



# Song Sparrow

Quarterly Newsletter of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society  
Volume 39 No.5 Spring 2011

For updates and information not included in this newsletter,  
check the web site: [www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com)

## Citizen Science Projects

Napa-Solano Audubon Society offers many opportunities for volunteers--"citizen scientists"--to help gather the raw data that helps us understand wild bird populations, the first step toward protecting them. Of course watching birds is fun and worthwhile by itself, but keeping records and sharing these with the community as part of a field monitoring project makes the activity much more valuable--and no less fun! These projects do not require a huge time commitment; they simply make birding more interesting! Learn more at <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/netcommunity/citsci/projects> and join us at upcoming educational events (TBA) in which NSAS presents information about Citizen Science.



*Local Girl Scouts enjoy birding at the newly restored  
American Canyon Wetlands*

Vallejo and American Canyon Girl Scouts enjoyed the wonders of birding at their "Kites in the Park" event at the American Canyon wetlands trail September 18. Scout leader Cheryl Peet, NSAS volunteers and parents assisted the scouts in several outdoor activities.

## Monitoring on Your Own eBird

eBird is a web site created by the [Cornell University Lab of Ornithology](http://www.cornell.edu) and the [National Audubon Society](http://www.audubon.org) where you can login and maintain your birding records in an international shared database of bird observations. This makes your records part of a permanent, enormous pool of data that can be accessed by a global community of educators, ornithologists, land planners, etc. eBird offers benefits to *you* as well: your data is organized consistently, and you can see your records in new ways, with interactive maps, graphs, etc. Best of all, you can view the birds that have been seen by others in a particular area you plan to visit. Obviously the eBird data becomes more valuable the more people use it. That is why we would like to enlist a lot more people to start adding their records to eBird for Napa and Solano Counties. We encourage you to [visit the eBird site](http://ebird.org/content/ebird/) and start using it. Learn more about eBird at <http://ebird.org/content/ebird/> and see our member ebird input at the NSAS web site. For a great introduction to ebird, join us at our meeting January 11 for a very helpful overview by our webmaster Dave McMullen.

## Upcoming Flyway Festival Feb. 11-13

This year the San Francisco Flyway Festival will be held a week later in February so as to not conflict with Super-bowl Sunday. This is a wonderful event for both expert birders & new birders as well! If you have never been, mark your calendars & watch our website for updates. The Flyway Festival website is often not updated until late January. NEW this year--Napa Solano Audubon will be offering additional activities at the American Canyon wetlands!! Our volunteers will be "manning" stations along the new American Canyon wetlands trail, with spotting scopes & interpretive brochures. Beginning bird walks for families as well as other fun activities will also be offered at this location.

## The Flyway Festival Needs YOU!

**VOLUNTEER!** If you are available to help with this event, please contact (ASAP) Janet Thiessen, Membership Chair, who is coordinating our volunteer scheduling. If you have a special interest in our educational offerings, activities for kids or families, or to help in another capacity, please contact Lore Dias, Education chair.

## Great Need for Volunteers!

Napa Solano Audubon is a volunteer based organization. Volunteers are always needed to ensure the success of our programs. Here are some select opportunities:

- Education** – volunteers are needed to help with our classroom & library presentations.
- Tabling at events** – Earth Day and other spring events are coming soon – volunteers are needed to share our information with the public.
- Publicity & Social Networking** – help us get the word out about all of our fun activities; write and send press releases, add posts to our Facebook page, assist in updating our website, manage/print newsletter.
- Field trips** – are you a knowledgeable birder? Help by leading some of the Friday or Saturday morning bird walks. Or – help us plan our trips!
- Programs** – help find & schedule interesting programs for our spring meetings.
- Flyway Festival volunteers** – host a membership/outreach table, “man” a birding station in the marsh, help with publicity, develop educational materials, assist with beginning bird walks for kids, or other tasks.
- Other volunteer opportunities abound** – just let us know & we’ll find a task that fits your interest, skills & time availability.

Contact Cheryl 224-6133 or Lore Dias 642-5577

## General Meetings and Programs Second Tuesday, Monthly

General Meetings are usually 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 7 pm with about 15 minutes of social time, sharing of birding experiences and refreshments; this is followed by announcements and a short period of chapter business (field trip, conservation, and membership reports, etc.), and finally most meetings feature a special presentation or guest speaker. See calendar dates on our March-June programs.

## NSAS Selected Board Members

President	Cheryl Harris	(707) 224-6133
Education	Lore Dias	(707) 642-5577
Janet Thiessen	membership@napasolanoaudubon.com	

Please check our web site for a complete list of Board members. The Board meets once a month and all members are welcome. Please call Cheryl Harris if you are interested.

## Coming Soon! Saturday Bird Walks

Have you thought about joining in on our Friday morning bird walks but felt that it was too far to drive? Or Fridays aren't really convenient for you? Well, now, thanks to your NSAS board members (who will each lead a walk), you can join a birding group on Saturday mornings in Vallejo! Beginning Sat. Feb. 19, these walks will be conducted every Saturday morning when there is not a regularly scheduled NSAS field trip (our field trips are usually the second Saturday of the month); If interested, mark your calendar & send a request to be on the Saturday walk email list—you will receive weekly notices about the planned destination & other details. Send your request to Cheryl Harris [cherylharris@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cherylharris@sbcglobal.net).

