



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 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.

February

Monday, February 15, 2016 6:30 p.m.

Chico Creek Nature Center

The Surprising Benefit of WILDFIRES Wildlife Nurseries

Presented by CHRISTY SHERR



Severely burned conifer forests are one of the most productive and critical habitats for California birds and wildlife, comparable or better than even late-succession or "old growth" forest. Large, dense patches of standing dead trees are preferred by a host of plants, insects, mammals,

and birds such as Black-backed Woodpeckers and Spotted Owls. Surprisingly, that includes even many of our most threatened and endangered species. Come find out more about why so many species of wildlife choose burned areas to raise their young.

Christy Sherr is a retired National and State Park Ranger, currently working as a field biologist and Education Coordinator for the John Muir Project of the Earth Island Institute. She is a past president of the Sierra Foothills Audubon Chapter, and is proud that her ten year old daughter became a birder in a burned forest! christysherr@johnmuirproject.org www.johnmuirproject.org

Christy and daughter walk in burned forest by Maya Khosla

March

Monday, March 21, 2016 6:30 p.m.

Chico Creek Nature Center

Birds, Ancient Palaces, Temples & Mosques of INDIA

Presented by CAROL ANDERSON

Last year Carol Anderson had an invitation to visit a friend in India and happily packed her binoculars, camera and a copy of the Princeton field guide, *Birds of India*. Although the friend had no interest in birds, she experienced new birds from purple sunbirds to Indian Hornbills at every stop. These stops included Delhi, Chandigarh (capital of the Punjab and Haryana), Jaipur (the pink city of Rajasthan), in Uttarakhand at the Rajaji wildlife refuge and holy city of Rishikesh.



Not only did she see new birds in many of the parks and back yards, she saw ancient palaces, Hindu temples, Sikh gurdwaras, Jain temples, some of the earliest mosques in India and many wonderful colorful people.

Elephant at Amber Fort by Carol Anderson

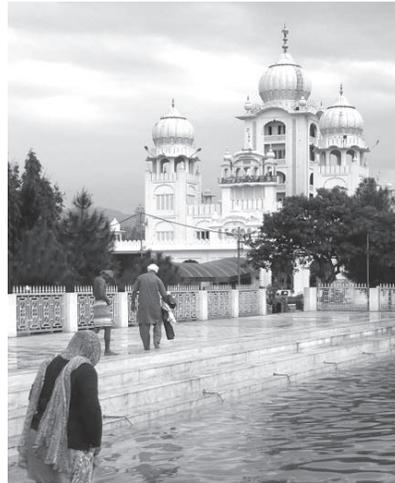
ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

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March (continued from page 1.)

Carol Anderson taught at Oroville High for 27 years. Although her initial degree was biology there were a lot of years of math and physical science. In 2012 when she retired, she returned to her interest in biology and the natural world, became a birder and joined Altacal.



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

Do you like our certified shade-grown coffee. Would you like to continue to see it sold at program meetings and special events? If so, we need you! Unless someone takes over the ordering, marketing, selling and tracking of our coffee sales, we, who enjoy this delicious coffee, will have to order it online and pay shipping costs. Currently shipping costs are covered. This could be a fun hobby for you. Please let LeAnn or Steve know if this interests you. leannmc2006@sbcglobal.net.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FEBRUARY 12 - 15, 2016

GBBC was the first online citizen-science project to collect data on wild birds online and to display results in near real-time. Since it started 18 years ago, more than 100,000 people of all ages and walks of life have joined the 4-day count each February to create an annual snapshot of the winter distribution and abundance of birds. In 2015, GBBC participants in more than 100 countries counted 5,090 species of birds on more than 147,000 checklists! Find out how! <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/>

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

from the President

BY STEVE OVERLOCK



With Spring fast approaching and as we anxiously await our first of season sightings, we bid a fond farewell to the Cranes and Snow Geese as they journey back north. And as they leave it's worthy to offer a congratulations to all the wonderful nature lovers who helped with the 14th Annual Snow Goose Festival. From Altacal's own Program Chair and SGF Coordinator, Jennifer Patten, and her assistant, Kathy Trevino to all the trip leaders, presenters, Steering Committee Members and helpers. What a great event, year in and year out and what a remarkable group of Birders who freely, generously offer their time and talents for all of us. THANK YOU.

