



Song Sparrow

Quarterly Newsletter of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society
Volume 35 No. 1 Fall 2005

For updates and information not included in this newsletter,
check the web site: www.napasolanoaudubon.com

Greetings from the President

To kick off the start of another exciting year for Napa-Solano Audubon, I just wanted to say a quick hello to all of you and introduce myself. I'm somewhat new to the area and Chapter, but I'm very happy to be serving as the club's President for 2005-2006. The members of our Board are fantastic and have made it a very smooth transition for me into this role. Our fall schedule is coming together quickly, and includes exciting programs such as "Why Birds Sing and How," as well as field trips to local hotspots like Point Reyes and Skaggs Island (a trip for Chapter members only). You'll find details on these and other events in this newsletter.

We do have a few key areas where we could use volunteers from the group, which are outlined below:

- 1) Newsletter Editor - Dave McMullen has kindly taken on the task of getting this newsletter out, but we're still looking for someone to take over this task on a regular basis. In the meantime we will do our best to create newsletters on a more limited quarterly schedule.
- 2) Program Chair - we're looking for someone to take over Program planning responsibilities.
- 3) Flyway Festival Chair - we still need someone to take over the organization of our club's efforts for the Flyway Festival.

Please let me or any of the other Board Members know if you'd like to help out with any of these volunteer opportunities.

Good birding to all,
--Eric Pilotte

General Meeting Location

General Meetings will continue to be held at the Solano County Education Building this year. The education building is located at 5100 Business Center Drive in Fairfield (just off I-80 near Cordelia, across from Costco). We are considering new locations for meetings next year. Let Eric Pilotte or Cheryl Harris know if you have an idea for a good meeting location.

General Meeting

Tuesday Sept. 13, 2005 7:00 pm
Program: Birding Manitoba

Our first General Meeting of the season is now over at the time this newsletter is being written. We wish to extend our thanks to Darrell Lee, past NSAS president, who prepared a marvelous program complete with many wonderful pictures from the NSAS trip to Manitoba in June of this year.

Field Trip to Point Reyes

Saturday, Sept. 17, 2005 7:15 am

Our first field trip of the fall season is now behind us. NSAS Member John Robinson led a group of about 15 to several areas beginning with the Point Reyes Lighthouse. The morning started cold with thick fog and steady wind, and we wondered if we would see any birds at all. But eventually the conditions improved and the fog was lifting by 11:00 am. Highlights of the trip included Olive-sided Flycatcher, Says Phoebe, Pacific Slope Flycatcher, Western Kingbird, Yellow Warbler, Red-necked Phalarope, Belted Kingfisher, Great Horned Owl, Osprey, and Black Oystercatcher. Many thanks to John Robinson for leading this trip. It was lots of fun!

Field Trip to Hawk Hill

In the Marin Headlands
Saturday, Oct. 1, 2005 7:15 am

If you want to see hawks in migration, this is the trip for you! We have tried to time this trip to coincide with the best part of the fall hawk migration on Hawk Hill, a fantastic hawk-watching spot in the Golden Gate National Recreation area in the Marin Headlands. The most common raptors seen this time of year include lots of Sharp-shinned Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and Coopers Hawks. Also common are Northern Harrier, Red-shouldered hawk, American
(Continued see "Hawk Hill Trip," next page)

Hawk Hill Trip, continued

Kestrel, and Broad-winged Hawk. If we are lucky it is also possible to spot Peregrine Falcon, Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, and maybe a Merlin (although they are more likely later in the year).

LEADER: Ken Dexter

COORDINATOR: David Takeuchi, (707) 643-5544 (if calling and want a return call, leave the city of your return phone number); davidtakeuch@aol.com (Subject: Field Trip) If I don't know who you are and you do not identify your message as a Field Trip, I will not open your incoming mail!

DESTINATION LOCATION AND TIME: We will meet at the pull-off just past the tunnel on Bunker Hill Road at 8:30 am. Take Hwy 37 to 101 south. Just before you get to the Golden Gate Bridge, take the exit to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, and follow the signs through the tunnel on Bunker Road. After birding the trees for fall warblers and passerines, we will continue on to Rodeo Lagoon and look for water fowl. Later in the morning, we will head to Hawk Hill to see the raptors. Dress in layers, wear a hat, bring sun screen, bug repellent (never know when you need them), pack snacks and a lunch to carry. Our outing will end around 2:00 pm.

