



# Song Sparrow

Newsletter of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society  
Volume 40 No. 3 Fall 2013

For updates and additional information, check our Website:  
[www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com)

## An Avian Afternoon in the Country – Sunday, Oct. 27



Rush Ranch – Photo by Tom Muehleisen

Please mark your calendars for an exciting event! We'll gather together for fine wines, hors d'oeuvres, silent auction, bird walks, and other fun activities at the spectacular **Rush Ranch Nature Center** at 3521 Grizzly Island Road in Suisun ([www.rushranch.net](http://www.rushranch.net)). The event will take place on Sunday, **October 27, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.** And we'll be kicking off the exciting **Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas** which is getting closer and closer to publication! Preview pages of the publication will be displayed. This will also be your chance to learn more about the innovative "**Hummingbirds at Home**" project and to meet and share stories with other NSAS members. The Rush Ranch property is owned and operated by Solano Land Trust. With 2000+ acres of historic tidal marsh and rolling grasslands, it hosts endangered plants and animals, plus 230 species of birds. For questions, to RSVP, or to donate items for the silent auction, contact Sylvia Klenz at 707-252-7819, [srklenz@aol.com](mailto:srklenz@aol.com), or Diane Ley at 707-552-2905, [leydm@aol.com](mailto:leydm@aol.com). Check our website for a link and map to the Rush Ranch location.

## Hummingbirds at Home Project

Hummingbirds visit our yards each spring to breed, looking for nectar from our gardens and feeders. Fascinating to watch, hummingbirds captivate us with their magical feats of flight and showy colors. Recent science reports that many flowers are blooming earlier due to climate change. The impact for migrating and breeding hummingbirds is unknown.

Audubon has launched a program called **Hummingbirds at Home**. The goal of this program is to gather data that will help document the hummingbirds' journey and provide a better understanding of how changing flowering patterns and supplemental feeding by people relate to hummingbirds' migration and breeding success, and also climate change.



Annas Hummingbird – Photo by Tim Kuhn

Since nectar is critical to hummingbirds, we're asking people to document which flowering plants hummingbirds are feeding on in their backyards as well as whether hummingbird feeders are supplied and used. This program provides an opportunity for citizen scientists to help us learn the impact of these changes on hummingbirds and their habitat. (Continued on the next page)

In this family-friendly program, participants will log hummingbird sightings and the flowering plants or feeders they visit, with free mobile technology or on desktop computers. Scientists will use the data to better understand how hummingbirds are impacted by feeders, non-native nectar sources in gardens, shifting flowering times, and climate change.

To complement the national **Hummingbirds at Home** program, **Napa-Solano Audubon Society** and **Napa Valley CanDo** are working together to develop “Hummingbirds at Home – Science Kits” for use by local teachers in their classrooms. These kits will include supplies that will allow children to start their own hummingbird gardens, as well as provide instructions and supplies for creating their own nectar feeder from recycled items. The students will learn how to observe and collect data from their new hummingbird gardens and then submit their observations to the national database.



Do you enjoy watching hummingbirds and want to become involved in this program? You can participate at a level that fits your schedule – from one sighting to watching hummingbirds over many

weekends throughout the program. To learn more about this exciting citizen science project, go to [www.audubon.org/citizenscience](http://www.audubon.org/citizenscience).

Want to volunteer to help with events or educational activities promoting the **Hummingbirds at Home** project? Contact our Education and Outreach Chairman, Wendy Schackwitz, at [napa-solano-birds@outlook.com](mailto:napa-solano-birds@outlook.com).

## Special Hummingbird Event

Want to create your own hummingbird patch? October is the best time of year to plant natives in your yard. Join the Napa-Solano Audubon Society and California Native Plant Society on **Wednesday, Oct 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m.** for an informative evening about how you can help hummingbirds and other pollinators by planting native plants. This event will be held at **Skyline Wilderness Park Social Hall** in Napa at 2201 Imola Avenue and compliments the native plant sale on October 12 -14 in the nursery area next to the Social Hall.

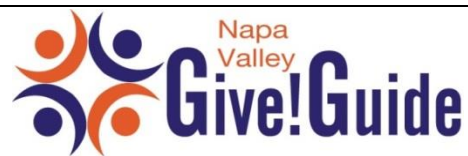
## Update on the Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas

The *Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas* is on its way to completion! Over 100 of the 150 breeding species descriptions have been written, and more than 8,000 photos have been submitted by 20 local photographers. From these photos, 300 will be chosen for publication.



*Pied-billed grebe – Photo by Randy Couch*

These spectacular photos will grace the Atlas, along with beautiful, informative range maps which will accompany each species account. The book is planned for release in December, BUT we need your help! Please donate or sponsor a species page! Approximately 80 of the 150 species covered in the Atlas have been sponsored by NSAS members and friends of NSAS. If we can achieve 100% sponsorship by December, NSAS's entire printing and publication costs will be met, which will be a remarkable accomplishment for our organization! Please consider sponsoring one of your favorite birds to help bring the Atlas to life! See the Napa Solano Audubon Society website at [www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com) for details. PayPal is now available on our website.



Napa-Solano Audubon Society has been chosen as one of the 40 non-profits featured in the first edition of the **Napa Valley Give!Guide**. The Give!Guide is a Napa Valley CanDo project offering a novel approach to year-end giving. It provides a quick, easy way to donate small or large amounts to your favorite Napa non-profit organizations online. The catalog will be distributed to all households in Napa County, but donations will be accepted from other communities as well. We are excited to be part of this project and hope you will use this opportunity to support our NSAS programs and projects and will encourage your friends and neighbors to participate as well. Watch for the Give!Guide in November and more information on our website.