Altacal continues a search to fill the Treasurer's position which will be vacated in March. Of course, the position would be best suited for someone who enjoys numbers and maintaining a budget. And that is primarily what the position would entail. Preparing a budget once a month to be reviewed at the Board Meeting. Other tasks include picking up the mail, and filing the necessary tax forms once a year or once a quarter.

LeAnn, our current treasurer, will stay on and continue to be the liaison with the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Bookstore. Please contact LeAnn or myself if you would like to hear more. It is a great group of folks serving our local community in an invaluable and rewarding way. It's important and can be adapted to your schedule. THANK YOU for considering.

Also, would like to extend a big thank you to Mary Muchowski and Gaylord Grams for hosting and compiling the Chico and Oroville Christmas Bird Counts, respectively. These are fun and educational but even more importantly, the data is used in planning and advocating conservation efforts for Birds everywhere. THANK YOU Mary and Gaylord and all who participated.

HAPPY BIRDING

above - Northern Pygmy Owl
Chico CBC, Dec 19, 2015
by Carter Moore

left- Lisa Winslow, Bonnie Morgan,
Kathy Trevino, Upper Bidwell Park
Chico CBC, Dec19, 2015
by Jon Aull



UPCOMING *Birding Trips*

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

February 20, Saturday

BIRDING UPPER BIDWELL PARK

Trip Leader: Steve Overlock

This will be an easy 3 mile walk in Upper Bidwell Park. Might be a little early for spring migrants but there will be plenty to see with the permanent residents. Meet at Parking Lot E, just past the gun club and then walk up to Day Camp. All birders and nature lovers are welcome, especially those just learning about birds or wanting to learn about the birds of Bidwell Park. Bring binoculars (some will be available to borrow), water, and a snack. Contact Steve Overlock at 530 828-0966 or stephenoverlock@sbcglobal.net

February 28, Sunday

GENETIC RESOURCE & CONSERVATION CENTER AND OXIDATION PONDS

Trip Leaders: Mary Muchowski and Matt Forster

Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30am (closest to Hwy 99). We'll take a leisurely stroll around the Genetic Resource Center to see what high elevation birds might still be around, then out to the Chico Wastewater Treatment Plant to look for ducks, geese, rails, bitterns, and shorebirds. Wear sturdy footwear (Oxi Ponds might be muddy). We should be back to the Park & Ride by 12:30 pm. Rain cancels. Contact Mary (mmuchowski@earthlink.net or 228-0625) or Matt (findforster@yahoo.com) for more information.

March 19 - 20, Sat -Sun

FT. BRAGG

Trip Leaders: Mary Muchowski and Matt Forster

We'll bird the coast looking for sea ducks (scoters, grebes, mergansers, harlequin ducks?) gulls, and shorebirds. We'll camp or stay in a hotel on Saturday night. There are also trails around lakes and in wooded habitat. March is also whale-watching time! Bring binoculars and scopes if you have them. Wear lots of layers for varying weather. Contact Mary (mmuchowski@earthlink.net or 228-0625) or Matt (findforster@yahoo.com) for more information. RSVP required by March 5! Rain cancels.



Burrowing Owl, Oroville CBC, Jan 3, 2015 by Mary Muchowski

Christmas **BIRD COUNT RESULTS**

December 19, 2015

CHICO CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

COMPILER: Mary Muchowski

Thirty-one people volunteered their time to count birds for the annual Chico Christmas Bird Count. We had a bit of rain in the morning hours, but the sky gradually cleared up after noon. This group of birders counted **130 species** and **22,474 individual** birds! This year, instead of Varied Thrushes (had a bunch of last year) one group got 40 **Red Crossbills** at the Genetic Resource Center, along with 10 **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. Diego, Bruce, Leslie and Cris got an out-of-season **Wilson's Warbler** and a **Ferruginous Hawk** in the east of Durham area! The Upper Park north folks got a **White-throated Sparrow** and 215 **Western Bluebirds**. Mary Wrynski and I got an **Osprey** fly-over and a single **Eurasian Wigeon** at the Oxidation Ponds. We also got 2 **Cattle Egrets** foraging in a field behind Durham High School with a colony of **Ring-billed Gulls**. In another nearby field, there were over 200 **Killdeer**! Victor, Ruth and Steve got a **Black-chinned Hummingbird** and 8 **Lewis's Woodpeckers** in the east of Cohasset section. Thanks to all the hardy volunteers who spent the whole day counting birds for the Audubon Society's longest running citizen science effort (116 years)! Once again, SPECIAL thanks to the troopers that had the wet walking routes

January 3, 2016

OROVILLE CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

COMPILER: Gaylord Grams

On a cold and clear day we had 28 participants. The waterfowl numbers were very good. Plus 13 raptor species, which included **Rough-legged** and **Ferruginous Hawks**, **Peregrine** and **Prairie Falcons**....and thanks to the Afterbay group a **Short-eared Owl**!.....the total species count was **137**.

