



Song Sparrow

Quarterly Newsletter of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society
Volume 40 No.1 Fall 2009

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

Photo by Keith Gish

Looking Forward

Hello Fellow Birders ~ I hope you are enjoying this lovely summer weather. Amazing that our Fall season is nearly upon us—a favorite time for birding and now we can look forward to many exciting adventures— new field trip locations, great new programs, parties & projects. A special Garden Event for Friends members is planned for Sept. 27, Creek Cleanup Day Sept.19, a pelagic field trip in October and much, much more. Be sure to clip our Field trip schedule & attach to your calendar so you won't miss out. Some of our activities are for Friends members only – so please renew or join Friends of NSAS today---these funds are essential to the ongoing support of our projects. Volunteer opportunities are also abundant: We're seeking both new & 'seasoned' volunteers to help with our Christmas bird counts, Coastal cleanup day, educational programs & fun events for kids. Just a few hours of your time can make a huge difference to our birds & their habitats. I hope to see you soon at one of our events or activities.
---Cheryl Harris, NSAS President

Our Together Green Project - A Success!

In Sept. 2008, NSAS received a grant from Together Green – a program of National Audubon Society with funding from Toyota – to promote wildlife habitat conservation and restoration on vineyards, ranch and farm lands, parks and open space preserves, and other properties by providing information, resources, educational materials, and outreach to rural land owners, land managers, and critically, those who work on the land in the Napa Valley.

On Thursday, August 6, more than 50 Spanish-speaking vineyard workers spent the morning learning about the value of biodiversity and wildlife habitat in and around agriculture.



This was the fifth in our series of Habitat workshops; the first directed at agricultural workers and presented entirely in Spanish.

We enlisted volunteers from NSAS, Napa RCD, Napa Land Trust, and other local organizations to present information on birds, native plants, beneficial insects & pollinators, reptiles, weeds, and other topics. The high point for many was the chance to see and touch live animals: Joe Lam of Joe's Reptile Rescue brought live snakes, so that workers could see the difference between poisonous snakes and harmless gopher and king snakes that consume gophers and other rodents, significant vineyard pests. Additionally participants learned how habitat can be provided for owls, kestrel, and other raptors -- excellent gopher predators. Participants also built bluebird boxes to mount near their vineyards.

Many thanks to our NSAS volunteers: Norma Ferriz, Betty Labastida, Uzelle Williams, Lore Dias, Pat Hildreth, Kathleen Shannon, Keith Gish, Wally Neville, Karen Martin, Dave Steiner and many others.

Also - a very special thank you to our partner in this **Together Green** project for her outstanding efforts: Katey Taylor & Icon Estates Wines ~ THANK YOU !

Habitat at Home – Improving Your Property for Birds & Other Wildlife

Tuesday September 29, 7:00–8:30 pm
Napa City County Library, 580 Coombs St., Napa.

Co-sponsored by Napa CNPS – This presentation, by our “Together Green” Habitat project Coordinator, Rose Roberts, will describe how to improve wildlife habitat on your own property for birds and others – by providing water, nest boxes, planting native plants in habitat groupings, hedgerows or corridors. There will be a preview of Oct. 3, Napa CNPS plant sale offerings. Open to all. Refreshments.

Save The Date!

A special Garden event for all NSAS Friends members is planned for Sunday afternoon Sept. 27. Invitations will be sent soon to Friends members. We will gather in a beautiful private Napa garden to enjoy fine wine, delicious hors d'oeuvres, an opportunity to meet other members with similar interests & enjoy a tour of the garden featuring the best plants & methods for attracting birds, butterflies & pollinators.

Art/Photo Contest

Would you like to see one of your wonderful bird photographs in a new Napa Solano Audubon Society brochure that explains who we are and what we do?

The Membership Committee of NSAS is sponsoring a photo contest—winners to be announced at the October general meeting. Our new brochure will have space for several photographs and/or artwork so there could be several winners! We also welcome drawings of birds and photos of people watching birds. The only stipulation is that the pictures be local. Deadline for submission is Monday, Sept.21.

For more information, call Janet Thiessen at (707) 935-9752 or email membership@napasolanoaudubon.com.

Photo by Mike Moshier



PROGRAMS

General Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Florence Douglas Senior Center, 333 Amador St., Vallejo(see map on our website). Meetings begin at 7pm with about 15 min of social time, sharing of birding experiences & refreshments; this is followed by announcements, a short period of chapter business (field trip, conservation, membership & special project reports); Each evening a special presentation by a guest speaker is offered. See below for details about our Sept., Oct. & November programs.

Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2009 Birding in Central Peru

NSAS Past-president Darrell Lee presents his recent adventures (& birding) in Central Peru; Peru has about 1700 species of birds. Darrell and his two birding companions toured Central Peru for 18 days, camping half their nights in remote areas and local schoolhouses to see about 500 species. Their tour had them birding from 2200' elevation in the Amazon basin to nearly 17,000' elevation in the Andes. They also birded three days around Lima. In addition, Darrell and one other birder spent a day birding the Cuzco area, and three days in the Machupicchu/Agua Calientes area sightseeing and birding. Join Darrell for a colorful slideshow and interesting narrative about this May-June 2009 adventure in Peru.

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2009 The Use of Falcons in Bird Abatement

Presented by Greg Burdick - Travis Air Force Base (AFB), Bird Air Strike Hazard team

The World Bird Sanctuary in Missouri has had the contract for bird abatement at Travis since 1996. Greg is currently part of the Bird/wildlife Air Strike Hazard (BASH) Team at Travis AFB. He works the flight line with dogs and falcons to clear the runways of birds and other wildlife. Since BASH started at Travis they have substantially reduced the number of bird strikes on the base. As a result of their effectiveness, BASH is now deemed "Mission Critical" and on the same level as Security Forces and the Fire Department.

They are also involved in bird abatement at Hay Rd Landfill, and have effectively reduced the number of gulls feeding at the landfill from over 5000 to less than 100. Falcons are also being used in orchards, vineyards and berry patches and have doubled and, in some cases, nearly tripled yields.

Visit our website:
www.napasolanoaudubon.com

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2009 The Power of Audubon & Citizen Science

Presented by Gary Langham - Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon California.

Gary will provide a brief history of citizen science at Audubon, focusing on projects in California. Although citizen science has been around for more than 100 years, new technologies are ushering in a golden age where everyone can participate and results are real-time. Citizen science can connect us to each other, to our landscapes, and provide the data to power sophisticated science projects on disease, climate change, and range changes in our backyard birds.

Monthly Field Trips

Unless otherwise noted, the following applies to all trips:

COORDINATOR: David Takeuchi (707) 643-5544. David is the Coordinator for all Field Trips. If calling and want a return call, leave the city of your return phone number. Email David at davidtakeuchi@aol.com (enter: "Subject: Field Trip").

Bring snacks and liquids, and pack a lunch and be prepared to carry it. It's always a good idea to wear a hat, bring sunscreen and bug repellent. Dress in layers. Don't forget your binoculars! Heavy rain cancels. Non-members are welcome on most field trips.

CARPOOL LOCATIONS:

Cordelia: Solano County Office of Education parking lot (5100 Business Center Drive, Fairfield) near Costco.

Vallejo: Old Wal-Mart parking lot across from Baskin-Robbins (5182 Sonoma Blvd.). From Sonoma Blvd., turn east at the Meadows Drive traffic light.

Napa: Riverpark Shopping Center; by Sweeney's Sports,, 1537 W. Imola Avenue, between Coombs and Jefferson St.

Check the details for the specific trip to see which carpool locations will be used for that trip. The Carpool times listed are departure times. Please arrive early. Finally, carpoolers will share driving expenses. The recommended rate of reimbursement to the driver is 30 cents per mile, to be split by the number of riders, excluding the driver.

Photo by Alan Moore



Saturday, Sept. 19, 2009 Field Trip to Outer Point – Point Reyes

LEADER: Rigdon Currie lives in Inverness Park and knows the birds and the places to find birds in the area. He leads the local Gray Hawks birding group year around.

COORDINATOR: David Takeuchi

DESTINATION LOCATION AND TIME: Meet at White House Pool Parking Lot outside of Pt. Reyes Station at 8:30 AM. Trip will end around 2:00 PM.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy 1 thru Pt. Reyes Station. Turn right on Sir Francis Drake Blvd heading west to Inverness Park. The White House Pool Parking Lot is less than half a mile on the right just before Bear Valley Road on the left.

TRIP INFORMATION: Fall is the most exciting time of the year at the "Outer Point" of the Point Reyes National Seashore. With a bit of luck in the weather we may experience a "vagrant fall-out" and see eastern migrants not often seen in California. In any event, there are always migrating, seasonal and resident birds to see in the area. Migration will be in full swing so we should have an eventful outing. Pack a lunch.

