



Song Sparrow

Quarterly Newsletter of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society
Volume 40 No.3 Spring 2010

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

SPRING!

Although cold, wet and gloomy, our wintry weather has provided us with the promise of a lovely spring and we plan to take full advantage of it. Launching the season with the very successful Flyway Festival in early February, followed by the first of several spring garden events in February at Skyline Park, Earth Day activities in April, inspiring spring programs, plus outings and field trips near and far – we’re looking forward to a wonderful, productive season ahead.

Thanks to all of you who volunteered at the Flyway Festival, our Christmas Bird Counts, the Family CBC event in December, our Children’s Birding programs, and more. Our volunteers have accomplished huge steps in forwarding our goal to share the fun of birding! And special thanks go out to our special project & program organizers – a great team! ~Cheryl Harris, President

The 38th Angwin Christmas Bird Count

In mild, drizzly weather the Angwin CBC attracted 60 human participants, found 134 species on count day, and seven more during count week. Birders explored some new areas, and revisited some areas recently un-visited. Rarities include Ross’s Goose, Blue-winged Teal, Barrow’s Goldeneye, N Saw-whet Owl, a first-ever Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher and Western Tanager. The most abundant species was American Robin. The end of the day featured the first compilation pot luck and a good time was had by all.

Learn, Grow & Have Fun

Volunteer with NSAS – can you offer a couple of hours from time to time to help out with one of our many projects? You might assist with beginning bird walks: besides the leader, people are needed to help children learn to use binoculars, find the bird, and move stragglers along. Help is needed to register participants at events, provide handouts and other information. Volunteers are needed to help gather signatures for the State Parks Initiative. Other opportunities abound! Check our website or contact a chapter board member for more information.

Saturday, March 6, 2010

SCBBA Planning Meeting/Potluck

Interested in helping out with the Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas? Then join us for a SCBBA committee party/ meeting to discuss plans for a sixth year of atlasing to complete this project. We will meet at 12 noon at the USGS Field Station Office conference room located next to Building 505 on Azuar Drive, Mare Island, Vallejo. Bring a dish to share for a potluck lunch. Please RSVP to Robin Leong at 707 643-1287 / robin_leong@netzero.net; or Murray Berner at 707 224-5897 / vireocity@hotmail.com.

Tuesday, May 11, 2010

Vote Early, Vote Often!

Besides a fine presentation (to be announced), we will be electing officers at the May General Meeting. Nominations will be accepted at the April meeting. If you are interested in serving on the Board please contact Cheryl Harris; cheryleharris@sbcglobal.net or any current board member.

Antarctica for New Year

What happens if someone offered you an adventure on your bucket list for one third of the usual cost? You GO! And you take your friends. In this case it was a 15-day trip to Antarctica to follow the route of Sir Ernest Shackelton’s famous voyage. Quarke Expeditions, a great tour company, put us on their best cruise ship, the Clipper Adventure. There were only 86 out of a possible 122 passengers. The weather was marvelous. The food and service were good. They offered bird, whale, dolphin, and iceberg watching, plus art classes, plus great talks on mammals, birds, oceans, geology and history and MORE. Quarke also added two unscheduled landfalls. We hiked the last part of Shackelton’s trek to get help for his stranded crew, saw his grave in Grytviken, and landed on Elephant Rock, exactly where crew was stranded for 22 days waiting for succor. Awesome. I hope to have some PowerPoints for you one of these days. In the meantime you might take a look at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3OXF71GiwU>

~Robin Leong, Adventurer

New Website!

Check out our new and improved NSAS website. Many thanks to Dave McMullen who has totally reconfigured our web pages with easier to find, up-to-date information, great photos, and excellent resources.

www.napasolanoaudubon.com

Good Deeds

If you haven't yet renewed - and you know who you are - take action today: simply fill out the form below and send it in with your check. With your good deed for the day accomplished, you can sit back, relax and enjoy those birdies! New members get that feel-good vibe too! The birdies thank you, NSAS thanks you and the Board thanks you, because our members are the best, and we are proud to be part of your organization.

Napa-Solano Audubon Society Chapter Membership

100% of your Napa-Solano Audubon Society membership dues remain in our local chapter to support our mission to share the fun of birding, promote conservation and scientific understanding of wild birds and their habitats, and offer engaging, science-based education emphasizing the communities of Napa and Solano counties.

\$25 Individual **\$35 Family**

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Tel (_____) _____

- I am enclosing an additional \$ _____ donation to support citizen science & educational projects
- I'd like to hear about volunteer opportunities.
- I wish to receive the Song Sparrow by email only

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

Make check payable to NSAS and mail to:
Napa-Solano Audubon Society
P.O. Box 10006, Napa, CA 94581

PROGRAMS

General Meetings are held at the Florence Douglas Senior Ctr, 333 Amador St, Vallejo from 7-9 pm. Meetings begin with social time and refreshments, followed by announcements and a short period of chapter business. Each evening a special program is offered as detailed below.

