



# Song Sparrow

[www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com)

NSAS General Meeting  
 6:00 P.M. **Tuesday, December 14, 2004**  
 Solano County Office of Education  
 Waterman Room  
 5100 Business Center Drive, Suisun City

*Tuesday December 14, 2004—*

## Potluck Dinner

Napa-Solano Audubon Society's December meeting is always a potluck dinner. Starting at 6:00 pm, dinner is served. Dinner is followed by a slide show made up of slides brought by the membership, to share. So, bring a potluck dish to share, eating utensils and plates, and your favorite slides from all your wonderful birding trips.

**Directions:** Take the Green Valley exit from eastbound or westbound I-80 and go north to the first road which is Business Center Road. Turn west and head toward the Costco store which is northwest of the junction of I-80 and I-680. The Board of Education Building is on the right side of the road before you reach Costco. If you're coming north on I-680, take the Cordelia Road exit and make three right turns to go under the highway and north on Green Valley Road which is the frontage road west of I-80. Go over I-80 and make a left turn on Business Center Rd. The meeting will be held in the Waterman room. For more information: visit [www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com) or call (707)224-6133.

## Breeding Birds of Napa County, California

"An essential inventory of the breeding birds....shows the richness and diversity of Napa County" --David Allen Sibley

Price: Book, \$25; CA sales tax, \$2 (no tax on books shipped out of state)

Shipping and handling \$3 **Total \$30.00**

To order send shipping address and check payable to Napa-Solano Audubon Society, P.O. Box 5027, Vallejo, CA 94591. For more information, contact [napasmith@sbcglobal.net](mailto:napasmith@sbcglobal.net)

## Field Trip Report: Nature in the City, North and West Vacaville Neighborhoods

**Trip Leader:** John Wagnitz

Wednesday, November 3, 2004



Unexpected intermittent rain did not stop twenty nature lovers from enjoying Nature in the City, the first of many weekday neighborhood walks planned by the Napa-Solano Audubon Society. The outing began at the home of the trip leader whose yard has been certified by the National Wildlife Federation as a Backyard Natural Habitat. The yard has been planted with native and Mediterranean climate plants for the express purpose of attracting wildlife – especially birds and butterflies. Techniques for planning and selecting plants for a wildlife-friendly garden were explained and examples shown.

The group began their bird sightings by identifying a number of small passerine (perching) birds that were at the feeders in the yard. Birds seen included Lesser and American Goldfinch, White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse, Golden and White-crowned Sparrows, and Anna's Hummingbirds. During a minute of silence

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## Field Trip to Rush Ranch

**DATE:** Saturday, December 4, 2004

**LEADER:** Joanne Castro

**COORDINATOR:** David Takeuchi 643-5544  
davidtakeuchi@aol.com



**DESTINATION LOCATION:** Rush Ranch, 9:00 am. From Hwy I-80 in Fairfield, take Hwy 12 exit east toward Suisun City. Proceed east 4.2 miles; turn right (south) onto Grizzly Island Road. Proceed 2.4 miles. Rush Ranch is on the right.

This area is operated by the Solano County Open Space District, offers trails into the surrounding tidal marsh, managed wetlands and rolling hills. These hills are especially good place to find raptors. Dress in layers, wear appropriate hiking boots and bring water and snacks. Rain cancels.

## FIELD TRIP: Newell Open Space American Canyon

**DATE:** Saturday, December 18, 2004

**LEADER:** Jo Maillard (707) 226-6665

**COORDINATOR:** David Takeuchi, (707) 643-5544  
davidtakeuch@aol.com

**DESTINATION TIME AND LOCATION:**

Newell Open Space, American Canyon; 9 AM

These windswept hills of American Canyon offer possibilities for various raptor species, as well as other winter birds. Trails are rugged and if wet could be muddy and slippery. Wear sturdy hiking boots and dress in layers appropriate to weather. A half-day hike up and down hills. Carry water and snacks.

**MEETING PLACE:** Lena's Cafe (great hamburgers) off Highway 29. Turn east on Napa Junction Road (turning lane if approaching from north) near RailRoad overpass. Drive approximately 100 yards. Ample parking.