CARPOOL: Vallejo: 7:15 AM Napa: 7:30 AM

Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009 Field Trip to Monterey Bay Pelagic

LEADER: Our leader Debi Shearwater is an expert. "What makes Debra different is that she is simply among the best seabird and marine-mammal observers in the world, eager to observe and to learn more about sea-life." Several "spotting" experts will also be onboard to ensure that nothing is missed.

COORDINATOR: Tom McNicholas, (707) 254-9953 tommcnicholas@yahoo.com.

DESTINATION LOCATION, TIME AND COST: Meet at CHRIS'S FISHING SHOP on FISHERMAN'S WHARF IN MONTEREY at 7:00 a.m. Sunday 10-11-09, where they will direct you to the boat for boarding and the pre-trip briefing. The boat will depart at 7:30 a.m. The boat will return at approximately 3 to 3:30 p.m. Allow for delays of several hours in returning to the dock if unusual wildlife is encountered. NSAS members could receive a \$40 per person discount off the \$138 trip cost with the following conditions:

Tom McNicholas will collect the funds and send one check along with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of each person signing on to the trip. This is required by the USCG, and has been enforced since 9/11.

(Info for Monterey Trip continued on next page...)

Sunday, Oct. 11, 2009 Field Trip to Monterey Bay Pelagic

(Continued)

The discounted rate is NON-REFUNDABLE FOR ANY REASON WHATSOEVER. It is also non-transferable. Trip members need to sign up with Tom by **September 15, 2009**.

TRIP DESCRIPTION: The fall season brings a vast variety of seabirds and marine mammals to the central California coast that can rarely be matched anywhere else in the world. "Shearwater Journeys is pleased to have you join us on our exciting nature trips to observe some of the most fascinating wildlife found in the Monterey Bay area. Please read the following information carefully as it will add to the enjoyment of your trip." <http://www.shearwaterjourneys.com/montereybay.shtml>.

Since we must be at the dock by 7 a.m. on Sunday, it is advisable to arrive in Monterey on Saturday. This provides an opportunity to visit the wonderful Monterey Bay Aquarium, Cannery Row and/or nearby Carmel on your own. There are a range of accommodations available in the area <http://www.seemonterey.com/>. We may meet for dinner Saturday - PM in Monterey.

CARPOOL: To be determined.

Saturday, Nov. 14, 2009 Field Trip to Petaluma Wetlands

LEADER: Lisa Hug is a birder and naturalist from Sebastopol. She has been a ranger at Point Reyes National Seashore in the past and is currently an independent biological contractor and freelance naturalist. She teaches a variety of bird-watching classes for a various organizations. More information can be found at her website: <http://www.lisahugsnorthbaybirds.com/>

COORDINATOR: David Takeuchi

DESTINATION LOCATION AND TIME: Meet at 8:30 AM at the Ellis Creek Water Treatment Facility in Petaluma. Trip will end around 3:30 PM

DIRECTIONS: To get to the Treatment Plant, from Vallejo, Take 37 West toward Novato. Turn right (north) on Lakeville Highway. Turn left on the South MacDowell Extension. Turn left again on Cypress Drive and go to the end of the road. There is a large parking area just inside the facility gate, next to a new restroom building.

TRIP INFORMATION: Come on an exciting trip to view new vistas. This property is adjacent to Schollenberger Park and only recently open to the public. There are several new trails circling 3 ponds designed to attract wildlife while treating the water. Pack a lunch. If weather and time allows, we may also explore some new Open Space Trails near Port Sonoma as well.

CARPOOL: Vallejo: 7:30 AM. Napa: 7:45 AM

REMEMBER! Refer to the Monthly Field Trip Details column, for important trip worthy information.



Photo by Keith Gish

What Is A Friend?

Are you puzzled by the term "Friends of Napa Solano Audubon Society?" Do you think, as I did, that it refers to an elite group of big donors? I'd been coming to monthly Napa Solano Audubon meetings and participating in field trips for several years before I learned that "Friends" are simply members of NSAS. Some of them donate above and beyond their annual dues, but Friends are not obligated to do so.

The membership categories of Friends of NSAS are: Individual (\$25) and Family (\$35). As of August 1, 2009 there are 227 Friends of NSAS. Their dues stay in our local area and support our meetings, field trips, educational programs, publications, and special projects.

We also carry on our mailing list 800 + residents of the Napa-Solano area who are members of the National Audubon Society. These people are valued members of our birding community – their National dues support National issues & pay for their Audubon magazine subscription. They also receive The Song Sparrow, our quarterly newsletter, and are welcome to join most of our activities and events. There are even 108 of our valued members who support both organizations! We would really love to increase this number.