## Something for the kids! NSAS Web Site and Facebook

Thanks to our Web Master, Dave McMullen, our website is updated often so it is easy for you to find the latest information about our activities & events. **There is a NEW information page planned “just for kids.”** There will be games, photos, and link's to great birding sites for kids & a column written by young local birders. *Watch for it soon!*



By Bryce, age 9 1/2

## Monthly Field Trips

Field trip details are provided below for 3 trips from Dec 2010 –Feb 2011. Unless otherwise indicated, the following applies to all field 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. 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 Streets.

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.

## FIELD TRIP BENICIA CHRISTMAS COUNT PREVIEW Sunday, Dec. 19, 2010

**Please note, this field trip is on Sunday!!!**

**LEADER:** Robin Leong

**DESTINATION LOCATION:** Benicia Christmas Count Circle

**DIRECTIONS:** Meet at the Vallejo Carpool location by the old WalMart across from Baskin Robbins/Food 4 Less.

**GENERAL INFO:** Benicia Christmas Count will be held on Monday, December 20. Pre-count can be done for 3 days consecutive days before count day and post-count is done for 3 days after count day. Robin is our Christmas Count Compiler and we will be checking out various areas in the count circle to adding birds we may not see on count day. Pack a lunch. Be prepared to bird till 2:00 PM.

**CARPOOL LOCATION AND TIME:** Napa , 7:30 AM. Vallejo , 8:00 AM.

## FIELD TRIP WOODBRIDGE ROAD STATEN ISLAND to see CRANES Saturday, Jan. 15, 2011

**LEADER:** David Yee

**DESTINATION LOCATION/TIME. DIRECTIONS:**

9:00 AM at the Carl's Jr. Restaurant near the corner of Hwy 12 and Starr Road / N. Thornton Road. Take Hwy 12 towards Lodi , go through the I-5 underpass, and take a right at the stop light.

**CARPOOL LOCATIONS :** Napa: 7:00 AM; Vallejo : carpool from Cordelia; Cordelia/Suisun: 7:30 AM

**GENERAL INFO:** We are fortunate to have David Yee, San Joaquin County 's preeminent birder, and international birding guide, take us on a birding adventure to some of his favorite birding sites. We will be looking for both the greater and lesser sandhill cranes at Woodbridge Road and Staten Island . Aleutian Canada geese which were uncommon can now be seen in the tens of thousands. We will visit various other locations to look for wintering water fowl, shorebirds and land birds. Pack a lunch. We should be ending by 2:00 PM.

## FIELD TRIP TO CHADBOURNE ROAD CORDELIA Saturday, February 12, 2011

**LEADER:** David Takeuchi

**DESTINATION LOCATION/TIME:** International Bird Research Rescue Center Fairfield/Suisun (IBRRS) Wastewater Treatment Plant. The field trip will end about 2:00 PM.

**DIRECTIONS:** Meet at the Solano County Office of Education Parking lot, 5100 Business Center Drive, Fairfield . (Cordelia carpool location) at 8:00 am.

**CARPOOL LOCTIONS:** Napa : departs at 7:30 am; Cordelia/Suisun: 8:00 am.

**GENERAL INFO:** We will be taken the tour by IBRRS volunteer, and NSAS member, Karen Sheldon. After the 1971 collision of two Standard Oil tankers beneath the Golden Gate Bridge and the loss of hundreds of birds, a small group of volunteers started the IBRRS. It's primary goals were developing oiled wildlife response, cleaning and rehabilitation techniques and promoting ongoing research in this field.

Following the tour, we'll visit the Waste Water Treatment Plant. The plant plays an important environmental role in treating wastewater for release into the Suisun Marsh. This is one of the best sites to study duck identification because of the variety and close range.

Then we'll take a slow ride down Chadbourne Rd. and side roads to look for raptors and passerines. Bring a lunch/snacks and water.

## Additional Friday Field Trips

In addition to the field trips above, our weekly Friday Bird Walks will continue throughout the spring. A carpool meets at the regular Napa location at 8AM each Friday (see "Monthly Field Trips" for carpool locations). Visitors are most welcome! An email goes out to a special list of "Friday birders" a couple days prior to the trip describing the destination for the week. If you are not included on this email list, Contact Cheryl Harris for any special announcements.

## How the CBC Helps Protect Species and Their Habitat



The data collected by observers over the past century allow researchers, conservation biologists, and other interested individuals to study the long-term health and status of bird populations across North America. When combined with other surveys such as the Breeding Bird Survey, it provides a picture of how the continent's bird populations have changed in time and space over the past hundred years.

The long-term perspective made possible by the Christmas Bird Count is vital for conservationists. It informs strategies to protect birds and their habitat - and helps identify environmental issues with implications for people as well. For example, local trends in bird populations can indicate habitat fragmentation or signal an immediate environmental threat, such as groundwater contamination or poisoning from improper use of pesticides.