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the group listened to the calls of Western Scrub Jays, Northern Flicker, and Black Phoebe. Some in the group caught a glimpse of a Hermit Thrush while most had a good look at a Spotted Towhee, a ground feeding bird with bright red eyes.

Strolling through the neighborhood located in extreme northwest Vacaville the group spotted American Crow, Turkey Vulture, Northern Mockingbird. Along the way Acorn Woodpeckers called their nasal 'whacka- whacka' and flashed over showing their white wing patches and undulating flight pattern. Stopping at a fence line overlooking an old apricot drying and packing barn, a well-illuminated flock of five Western Bluebirds was observed at the top of a young walnut tree. A Red-tailed Hawk shrieked its call and was spotted at the top of a conifer. In the mid-distance a male California Quail stood guard at the top of a brushy pile while a small flock of Bushtits flitted in a nearby hedgerow.

The group then relocated to a bike and walking trail along Alamo Creek on the west side of Vacaville between California Drive and the Twin Oaks Community Center. After posing for a photo in front of a large Valley Oak the group paused on a pedestrian bridge spanning the deep cut creek. We listened to the plaintive song of the Golden-crowned Sparrow and viewed the remnant riparian (along a waterway) habitat. The habitat included Fremont Cottonwood, Valley Oak, native grapevine, pipe vine (a critical plant for the Pipe vine Swallowtail butterfly), elderberry (no longhorn elderberry beetles were

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## Napa-Solano Audubon Society

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### Song Sparrow

Editor	Susan Lane .....707-649-8033
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**Web Page** www.napasolanoaudubon.com .....John Wagnitz

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E-mail address: susan@cardsonline.com

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*NSAS Board of Directors Meeting are held the last Wednesday of the month, from 7 to 9 p.m. at the San Pablo Bay Wildlife Refuge Headquarters on Mare Island. Any BOD member can be contacted for directions. All members are always welcome.*



seen), and dense thickets of poison oak. We avoided the poison oak but picked and crushed pungent Bay Laurel leaves and inhaled the fragrance of the aptly named anise plant. The only new bird seen was the House Finch but we could have seen Yellow-rumped Warblers, California Towhees, Bewick's Wren, Great Blue Herons, Snowy and Great Egrets. We searched the hillsides for raptors but the normally seen Red-shouldered and Cooper's Hawks were hunting elsewhere. Even the 'guaranteed' sighting of an American Kestrel was not to be on this showery day.

The final stop began at the Buck Mansion in downtown Vacaville and the group perambulated down Buck/Main Street past turn of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century Victorian mansions and 'kit houses'. Some of the group were staff and volunteers from the University of California Davis Arboretum and they shared their expertise by pointing out the major trees along the walk including 50' tall Southern Magnolias, three kinds of palms – 'fat-trunked' California Fan Palms, 'skinny-trunked' Mexican Fan Palms, and 'feathery-fronded' Canary Island Palms. We walked under Coastal Redwoods, Deodora Cedars, Big-leafed Maples, Camphor Trees, ...Ray Ash, and Ginkgoes. We stopped and admired a sculpture called Pear Harvest consisting of life-sized bronzes of a young girl and her father picking pears from the ground and from a pear tree.

We quickened our pace as the clouds darkened again, and

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# NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE

