in Durham. My group, which had the Neal Road Landfill, was surprised to only get a few gulls. We met the falconer who was paid to chase off the gulls with his Aplomado Falcon, Peregrine Falcon and two Harris' Hawks. Skip Augur's team found three **Sora**, two **Lesser Yellowlegs** and one **American Bittern** at the Chico Oxidation Ponds. We had a great day of birding and counted **17,799 individual birds of 125 species!** I extend a huge thank you to all participants!

December 28, 2013 **OROVILLE** CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

COMPILER: Gaylord Grams

The Oroville Christmas count was a success with a total **133 species** this year. A few of the highlights were: **Long-tailed Duck, Western Tanager, Black-bellied Plover** and an ample number of ducks and geese. Thanks to all that helped out.



December 14, 2013
Chico Christmas Bird
Count,
White-throated Sparrow
(left) and bobcat (right)
by Rick Wulbern

Opportunities and *Events*

WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL **Klamath, OR**

February 13 - 16, 2014

Klamath Basin Audubon Society host one of the longest running bird festivals in the nation. A small gathering that began as the Bald Eagle Conference over 30 years ago has now become an incredible event for bird enthusiasts. Enjoy presentations, workshops, field trips, and free family activities. This year the editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Bill Thompson III will be there.

The Klamath Basin, located in southern Oregon and northern California, is a major migratory stop on the Pacific Flyway. Over 80% of the birds that use the Flyway stop over in the Klamath Basin. Six national wildlife refuges covering nearly 200,000 acres attract an impressive variety of waterfowl and raptors, many in astounding numbers. More information about the festival can be found at <http://www.winterwingsfest.org/>

THE GREAT **BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

February 14 - 17, 2014

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the continent. Anyone can participate, beginning birders to experts. It's free, fun, and it helps the birds. Go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

CALIFORNIA DUCK DAYS **Davis, CA**

February 21 - 22, 2014

California Duck Days is a wetlands festival in the heart of the Pacific Flyway at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Headquarters in Davis. The day-long festival will feature field trips, workshops and other activities. Register online at www.yolobasin.org



The Coming of the **GULLS**

by REX BURRESS

Gulls are often referred to as “sea gulls” since most people think that is where they live. The sea coast is the predominant home of gulls, but they also make forays inland which is quite apparent when the migratory salmon die in the Feather River each fall.

It seems like gulls have a continental communication system for no sooner does the annual salmon die-off begin than thousands of gulls come streaming in from the coast to clean up an abundant food supply. Gulls literally fly to where food is available, whether it is salmon, garbage dumps, grasshoppers at Salt Lake City, or a bread flinger at some local lake!

While waiting for a connection at Ellis Lake in Marysville, I noticed a cluster of gulls out in the middle, and when I produced a loaf of bread, a chaos of screaming, swarming, snatching flurry of white wings ensued! Just like Lake Merritt in Oakland 40 years ago! The catchers were there, hovering overhead and handily catching a piece of bread with careful timing. I know those were different gulls but their aerial ability and addiction to catching bread looked the same and seems universal. It must be an acquired trick but sometimes you wonder if it's inherited.

It seems only the Ring-billed Gulls are catchers as I've never seen another species involved. Larger Herring, Glaucous-winged, and Western Gulls are apparently too heavy for the hovering maneuvers.

Most of the gulls that come to eat the Oroville river salmon are Ring-billed Gulls, but each year I have noticed a few of the large Herring Gulls arrive early as if to check things out. Four or five species can be seen plying the putrid Pisces during the day, but at night there is a grand exodus to the wide expanses of Lake Oroville, as if the narrow, dark, flowing river is not safe for an overnight. Indeed; the fox, otter, and owl are at large, and keeping your boat steady without an anchor is unnerving, as it must be for the Golden-eye and Bufflehead Ducks. Can there be a moment of total relaxation when you must paddle all night and be alert for danger?

The ring-billed crowd hang around for a month after the salmon are all gone, fleecing local garbage, flocking to OHS football fields if saturated, knowing the night-crawlers will be forced to the surface. (No saturation as of Solstice in 2013!) Most will drift back to the seashore, but the California Gulls will go on to Mono Lake to harvest the brine shrimp and hang around to nest on the island.

Western Gulls also scout the shores of Mono Lake and hunt the tributaries. I was camping on Lundy Creek once, and a gang of Western Gulls were poking around the streamside, large white bodies and ramrod legs appearing like gleaming monsters, which they surely were for any aquatic life in the vicinity, and even rodents and small birds were imperiled! Gulls will eat not only breaded pastries, but anything vaguely resembling meat. Gulls are “protected for their scavenger-clean-up habits.”

The coming of the white feathered gulls during the somber tones of winter is an uplifting inspiration, just as the winter-time occupancy of bufflehead, golden-eye, and merganser waterfowl on the Feather River is a thing of joy. White egrets and snowgeese are part of that winter white wonder time, too. Birds of all kinds generally generate goodwill and a quality to life in all parts of the world.

The flight of a gull is poetry in motion. Some have said there is poetry in my words about nature, but if there is, it is not because I deliberately put it there, but because no one could write truthfully about nature and leave out the poetry.

SEA GULLS INLAND

*A flash of silver wings in the sun,
And I see, with divine surprise,
Here in the inlands quiet and dun--
Sea gulls up in the skies.*

*Sea gulls! I am content no more
With tame little fields and woods:
My thoughts are set to rock-bound shore,
The sea, and the sea's wild moods. - Teresa Hooley*

Ring-billed Gulls at Irondequoit Bay outlet. Democrat and Chronicle archive photo. <http://php.democratandchronicle.com/blog/birds/?p=3705>

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

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Basic Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Sponsor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Sustaining | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Benefactor |
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| <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/

Please make check payable to ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
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CURRENT RESIDENT



White-tailed Kite

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2014

DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb	8	<i>2nd Sat</i> , Upper Bidwell Park
Feb	17	Program - <i>Ishi Secrets</i>
Mar	1	Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary
Mar	8	<i>2nd Sat</i> , Chico Oxidation Ponds
Mar	17	Program - <i>Costa Rica</i>

For updated information check the Altacal website
www.altacal.org

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

ALTACAL Programs



February 17

Ishi Secrets

March 17

Mike in Costa Rica

ALTACAL

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