Tuesday, March 9, 2010 Dragonflies & Damselflies of California

Presented by Tim Manolis - Sacramento Valley native who has studied birds and nature for over 40 years

Come and enjoy a fascinating presentation focusing on the variety of San Francisco Bay Region species; how to find and identify them, and ways in which even amateur observers can contribute to increased understanding of the status and distribution of damselflies and dragonflies in the Bay Area.

Tuesday, April 13, 2010 Penguins & Albatross: The World thru the Eyes of a Seabird

Presented by Ted Cheeseman - naturalist, expedition leader

Join Ted Cheeseman for a presentation on the lives of seabirds in the vast unforgiving expanse of the open ocean. Illustrated with images from his worldwide travels, he will tell stories of the new insight we have into the lives of seabirds and take you on an entertaining and educational journey diving with penguins and soaring with albatross, the world's greatest mariners.

MONTHLY FIELD TRIPS

Unless otherwise noted, the following applies to all field trips:

COORDINATOR: David Takeuchi (707) 643-5544 email David at davidtakeuchi@aol.com (enter: "Subject: Field Trip"). David is Coordinator for all Field Trips. If you wish a return call, leave the city of your return phone number. Bring snacks and liquids, pack a lunch and be prepared to carry it. Consider bringing a hat, and bug repellent. Dress in layers. Don't forget your binoculars! Heavy rain cancels. Non-members are welcome on most field trips.

CARPPOOL LOCATIONS: The carpool times listed are departure times. Please arrive early. Carpoolers share driving expenses. We suggest 30 cents per mile to the driver, to be split by the passengers. Check the details for each specific trip to see which carpool locations will be used for that trip.

Cordelia: Solano County Office of Education parking lot (5100 Business Center Dr, 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 Ave), between Coombs and Jefferson St.

Saturday, March 13, 2010
Field Trip to Carneros District

LEADER: Murray Berner 707-224-5897

DESCRIPTION: The southern base of these rolling hills is notable for tidal marsh, grassland, pastures and ephemeral freshwater wetlands teeming with waterfowl, raptors, shorebirds, rails and songbirds. 22 species of waterfowl and 15 species of raptor have been seen in the area. We will visit Napa and Sonoma counties, and take short walks at each of the best patches of habitat on trails (likely muddy or wet) and perhaps a bit on railroad tracks. Carpool: leaves Napa at 8:00 am and finishes about 2 pm.

Saturday, April 10, 2010
Field trip to Pt. Reyes

LEADER: David Wimpfheimer, naturalist

CONTACT: Joanne Castro 644-8191 davidjcastro@aol.com

April is great time to see a large variety of birds at Pt Reyes National Seashore. We will visit sites in both inner and outer Pt Reyes. In the estuaries we will focus on shorebirds, grebes, loons and ducks, most in breeding plumage. We will also explore some forest habitats where neotropical migrants such as warblers, vireos and flycatchers are already on breeding territories. Finish around 4pm.

DIRECTIONS: Meet by the restroom near the large parking area opposite the main Bear Valley Visitor Ctr, Pt Reyes 8:30 am.

Carpool: Vallejo-7:15 am Napa-7:30 am

Tuesday-Saturday, May 4-8, 2010
Trip to South Nevada

LEADER: Bob Barnes who has led over 200 Kern River Valley and So Sierra Nevada birding trips.

DESCRIPTION: The number of spaces is limited so it is open only to current NSAS Chapter members (formerly called 'Friends'). Itinerary and details are posted on our website. SIGN UPS: Requests for spaces will open up on a first come basis on Saturday, March 13 at 8:00am via Email: davidtakeuchi@aol.com Subject: NSAS Field Trip to So Nevada. Email requests sent prior to this time cannot be considered. COST: There is a non-refundable deposit of \$25.00 for each participant. Food, travel and lodging and any other costs apply. Details on website.

Saturday, May 15, 2010
Field Trip to Putah Creek

LEADER: Dr. Manfred Kusch, retired from UC Davis, has lived last 22 years along the south bank of Putah Creek

DESCRIPTION: Dr. Kusch has turned part of his property into a private bird preserve that includes large riparian woodland. Varied habitats attract many species of wintering and breeding birds. The tour is about two hours with a one-mile walk over mildly uneven terrain along the creek. DIRECTIONS: Meet at 8:30 am, 6444 Putah Creek Ln, Winters. The property is close to Davis at the north edge of Solano Co about 3/4 mile downstream of the Stevenson Bridge. At the intersection of Putah Creek Rd and Stevenson Bridge Rd take the private gravel road east. This is Putah Creek Ln, basically the continuation of Putah Creek Rd to the east. Carpool: Napa - 7:00 am Cordelia - 7:30 am.