www.napasolanoaudubon.com

November 2004 - April 2005

<u>MONTH</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>LEADER</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
December 4 - Saturday	Rush Ranch, Solano Co	Joanne Castro	707-644-8191
December 18 - Saturday	Newell Ranch, American Canyon, Napa	Jo Maillard	707-226-6665
December 27 - Monday	Benicia Christmas Bird Count	Robin Leong	707-643-1287
January 15 - Saturday:	Lake Solano/Monticello Dam, Solano Co	Jim Knight	707-448-6596
January 21 - 23	9 <sup>th</sup> Annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival, Mare Island, Vallejo, CA	Myrna Hayes, Festival Coordinator	707-557-9816
February 2 - Wednesday	Northwest Vacaville	John Wagnitz	707-447-2685
February 12 - Saturday	Open		
February 19 - 20 - Sat - Sun	Klamath Basin/Tule Lake, Siskiyou Co	Charlotte Kisling/ (John Boyd)	916-397-2770
February 26 - Saturday	Owling, Solano Co	Robin Leong	707-643-1287
March 12 - Saturday	Grizzley Island, Fairfield, Solano Co	John Robinson	707-864-8279
March 23 - Wednesday	Rush Creek, Black John Slough, Sonoma Co	Jim Knight	707-448-6596
April 6 - Wednesday	Hanns Park, Vallejo, Ca	Joanne Castro	707-644-8191
April 16 - Saturday	Solano Co Transect	Robin Leong	707-643-1287
May 4 - Wednesday	Fairfield Neighborhood	Uzelle Williams / Fran Scarlet,/ Tim Jenkins	707-425-2732 timwjenkins@jcis.net
May 14 - Saturday	Napa-Solano Valley Lakes	Mike Rippey	
June 18 - 19 - Sat - Sun	Plumas-Eureka, near Blairsden/Graeagle, (North of Yuba Pass) Plumas Co	Jerry Karr	707-643-7089
June	Churchill, Canada	Robin Leong	707-643-1287

## *Vacaville continued from page 3*

entered the Ulatis Creek Walk in downtown Vacaville. This is a series of walkways, pedestrian bridges, and promenades on the floor of Ulatis Creek twenty feet below the surface of the surrounding downtown. It passes through a remnant riparian habitat, and is guarded by large Fremont Cottonwoods, Coast Redwoods, California Buckeyes and is patrolled by a Belted Kingfisher, who like many birds expected to be seen, was in fact neither seen, nor heard. It began to rain heavily so we sheltered under the old arched concrete Highway 40 bridge and decided to end the walk without exploring the remainder of the Creek Walk.

Fourteen of the group then gathered for a wonderful no-host lunch at the Old Post Office Restaurant on Main Street in Vacaville where we enjoyed selections such as crab cakes, polenta, trout, a fantastic seafood medley, and eggplant sandwiches; some enjoyed the taste of a local Wooden Valley chardonnay. As lunch ended the clouds began to clear away and sunshine eventually returned.

Although the bird list was limited, the day was very successful as we enjoyed each other's companionship on the walk and at lunch, as we experienced Nature in its myriad ramifications in the City.



## **The 2005 Napa Valley Birdwatching Festival February 24-27**

The First Annual Napa Valley Birdwatching Festival is an event celebrating the migratory and native bird population of the Napa Valley. This event will consist of many exciting activities available year-round in Napa Valley and the surrounding areas, as well as unique opportunities to take part in special guided tours and educational seminars about the environment and the birds of Napa Valley. The purpose of the event is to raise awareness of the bird population of Napa Valley and enlighten people of the wonderful outdoor activities available and the wilderness to see in the region.

Please visit <http://www.napavalleybirdwatching.com/> for more information.

## **Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count**

The Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count, conducted by the Redwood Region Ornithological Society, will take place on December 19, 2004. If you would like to participate, (we especially need observers for Annadel State Park) please contact Ken Ackerman at [markandack@aol.com](mailto:markandack@aol.com) or 707-538-2038.

**FRIENDS OF NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON SOCIETY**

**MEMBERSHIP ONLY \$25 per year**

One hundred percent, of *Friends of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society* Membership dues will stay in our local Chapter to support local birding, local conservation education and advocacy, and local birding science including the new Breeding Bird Atlas of Solano County. *Friends of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society* members receive periodic issues of Song Sparrow but do not receive Audubon Magazine.

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- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Do not share any of my personal information with any other organization.

Please make your \$25 check for Friends of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society Membership payable to Napa-Solano Audubon Society (NSAS) and mail it to: NSAS, PO Box 5027, Vallejo, CA 94591

National Audubon Society new memberships and renewal dues support national conservation issues. A token amount for each new member is sent to the local chapter as a modest 'safety net' payment based on the total local chapter membership. National Members receive Audubon Magazine and receive our local NSAS newsletter, *Song Sparrow*. National Audubon Society Membership is \$20 for the first year.

To join the National Audubon Society, please remit \$20 and make your check payable to National Audubon Society and mail directly to National Audubon Society, Membership Department, PO Box 51005, Boulder, CO 80323-1005. You may also join or renew online at <http://www.audubon.org/audubon/>.



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