Get to know YOUR NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES!



by LIZ BELO-REX, Visitor Services Assistant

Hunting has been an integral part of conservation since the early 1900s. The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, passed in 1934 and commonly known as the Duck Stamp Act, raises millions of dollars annually for the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, or the Pittman-Robertson Act of 1937, put an excise tax on all firearm and ammunition purchases. This tax money goes straight towards things such as research, surveys, and management of wildlife and/or habitat. These acts have raised billions of dollars for conservation since their creation.

However, while hunting has raised funds for game species and greatly helped manage their populations, it has also been detrimental to many species. Lead ammunition in particular has contributed to past population declines in waterfowl and upland game bird species. Lead was also a major factor in putting some species on the Endangered Species List. The previously endangered bald eagle was negatively impacted by lead ammunition, and California condors are still dramatically affected by lead in their environment.

Lead shot for waterfowl hunting has been nationally banned by law since the early 1990s. Ingestion of lead shot by waterfowl and bald eagles caused lead poisoning and death, which motivated the passing of this law. However, lead slugs or solid lead bullets still remain a hazard in the environment. Lead fragments from these slugs still affect the California condor. These massive birds ingest lead fragments present in carcasses left behind after hunters clean the animals they harvest. The ingested lead is ground up in the condor's gizzard, and enters the bloodstream, causing lead poisoning. Even with the ban on lead ammunition within the condor's known range, 45-95% of condors each year are positive for lead exposure. The question now remains: what is California doing about this harmful pollutant in our environment?

California is taking a legislative approach to address the issue of lead ammunition. In 2013, Assembly Bill 711 was passed which requires the use of nonlead ammunition for all hunting anywhere in California. As of July 1, 2015, regulations to phase-in this law have been implemented, and the law will be in full effect by July 1, 2019.

At the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex, since July 1, 2015, nonlead ammunition has been required for the take of any game species. This is part of the three phase implementation of California's nonlead ammunition law. Phase one began on July 1, 2015, which requires the use of nonlead ammunition when taking all wildlife on state wildlife areas and ecological reserves. Phase 2, effective July 1, 2016, requires nonlead shot when taking upland game birds with a shotgun, except for dove, quail, snipe, and any game birds taken on licensed game bird clubs. Phase two also requires that nonlead shot be used when using a shotgun to take resident small game mammals, furbearing mammals, nongame mammals, nongame birds, and any wildlife for depredation purposes. The final phase, effective July 1, 2019, will require nonlead ammunition for the taking of any wildlife anywhere in California.

Since the nationwide ban on lead shot for waterfowl hunting in 1991, many bird populations have rebounded significantly. As of the year 2000, one survey estimated that the ban on lead shot reduced lead poisoning deaths of Mississippi Flyway mallards by 64%, while overall ingestion of toxic pellets declined by 78% in the first 5 seasons of the lead shot ban. In 2007, the bald eagle was removed from the endangered species list, and the recovery of the California condor from the brink of near extinction in the early 1990s has been a huge success story. Now only continued monitoring and research will tell if current programs in California are succeeding in further reducing incidents of lead poisoning in wild California condor populations.



AUDUBON'S *Bobcat Ranch*

by BY LORNA CUNKLE

On Saturday, December 5, 2015, I was doubly lucky: clear weather and a lottery win. In a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) lottery, I had won two permits for entry into Bobcat Ranch, a 6,800-acre property Audubon acquired in 2007. And although it rained the day before and the day after, our entry day was clear. Bobcat Ranch is located in Solano County, about seven miles east of Winters on Highway 128. This working ranch includes blue oak woodlands, annual wetlands, chaparral, and grasslands where cattle share space with preservation-oriented research and restoration projects. The area's blue oaks function as hotels for migratory birds.

