



Song Sparrow

Newsletter of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society
Volume 40 No. 4 Winter 2013-2014

For updates and additional information, check our Website:
www.napasolanoaudubon.com

A Note from our President



Barn Owl – Photo by Sylvia Hunt

Winter is upon us with welcoming rains, cooler temperatures and a little more time to study catalogs and travel guides---where to find that elusive bird nearby or far afield, to plan our gardens for more spring visitors, to observe and monitor birds from our kitchen windows (or best viewpoint) and to plan our holiday activities and New Year's resolutions.

Please remember NSAS in your plans -- our upcoming Christmas Bird Counts depend on your participation. You will find details below about both the Benicia CBC on Dec.16 and the Angwin CBC on Jan. 1 on page 2. Help is also needed with other Citizen Science efforts--providing data to scientists working with National Audubon, Cornell, PRBO and other monitoring projects. Find details about our **Hummingbirds at Home** project and other opportunities on our website (www.napasolanoaudubon.com). While there....get the latest updates about our soon to be published **Solano Breeding Bird Atlas** --there may still be time to sponsor a species page and choose an inscription. ---Cheryl Harris

Special Incentive Offer for the Napa Valley Give Guide

Consider NSAS in your year-end giving. Your donation is needed to complete our *Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas*, to provide educational opportunities for families, youth groups and schools, and to support our conservation work. Take a look at our new photo stream (slide show) in the Napa Valley Give Guide at www.napavalleygiveguide.org or on the home page of our NSAS website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com. Or support us as a volunteer -- send us a note to receive occasional e-notes about volunteer opportunities.



Special incentive offer - your \$100 donation to NSAS through the 2013 Napa Valley Give Guide wins a free one hour habitat garden consultation--with suggestions on how to attract more birds to your garden.

Update on the Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas

The *Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas* is nearing completion. This beautiful book will be available early next year. There have been some delays due to the Government shutdown (which affected the creation of the maps) and other unforeseen interruptions. If you had planned to give the Atlas as a Christmas gift, please contact our secretary, Diane Ley at leydm@aol.com, and she will provide you with a gift card.



New Workshops with Bird Walks

Last year was great fun as we launched our Beginning Birding Walks at American Canyon Wetlands, and this year holds yet even more learning opportunities. In addition to hosting these free monthly walks, NSAS will present short workshops just prior to the walks. Workshops and activities will usually **start at 9am** near the **American Canyon Wetlands parking lot** on the dates listed below, and will end around noon. The walks are on flat ground, and appropriate for all ages (children must be accompanied by an adult). We expect to see more than 30 different species of birds. So, come join us! For more info, check our website or contact Wendy at napa-solano-birds@outlook.com. Walks and discussion topics include:

Dec 7 (10 a.m.) Intro to Christmas Bird Count (CBC) – We'll discuss the rich history of the CBC and how the data has been used in Audubon's conservation efforts. We will then try a practice CBC by taking a census of the birds we see on our walk.

Jan 11: Hummingbirds @ Home - We will learn about a citizen science project that is not only gathering information about hummingbirds, but focusing on the habitat upon which they rely. Participants of the workshop will receive a 'Hummingbirds at Home' kit, including wildflower seeds of native California flowers, materials for creating a hummingbird feeder from recycled materials, and more.

Feb 15: The Great Backyard Bird Count - This weekend is the national Audubon Great Backyard Bird Count weekend! We will see how you can help scientists better understand the world around us by recording the birds that you see in your backyard.

March 1: Basic bird identification - How do the experts tell all the different species apart? Hear tips for finding and identifying typical California birds, including how to identify a bird just from its silhouette!

April 5: Bird song - Why do birds sing? How can you tell birds apart by their songs? You will learn to ID five different birds from their song alone, and discuss apps for your smartphone that can help you learn more songs and identify birds in your yard and in the field.

May 3: Nesting - What are the different kinds of nests that birds build? Try your hand at building a nest yourself. Find out about active nests with living birds that you can watch from your computer. Several different types of nests will be available for you to look at up close, and we will watch for more nests on our walk.