CARPPOOL LOCATION: Vallejo: 7:15 am across from Baskin Robbins in the Wal-Mart Shopping Center.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE GENERAL MEETINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS ON TUESDAYS EVERY MONTH!!

General Meeting

Thursday Oct. 13, 2005 7:00 pm

Program: Why Birds Sing and How

Do you ever wonder why some birds sing and others just call? Would you like to know how songbirds produce such melodious tunes? What about the dawn chorus? Sexual attraction? Aggression? No, it's not a Shakespearean tragedy, just the day-to-day life of songbirds. Come and learn about the anatomy and physiology of birdsong, from specialized organs to highly evolved brains. Find out how song can cause hormones to surge. This talk will present an overview of the how's and the why's of vocal communication in birds, with an emphasis on what classic and cutting-edge research has taught us.

George Bentley, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Department of Integrative Biology at UC Berkeley. He recently moved with his wife, Sharma, to the Bay Area from Seattle, where he studied the anatomy of birdsong at the University of Washington and taught birding classes for the Seattle Audubon Society.

Field Trip to Skaggs Island Saturday, Oct. 15, 2005 8:00 am

Skaggs Island is a large tidal wetland north of highway 29 (west of Vallejo). For years Skaggs Island was a secretive naval base, engaged in communications and intelligence operations. The 3310 acre site was closed in 1993, and has remained inaccessible, although a long process is slowly moving to transfer the ownership away from the Navy and manage Skaggs Island as a natural area adjacent to the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Jerry Karr, the NSAS Conservation Chairperson and long-time NSAS member, has obtained a rare permit to lead a field trip into this rich habitat. Because this is such a desirable trip, participation is limited to NSAS members only. Also, you need to sign-up ahead of time by contacting Jerry directly (birdnerd@jps.org or call 707 643-7089). Jerry will make every effort to include every NSAS member who wants to come, but contact him soon or he may have to put you on a waiting list!

Details as to meeting time and location will be available soon. Check the web page or contact Jerry or David Takeuchi (707) 643-5544.

General Meeting

Thursday Nov. 10, 2005 7:00 pm

**Program: International Bird
Rescue and Research Center**

The International Bird Rescue and Research Center (IBRRC) is an organization dedicated to helping minimize human impact on birds. Megan Prelinger, Assistant Rehabilitation Manager at the Northern California Headquarters for IBRRC in Cordelia, will present a slide show describing the history of the IBRRC, from its beginnings on the shores of San Francisco Bay in 1971, to its current global reach as an international oil spill response organization. She will describe some of the basic considerations in the husbandry and rehabilitation of oiled waterbirds, as well as those who have been injured and orphaned, and illustrate how IBRRC works as a member of the local wildlife care community.

Field Trip to IBRRC Saturday Nov. 12, 2005

This field trip is a follow-up to the presentation above (but you don't have to attend both). Check the website for details. We will probably do some birding near Cordelia before or afterward.

2005-2006 NSAS Board Members

President	Eric Pilotte	(707) 751-1890
Vice President	Cheryl Harris	(707) 224-6133
Secretary	Laurie Schremp	(707) 446-1150
Treasurer	Janet Renfrow	(707) 255-6780
Education	Pat Hildreth	(707) 252-8928
Webmaster	Dave McMullen	(707) 643-7471
Conservation	Jerry Karr	(707) 643-7089
Publicity	Cheryl Harris	(707) 224-6133
Field Trips	David Takeuchi	(707) 643-5544
Membership	Gordon Schremp	(707) 446-1150
SCBBA / CBC	Robin Leong	(707) 643-1287
At Large	John C. Robinson	(707) 864-8279
Newsletter	vacant	
Flyway Festival	vacant	
Programs	vacant	

Two Upside Down Raptors in Rolling Hills Park, Fairfield

Submitted by NSAS member Bob Pitts:

An article in the Daily Republic newspaper mentioned the 300+ acre park. So on Sunday, September 18, I decided to go check it out. Arriving at the trailhead on Fieldcrest Avenue at about 8am, I was greeted by several dozen California Quail. I walked up the hill to the water tank on the paved road, then along a dirt road around to the far side of the tank. In the trees I saw Yellow Warbler, White Breasted Nuthatch, and another species that looked like a Western Tanager (non-breeding plumage) but I am not sure. On the far side of the tank I saw a pair of Say's Phoebe. Walking back down the hill, I saw Chipping Sparrow, Song Sparrow, and House Finch. A trail led into a wooded area near the creek where I found a flock of Wild Turkey, and spooked a large Barn Owl which was nice enough to perch on a clearly visible branch 25 yards away. The name of this bird should be changed to Awesome White Owl. While watching the owl, the Turkeys began moving noisily straight at me and I could hear raptors overhead.