In the 1980's CBC data documented the decline of wintering populations of the American Black Duck, after which conservation measures were put into effect to reduce hunting pressure on this species. More recently, in 2009, the data were instrumental in Audubon's Birds & Climate Change analysis, which documented range shifts of bird species over time.

## How the CBC Helps Protect Species and Their Habitat (cont'd)

In 2007, the data were instrumental in the development of two Audubon State of the Birds Reports - *Common Birds in Decline*, which revealed that some of America's most beloved and familiar birds have taken a nosedive over the past forty years, and *WatchList 2007*, which identified 178 rarer species in the continental U.S. and 39 in Hawaii that are imperiled. These three reports helped scientists and policy-makers to both identify threats to birds and habitat, and promote broad awareness of the need to address them. YOU can help - please see our website for details!

## Christmas Bird Counts

Christmas Bird Counts are 1-day events sponsored by Audubon chapters across the country. Each Christmas count takes place sometime during a 3-week period beginning in mid-December, and focuses on a fixed area defined by a 15-mile diameter circle. Teams of birders are assigned to specific areas within the circle, where they record the species and estimate the numbers seen. Napa-Solano Audubon organizes 2 different counts: The Benicia Christmas Count, December 20, 2010, in Solano County, and the Angwin Christmas Count, January 1, 2011, in Napa County. Visit our web site for details.

## Join in January ~ Save a Bundle!

For those of you who are members of National Audubon and receive the **Song Sparrow** but have never joined the Napa-Solano Audubon Society, please give some thought to supporting our local chapter. One hundred percent of NSAS's dues (\$25 annually for an individual, \$35 for a family) pay for local conservation education, bird-related field trips and monthly programs, advocacy for ecologically sound planning, and habitat restoration. A complete list of our planned activities from January through June can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. We do not receive money from National Audubon for these activities. We are an all-volunteer organization with no office, and no paid staff, but we have been successful in obtaining grants and expect to do more grant-writing in the future. Because our fiscal year begins on July 1, we offer everyone who joins NSAS after January 1, 2011 an extended membership the first year, that is, your second year will begin on July 1, 2012. From the second year everyone's dues expire on June 30. So put some of your conservation funding to work here in the North Bay, and join our efforts to keep the Bay Area we all love bird and wildlife friendly so that it will be a healthy place for our children and grandchildren to live. Be sure to fill out the renewal form enclosed and send it in promptly. Thank you!



## NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON SOCIETY Chapter Membership

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



## The San Francisco Flyway Festival February 12-13, 2011

Napa Solano Audubon will host a birding event at the **newly restored** American Canyon Napa River Bay Trail for the San Francisco Flyway Festival

### Wetland Talks & Bird Walks

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Visit our website & Facebook page for updates.

**Napa-Solano Audubon Society**

**P.O. Box 10006  
Napa, CA 94581**



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**Weekly Friday and Saturday Bird Walks in and around Napa and Solano County**  
Please check the website and Facebook for any last-minute updates regarding our events.  
[www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com)



*California Thrasher* Photo by Dave McMullen  
**Save Paper! Receive your newsletter by email by contacting our Webmaster Dave McMullen at (red-tail@comcast.net)**

| <b>Event Calendar At-a-Glance</b> |                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sun, Dec 19, 2010</b>          | Benicia CBC Preview Fieldtrip                                                |
| <b>Mon, Dec 20, 2010</b>          | Benicia CBC & Compilation Dinner                                             |
| <b>Sat, Jan 1, 2011</b>           | Angwin CBC & Compilation Dinner                                              |
| <b>Tues, Jan 11</b>               | General Meeting /Program: Discover Ebird AND American Canyon Wetlands trails |
| <b>Sat, Jan 15</b>                | Field Trip Woodbridge Rd/Staten Island                                       |
| <b>Sat, Jan 15</b>                | Sonoma Valley CBC for Kids                                                   |
| <b>Tue. Feb 8</b>                 | General Meeting /Program Walking with African Wildlife                       |
| <b>Sat, Feb 12</b>                | Field Trip Chadbourne Rd/Cordelia                                            |
| <b>Fri-Sun, Feb 11-13</b>         | S. F. Bay Flyway Festival, New NSAS activities at American Canyon Wetlands   |
| <b>Fri-Sun, Feb 18-21</b>         | Great Backyard Bird Count                                                    |
| <b>Fri-Sun, Mar 3-6</b>           | 2011 San Diego Bird Fest (non NSAS)                                          |
| <b>Tues, Mar 8</b>                | General Meeting /Program: TBA                                                |
| <b>Sat, Mar 12</b>                | Field Trip TBA                                                               |
| <b>Sat, Apr 9</b>                 | Field Trip TBA                                                               |
| <b>Tues, Apr 12</b>               | General Meeting /Program: TBA                                                |
| <b>Sat. Apr. 23</b>               | Earth Day Napa/Vallejo                                                       |
| <b>Tues, May 10</b>               | General Meeting /Program: TBA Election of Officers                           |
| <b>Sat, May 14</b>                | Field Trip TBA                                                               |
| <b>Sat, June 11</b>               | Field Trip TBA                                                               |