Programs & Events

Monday, Dec. 16, "Benicia Christmas Bird Count"

Join us for the annual Christmas bird count (CBC). From feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors, everyone who takes part in the Christmas Bird Count does it knowing that their efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation. The Benicia CBC circle includes Benicia, East Vallejo, Cordelia, West Suisun City, and parts of Grizzly Island and Grizzly Bay. Contact Robin Leong at robin_leong@netzero.net to sign up. Help us with the potluck dinner. Please contact Pat Hildreth at pathildreth@yahoo.com to find out what to bring or how to help.

Wednesday, Jan. 1, "Angwin Christmas Bird Count"

Sunrise to sunset. Count area includes central Napa Valley, Pope Valley, Lake Hennessey and Lake Berryessa. You can also choose to count for one-half day or help with the countdown dinner. Contact Murray Berner at (707) 224-5897 or vireocity@hotmail.com to sign up.

Tuesday, January 14, 7 p.m. - "Freeway Birding: San Francisco to Seattle"

Freeway Birding author Harry G. Fuller is an unrelentingly devoted birder. For over two decades he has shared his passion by leading field trips in California, Oregon and Washington. Join Harry as he shows you how and where to find the birds within a few miles of the freeway corridor, so that one or more short stints of birding can be easily worked into your interstate travels on the I-5 corridor and beyond.

Tuesday, February 11, 7 p.m. - "The Birds of Borneo"

Borneo is a land of contrasts from the monoculture palm plantations to ancient primal rain forests. We will take a look at the diversity of wildlife including the Orangutans and Proboscis monkeys to the bird life. Come join the always entertaining John Glover on a journey to an area of great beauty that is under tremendous environmental stress.

Tuesday, March 11, 7 p.m. - "Projects of the Solano Land Trust"

Hear about Solano Land Trust's work to permanently protect natural areas, working farms, and ranchlands in Solano County, and connect our community to these lands. Find out what's new, including their citizen science projects and the management of their newest property, Rockville Trails Preserve. Learn how you can get involved!

General Meetings and Programs Second Tuesday, Monthly

General Meetings are *usually* held on the second Tuesday of most months at the **Florence Douglas Senior Center, 333 Amador St., in Vallejo** (see map on our website). Meetings begin at **7 pm** with about 15 minutes of social time, sharing of birding experiences and refreshments, and finally, a special presentation or guest speaker. Non-members are welcome.

Upcoming Field Trips

Specific field trip and carpool information is always on our website. You can also sign up for the email notification list on our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com to receive special announcements or detailed field trip information.

“Pre-Christmas Bird Count Scouting” – Sat., Dec. 14.
Napa carpool leaves at 7:30 a.m. and meets in Vallejo at Baskin-Robbins at 8:00 a.m. Return at noon.

Join Robin Leong and Phil Gulley for this year’s scouting for the Benicia Christmas Count. The pre-count can be done for 3 consecutive days before the count day, and post-count is done for 3 days after the count day. Robin and Phil will lead us through various areas in the count circle to add birds we may not see on count day. We will preview Benicia State Recreation Area (park fee) and parts of Vallejo. We’ll bird for half a day.

“Sierra Valley” – Sat., Jan. 4. Napa carpool leaves Sweeny’s Sports at 7 a.m. and returns before 8 p.m. unless group wants to stop for dinner. If inclement weather, we will bird in Yolo Basin Wildlife area.

Join us as we explore the Sierra Valley with leader Bruce Webb. Sierra Valley is a huge valley at approximately 5,000 ft elevation with vast tracts of pastureland and expanses of tall sagebrush and is known for large numbers of wintering raptors. From Truckee we will carpool north on Hwy 89 to enter the spectacular Sierra Valley at the town of Sierraville. We will start the New Year with panoramas of mountains and closeup views of wintering raptors, including Golden and Bald eagles, Prairie Falcon, Merlin (we will study each one), Rough-legged, and Ferruginous Hawks in their various color morphs. Dress warmly with knit caps and gloves. Will stop in Truckee for snack or lunch to eat on the road up to Sierraville. **Bring:** \$s for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, warm layers. **Contact:** Wendy Schackwitz at napa-solano-birds@outlook.com.