Together Green Volunteer Days

We have had wonderful responses to our family birding events, funded by the Together Green Volunteer Days grant.

Our Introduction to Citizen Science program offered December 30 at the St Helena Library was very well received by 40 attendees and netted 20 new volunteers for our January 1 Angwin Christmas Bird Count. We conducted a bird box building workshop in January with students from Napa's New Tech High School. In February, we had great fun exploring, mounting bird boxes and planting a bird and butterfly garden at Skyline Park in Napa. Another garden volunteer day is planned for April 25 - learning about birds and planting a demonstration native plant hedgerow. Additionally, in June we are planning a Beginning Birding and Citizen Science program for families at the JKF Library in Vallejo. We always need volunteers. Please consider joining us. It's great fun and personally rewarding too! Check our website for further details. For more information about the Together Green program, go to www.togethergreen.org.



**Thank You Frank Oliver for constructing
and donating 50 bluebird boxes to our
outreach programs!**

~

Lawrence's Goldfinch

An uncommon songbird (3.9-4.7") found in limited areas of woodland in California & Baja California.

- Gray back & sides
- Yellow patch on chest
- Yellow wing bars
- Dusky or black face

Male: Black face, black wings w/broad yellow bars & yellow edges on primary feathers.

Female: Gray face.

Gray overall. More subtle yellows than on male.

Juv: Like adult female, w/less yellow; may appear all brownish gray.

Photos © David McMullen 2009



California Native Plant Society Events

Wildflower Show & California Native Plant Sale

Saturday & Sunday, April 10-11 10 am-4 pm, Skyline Park. View a display of over 200 varieties California native plants and wildflowers (labeled!). Native plants will also be offered for sale. Free. Plant inventory, schedule at website below.

Workshop - Lose the Lawn: Go Native

Thursday, March 25, 2010 7 pm. Save water, energy, harmful chemicals, and attract birds! Free. Skyline Park Social Hall, 2201 Imola Ave, Napa 707-253-2665

Information for both events at www.napavalleycnps.org

Napa-Solano Audubon Society
P.O. Box 10006
Napa, CA 94581

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WE NEED YOUR EMAIL—The SONG SPARROW IS GOING PAPERLESS!
ALL MEMBERS please update your email to membership@napasolanoaudubon.com—
and include your name – thank you!

Some of our email lists (like Fri Bird walk's) are not joined with our membership database and may not include names, so please send us your update even if you think we have it. If you do not have email, please drop us a line, and we will continue to send your newsletter by mail.

For more NSAS info...

Website: www.napasolanoaudubon.com.

Visit us on Facebook for timely notice of coming events and activities, and reports of birds recently sighted on field trips or Friday walks! Just click on the link from our website's main page. It is not necessary to join Facebook to view our activities.

Secretary: email Robin Hutchings at spudnbuzz@comcast.net

Membership: email Janet Thiessen at membership@napasolanoaudubon.com

Reports: Napa-Solano Audubon Society's 2009 annual financial report is available to members upon request. Contact Treasurer Robert Martin at rkjbhome@gmail.com.

Calendar

Sat, Mar 6	SCBBA Meeting/Potluck	Planning Party, Mare Island
Thu, Mar 25	Lawn Workshop	"Lose the Lawn, Go Native", Skyline Park, Napa - CNPS
Tue, Mar 9	†General Meeting	"Dragonflies & Damselflies of Calif."
Sat, Mar 13	Field Trip	Carneros District (Napa/Sonoma counties)
Wed, Mar 31	‡Board Meeting	Members Welcome
Sat, Apr 10	Field Trip	Pt Reyes
Apr 10-11	Wildflower Show	& native plant sale, Skyline Park, Napa -CNPS
Tue, Apr 13	†General Meeting	"Through the Eyes of a Seabird"
Sat, Apr 24	Earth Day Events	Napa Valley
Sun, Apr 25	TG Volunteer Day	Birding, garden exploration & hedgerow planting, Skyline Park
Wed, Apr 28	‡Board Meeting	Members Welcome
May 4-8	Field Trip	South Nevada
Tue, May 11	†General Meeting	Election Day! Presentation TBD
Sat, May 15	Field Trip	Putah Creek
Wed, May 26	‡Board Meeting	Members Welcome
TBA- June	Beg. Birding Workshop	Family event, John F. Kennedy Library, Vallejo
Sat, Jun 12	Field Trip/Gourmet Picnic	TBA – <i>Save the Date</i>

Plus local weekly Napa Friday Bird Walks

Please check website for any last minute updates: www.napasolanoaudubon.com

†General Meetings: 7-9 pm. At the Florence Douglas Senior Ctr, 333 Amador St, Vallejo.
Non-members are welcome

‡Board Meetings: 7-9 pm-*Currently* at the USGS Field Stn, 505 Azuar Dr, Mare Island, Vallejo.
Please check website for venue changes.