



NSAS Merced National Wildlife Refuge Field Trip 1-23-22

The morning of January 23 found 15 NSAS members driving through dense fog to find the Merced NWR. We arrived at the meeting spot and heard lots of bird activity but there was not much to be seen due to the Tule Fog. The fog gradually lifted as we walked the trail with our local leader, Ralph Baker and the day transformed with sunny, blue skies. During the day we saw 9 **Great Horned Owls** sitting in trees and the usual geese and ducks, including Blue-winged Teal. Our leader pointed out a few **Blue-morphs** of the **Snow Goose**.

Highlights were seeing **Lesser Yellowlegs**, and a vagrant female **Vermillion Flycatcher**! We watched her for a long time as she was flycatching and returning to the same tree. Her pinkish, orangey belly was so pretty! On our drive out of the refuge we were lucky enough to see two Burrowing Owls! It turned out to be one of those magical winter days in the Central Valley, seeing and hearing thousands of geese flying across the sky in all directions.



Lesser Yellowlegs



Vermillion Flycatcher