“Woodbridge Road, Staten Island and 8-Mile Road” – Sat., Feb. 8. Napa carpool leaves from Sweeny’s Sports at 7 a.m. and stop in Cordelia at 7:30 Trip ends 2 p.m. Join David Yee for a day in the Delta to see the Sandhill Cranes, possible Tundra Swans and the many species of ducks, geese and water birds that flock the Pacific Flyway in winter. This will be mainly a driving trip, with stopping and brief walking along country roads. **Bring:** Lunch, \$s for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, layers. **Contact:** Gerry Nathan at gerrynathan1@yahoo.com.

“Elkhorn Slough and Moonglow Dairy” – Saturday, March 15. Leave 8 a.m. and return 5 p.m. Join us at the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, MoonGlow Dairy and more. This family-friendly Reserve has a visitor center with great exhibits, helpful staff, nature store, and guided tours. We will take one of the tours and then go out on our own to many birding spots in the area. A number of birds nest here including the white-tailed kite, red-shouldered hawk, barn owl, chestnut-backed chickadee, swallow and oak titmouse. We may also stop at nearby Kirby Park. A number of rare birds have been spotted here including a lesser flamingo very recently. In the past, visitors have seen the white-faced ibis, tufted duck, long-eared owl, yellow loon, lesser yellowlegs, least sandpipers, widgeon, phalarope and more. **Bring:** Lunch, \$s for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, layers. **Contact:** Carol Boykin at carol.boykin@att.net.

2013-14 Calendar At-a-Glance

Sat, Dec. 7	Beginning Bird Walk & Intro to Christmas Bird Count
Sat, Dec. 14	Field Trip: Pre-Christmas Bird Count Scout
Mon, Dec. 16	Benicia Christmas Bird Count
Wed, Jan 1	Angwin Christmas Bird Count
Sat, Jan 4	Field Trip: Sierra Valley
Sat, Jan 11	Beginning Bird Walk in American Canyon & Hummingbirds@Home Workshop
Tues, Jan 14	Program: Freeway Birding – San Francisco to Seattle – Harry Fuller
Sat, Feb 8	Field Trip: Woodbridge Road, Staten Island and 8-Mile Road
Tues, Feb 11	Program: Birds of Borneo – John Glover
Feb 14 – 15	American Canyon Birding Event & Great Backyard Bird Count
Sat, Mar 1	Beginning Bird Walk & Bird Identification
Tues, Mar 11	Program: Projects of the Solano Land Trust
Sat, Mar 15	Field Trip: Elkhorn Slough-Moonglow Dairy

Watch for email updates or check the NSAS website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com for more information.

Napa-Solano Audubon Society
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Name the birds and win a prize!

Take a look at our new slide show on our website home page. Then send your list naming at least 10 of the birds you see in the slide show photographs (in any order) to Napa-Solano Audubon, P.O. Box 10006, Napa, CA 94581, or email Cheryl at cheryleharris@sbcglobal.net. If correct, we will send you a special gift. Offer good until December 15.

Save Paper! Receive your newsletter by email by contacting our Webmaster Dave McMullen at red-tail@comcast.net.

Join the Crowd and Become a Member of the Napa-Solano Audubon



Don't be left out. Join or renew your Chapter membership for the low, low price of \$25 for an individual or \$35 for a family membership.

The current membership year is from July 2013 through June 2014. So there is plenty of time to enjoy benefits, such as member-only field trips, and participate in an active conservation and education organization. To join or renew, please complete the form below or sign up with Paypal on our website.

Egrets – Photo by Pamela Rose Hawken

NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON SOCIETY Chapter Membership

100% of the Napa Solano Audubon Society Chapter 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: _____ DATE: _____

EMAIL: _____ (to 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 "NSAS" and mail to: Napa-Solano Audubon Society, P.O. Box 10006, Napa, CA 94581. **Thank you!**