Only five people were given two permits each for birding on one of only five different days during the fall of 2015 as part of CDFW's Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) program. Besides opening the ranch for birding, the SHARE program issues permits (yes, on days different from birding days) for the hunting of wild pig, waterfowl, and other upland game. A new Bobcat Ranch lottery for 2016 spring dates will be posted on the SHARE website near the end of January. With recent rains, spring wildflowers should be abundant this year.

Since I consider myself a novice birder, I was lucky to meet and hike with two ace birders from the Bay Area: photographer Sarah Barsness, who posted a list of the 32 species we identified on eBird.com, and Juan-Carlos Solis, who can identify birds as quick as a flash based on their calls. As we hiked a couple of miles up Bray Canyon, we saw no owls, reputed to be abundant there, but we did see quail, a cormorant, an osprey, a northern harrier, mourning doves, five kinds of woodpeckers, two kinds of phoebe, numerous sparrows and finches, a kestrel, and a large flock of pine siskin, to name just a few.

The presence of numerous California newts prompted Juan-Carlos to tell us how toxic they are when ingested, especially for birds. He once found a dead grebe shortly after seeing it alive, and asked the California Academy of Sciences to examine it. He later learned that the grebe had been poisoned by a tasty but poisonous meal of California newt.

Lincoln's sparrow by Sarah Barsness

After leaving Bobcat Ranch, two of us crossed Highway 128 to walk along Putah Creek, which runs year-round from Lake Berryessa into Lake Solano. There we saw a gorgeous and very healthy looking bobcat, who had come down to the creek for a drink of water. A short drive back toward Winters took us to Lake Solano, where we saw numerous waterfowl, including herons, egrets, wood ducks, the common goldeneye, buffleheads, shovellers, and many kinds of ducks and geese. We were amused by what appeared to be a territorial fight in a large oak tree between two steller's jays and two squirrels (the squirrels lost). Several very tame peacocks, both gorgeous males and the more drab females, wandered around the lake's picnic area.

Another trip up Highway 128 is warranted because two other sites promise good birding: Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve, a University of California reserve twelve miles east of Winters, closed this fall due to a 2015 fire but scheduled to reopen in May 2016; and Monticello Dam on Lake Berryessa, one mile east of Stebbins Cold Canyon. Winters is also a fun stop, with several fruit stands, a large brewery that has live music on weekend evenings, several wineries, and a restored old-time downtown.

The new 350,000-acre Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, created last summer by President Obama, stretches from Putah Creek below Lake Berryessa in Solano County through Napa, Lake, Mendocino, and Yolo counties. Included are the popular river-rafting Cache Creek to the south and Snow Mountain to the north. Locals have long known what a treasure they have, and since 2005 hikers have been going to the 80-foot-high Zim Zim Falls in the Knoxville Ranch State Wildlife Area, now part of the new national monument. Lots of potential here for hiking and even more birding.

Audubon's Bobcat Ranch
<http://ca.audubon.org/about-us/bobcat-ranch>

Lake Solano County Park & Campground:
www.co.solano.ca.us/depts/rm/countypark/lakesolano.asp

Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve
<http://nrs.ucdavis.edu/stebbins.html>

Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument
<http://berryessasnountain.org>

Hike to Zim Zim Falls
<http://yolohiker.org/trails/knoxville/zimzim/index.html>

Winters, California
<http://www.cityofwinters.org>

Local Chapter Membership Application

Please join us!

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

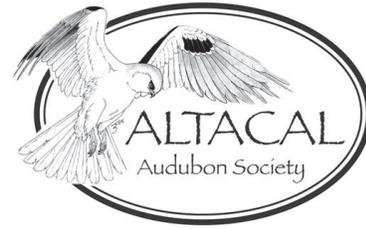
Altacal Audubon Society (AAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. AAS is a separately incorporated non-profit organization with a local chapter membership. 100% of membership dues goes to support local projects and activities. AAS is an all-volunteer organization that conducts all of its programs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

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| <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/

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CURRENT RESIDENT



White-tailed Kite

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2016

DATES TO REMEMBER

| | | |
|-----|---------|----------------------------|
| Feb | 15 | Program - <i>WILDFIRES</i> |
| Feb | 20 | Upper Bidwell Park |
| Feb | 28 | Genetic Resource Center |
| Mar | 19 - 20 | Fort Bragg |
| Mar | 21 | Program - <i>INDIA</i> |

For updated information check the Altacal website
altacal.org

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ALTACAL Program



Feb 15
WILDFIRES

Mar 21
INDIA

ALTACAL

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