Suddenly, there was a loud crashing through the oak canopy. I turned towards the noise expecting to see a hawk with a Turkey in its talons. Instead, there was a Golden Eagle hanging upside down from the branches, and just above it a much smaller hawk also upside down. About a minute later the Eagle fell to the ground and promptly flew away. The hawk hung for another minute as I approached, then it also fell to the ground, but it was injured. The bird was quite docile after its eyes were covered with my t-shirt. I called my wife, LeAnne. She drove over bringing some leather gloves and my camera. Then we brought the hawk to the Suisun Wildlife Center. The very helpful staff gave the hawk a check up and found no apparent broken bones, but

they did note blood inside its mouth. When I left, the bird was under observation for internal bleeding. Even after holding the hawk in the hand there was some confusion as to identification. Weighing in at 454 grams, it was initially identified as a large Coopers Hawk, but the staff at the Wildlife Center now tell me it is a Red-shouldered. I might swear to never leave the house without my camera again, but the most amazing things happen when I'm unprepared! --Bob Pitts



Tuesday Dec. 13, 2005 7:00 pm Program: An Invitation to Join the Christmas Bird Count

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) will be on Monday, December 19. This year we hope to promote and advertise the CBC by preparing a program not only to help us all prepare for the event, but also to explain it and introduce it to newcomers who may wish to participate for the first time.

Scouting Field Trip(s) for CBC Saturday, Dec. 17, 2005

Teams will visit their respective assigned blocks to prepare for the CBC the following Monday.

Napa-Solano Audubon Society

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Vallejo, CA 94591



Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas Report

The Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas (SCBBA) has completed its first year! More details about the results of our first year will be reported in future newsletters and General Meetings. But here is an incomplete list of "highlights" that our "atlasers" have observed so far: Loggerhead Shrike nest with 4 eggs, Savannah Sparrow nest with 4 eggs, Red-shouldered Hawk nest, Ospreys nesting on Mare Island Cassins Kingbird (if we can confirm breeding for this species it will be the furthest northern breeding record in the state), an active Prairie Falcon eyrie by the Monticello Dam, 11 confirmed Swainson's Hawk nests, Burrowing and Great-horned Owl nests, and on and on...

It's not too late to get involved and enjoy the SCBBA fun! Just give Robin Leong a call or drop him an email. (707) 643-1287

robin_leong@netzero.net.

to input their data over the internet, and he will explain and hopefully do a live demonstration. If you have a block in the SCBBA and you miss this demonstration, don't worry; there will be written instructions sent out describing how to do it. Robin Leong will send an announcement with more details to the SCBBA email group.

Event Calendar At-a-Glance

Tue. Sept. 13	General Meeting
Sat. Sept. 17	Field Trip to Point Reyes
Sat. Oct. 1	Field Trip to Hawk Hill
Thu. Oct. 13	General Meeting
Sat. Oct. 15	Skaggs Island Field Trip (members only)
Thu. Nov. 10	General Meeting
Sat. Nov. 12	Field Trip to IBRRC, Cordelia
Tue. Dec. 13	General Meeting
Sat. Dec. 17	Scouting Field Trip for Christmas Bird Ct.
Mon. Dec. 19	Christmas Bird Count
Tue. Jan. 10	General Meeting
Sat. Jan. 14	Field Trip to Abbott's Lagoon, Point Reyes
Jan. 27-29	Flyway Festival

Please check the website if you can for any last-minute updates regarding our events. www.napasolanoaudubon.com

Training / Demo for SCBBA On-line Data Entry Thursday, Oct. 13, 2005 6:30 pm

Prior to the General Meeting October 13, there will be a brief training/demonstration for SCBBA on-line data entry. Atlaser Steve Lombardi and others have established an efficient way for all atlasers