So those of you who are members of National but are not yet Friends, please give some thought as to where you want your hard-earned bird dollar to go. It isn't either/or; it can be both/and. So, join us—we will welcome you with open arms!

Janet B. Thiessen, Membership Chairman *Photo by Dave McMullen*



Volunteers with NSAS!

There are many rewards to giving a few hours of your time—social & networking opportunities, the personal reward of a job well done, giving back to the community-- to name a few. Our volunteer projects include those with the commitment of just a few hours OR projects to “sink your teeth into” Help plan a party, design outreach materials, remove invasive weeds, mount bird boxes, monitor & record bird sightings, introduce kids to the fun of bird watching AND more! Please let us know if you can help with one of these projects:

Dates to Volunteer

- Sept. 19:** **Coast & Creek Cleanup Day at the Yountville Napa River Preserve**
Sept. 27: **Friends Garden event in Napa**
Oct. 17: **Girl Scouts ‘Amazing Bird Day’ at Rush Ranch**
Oct. 8-18: **Tolay Raptor event**
Dec. 14: **Christmas Bird Counts (beginners welcome)**
Jan. 1: **Christmas Bird Counts (beginners welcome)**

Call Cheryl for more information (707) 224-6133

FRIENDS of the NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON SOCIETY

100% of Friends of the Napa Solano Audubon Society membership dues remain in our local chapter to support local birding, local conservation education and advocacy, and local birding science.

\$25 individual or \$35 family. Please JOIN or **RENEW TODAY** by completing the following:

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

EMAIL: _____ (receive timely reminders or notification of events)

ADDRESS: _____

_____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

- Please contact me about volunteer opportunities. I prefer to receive my newsletter by e-mail ONLY.
 I am enclosing an additional _____ donation to support citizen science and educational projects.

Make your check payable to “Friends of NSAS” and Mail to: Napa-Solano Audubon Society, P.O. Box 10006, Napa, CA 94581

Do you have questions about your membership status, duplicate mailings or need to submit a change of address?
Contact Membership Chairman Janet Thiessen at membership@napasolanoaudubon.com or (707) 935-9752.

NSAS Field Trip Schedule (September 2009 – June 2010)

FALL 2009

- Saturday, September 19:** **Point Reyes - Leader, Rigdon Currie**
Sunday, October 11: **Monterey Pelagic w/Shearwater Journeys**
Saturday, November 14: **Wetlands - Leader, Lisa Hug**
Saturday, December 12: **Pre-Benicia CBC –Leader, Robin Leong**
Monday, December 14: **Benicia Christmas Bird Count – Coordinator, Robin Leong**

SPRING 2010

- Friday, January 1:** **Angwin Christmas Bird Count – Coordinator, Louise Vicencio**
Sunday, January 3: **Post Angwin CBC - Leader, Murray Berner**
Fri-Sun, February 5-7: **San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival Field Trips**
Saturday, February 13: **Davis Wetlands - Leader, John Sterling**
Sunday, March 21: **Point Reyes National Seashore. Leader - David Wimpfheimer**
Saturday, April 17: **Long Canyon , Napa County – Leader, Murray Berner**
Tue-Sat, May 4-8: **South Nevada - Leader, Bob Barnes (by reservation only)**
Saturday, May 15: **Putah Creek, Woodland – visit Manfred Kusch’s property**
Saturday, June 19 : **Birding and gourmet picnic (details to be announced)**

Napa-Solano Audubon Society

P.O. Box 10006

Napa, CA 94581



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Dave McMullen: red-tail@comcast.net.



Northern Screech Owl seen on the June 23 field trip to Gates Canyon. – Photo by Vicki Isborn

Event Calendar At-a-Glance

- Tue. Sep. 8** Program: "Birding Peru"
- Sat. Sep. 19** Coast & Creek Clean up Day,
(with NSAS at Napa River Preserve, Yountville)
- Sun. Sep. 27** Garden event for Friends of NSAS
- Tue. Sept 29** "Habitat at Home" program
- Fri. Oct. 2** Native plant sale preview party
- Oct. 3 & 4** Napa CNPS plant sale, Skyline Park
- Oct. 8–18** Tolay Fall Festival *(Thurs-Sun)*
- Tue. Oct. 13** Program: "Falcons at Travis AFB"
- Tue. Nov. 10** Program: "Audubon & Citizen Science"
- Mon. Dec. 14** Benicia Christmas Bird Count
- Jan. 1, 2010** Angwin Christmas Bird Count

Plus weekly Friday Bird Walks in & around Napa

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