## Programs & Events

We have many exciting programs and events planned for this year. Please join us and invite your family and friends.

**Tuesday, Sept. 10, 7 p.m.**

### ***“Photographing Birds – A Personal Viewpoint”***

Sebastian Kennerknecht has traveled around the world to photograph wildlife. His photographs have been published worldwide in *The Economist*, *Bay Nature*, and *National Geographic Kids*, among others. He will discuss his approach to photographing birds, his personal vision for capturing "the shot," and what he is trying to achieve with his pictures. Find out more about Sebastian at [www.pumapix.com](http://www.pumapix.com).

**Saturday, Sept. 28, 11:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

### ***“Harvest Day at Erickson’s Ranch in Suisun Valley”***

Erickson’s Ranch, at 2482 Cordelia Road in Suisun Valley, will be celebrating “All Things Pepper and Tomato.” We will join them with exhibits and bird walks.

**Wednesday, Oct. 9, 7 p.m. – “Hummingbirds and Other Pollinators and the Plants They Love”**

This is a joint program with the California Native Plant Society on hummingbirds, native plants, and citizen science. **Note:** *This program is on a different night and in a different location than our other monthly programs. It will be held at Skyline Wilderness Park Social Hall in Napa. See “Special Hummingbird Event” article on page 2 for more information.*

**Sunday, Oct. 27, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

### ***“An Avian Afternoon in the Country”***

Join us at Rush Ranch in Suisun to enjoy fine wines, hors d’oeuvres, silent auction, bird walks, and more to celebrate the publication of the *Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas*. See article on page 1.

**Tuesday, Nov. 12, 7 p.m. – “Bird Identification Made Fun and Easy: A Legacy for Future Generations”**

Join award-winning and best-selling author and ornithologist, John C. Robinson, as he shares his top ten steps to identifying birds by sight and by sound. During this funny, entertaining, and informative talk, John answers all the questions you ever had about bird identification! John will also share the many ways that birders can pass the excitement of birding down to future generations, whether that be our own children or kids who have never experienced the magic of bird watching.

**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](mailto:robin_leong@netzero.net) for more info.

**Wednesday, Jan. 1, “Angwin Christmas Bird Count”**

Mark your calendar and watch for more information on our website, Facebook page, and winter newsletter.

**Tuesday, Jan. 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.



*Western Screech Owl – Photo by Harry Fuller*

## 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. **Note** the different location and day of week for the October meeting. It will be held on **Wednesday, Oct. 9 at Skyline Wilderness Park Social Hall in Napa.**

## 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](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com) to receive special announcements or detailed field trip information.

### **“San Mateo Coast” – Saturday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013.**

#### **Napa carpool leaves at 7 a.m. and returns at 7 p.m.**

Join us as we explore the largely undeveloped shoreline and rolling hills of the San Mateo Coast. We will begin the day by looking for shore birds at Pillar Point, Pescadero Marsh, Pigeon Point and Ano Nuevo State Park. Leaving the coastline, we will then move inland and look for land birds at Gazos Creek Road and Butano State park. Expected birds include Pacific Loon, Sooty Shearwater, Pelagic Cormorant, White-tailed Kite, Wandering Tattler, Pigeon Gillemot, Marbled Murrelet, Band-tailed Pigeon, Black Swift, Varied Thrush, and Tricolored Blackbird. **Bring:** Lunch, \$s for state park entrance fee, \$s for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, layers. **Contact:** Wendy Schackwitz at [napa-solano-birds@outlook.com](mailto:napa-solano-birds@outlook.com).

### **“Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, Coyote Hills Regional Park, Hayward Shoreline” – Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Napa carpool leaves at 7 a.m. and returns approximately at 7 p.m.**

The morning will be spent with Ohlone Audubon and Rich Nicholson exploring Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge and celebrating the opening of their new viewing platform. After lunch, Rich will lead us on a walk at Coyote Hills Regional Park. After we say goodbye to Rich we will head north to Napa, and for those with the energy, we will visit Hayward shoreline. Expected birds include Pied-billed grebe, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Ruddy Duck, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Long-billed Curlew, Marbled Godwit, California Quail, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, California and Spotted Towhee, Fox Sparrow, and Lesser Goldfinch. With luck we might spot Virginia Rail, Common Moorhen, Marsh Wren and Common Yellow Throat. **Bring:** Lunch, \$s for Park entrance fees, \$s for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, layers. **Contact:** Wendy Schackwitz, [napa-solano-birds@outlook.com](mailto:napa-solano-birds@outlook.com).

### **“Skaggs Island” - Saturday, November 16, 2013. Napa carpool leaves at 8:00 and Vallejo carpool at 8:30.**

**Returns approximately 1:00 p.m.** Join us and leader Murray Berner on this trip to Skaggs Island off Hwy 37. After the arrival of the carpools at 8:45, we will spend 15 minutes on the Skaggs Island Rd. bridge looking for birds before entering the island and consolidating into as few vehicles as possible for the auto tour on the paved road. A former naval base, Skaggs Island is now entirely open grassland and coyote brush where the primary attraction for birdwatchers is diurnal raptors, along with Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, Red-tailed Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk and Merlin. Golden Eagle, Peregrine and Prairie Falcon make a daily appearance. We will also see Burrowing, Great-horned and Barn Owl. **Bring:** \$s for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, layers. No bathroom facilities on the island.

**Contact:** Murray Berner at [vireocity@hotmail.com](mailto:vireocity@hotmail.com).

Other field trips scheduled for this year and in 2014:

- **Pre-Christmas Bird Count Scouting** – 12/14/13
- **Sierra Valley** – 1/11/14
- **Nature Conservancy Consumnes River Reserve and Woodbridge Road** – 2/8/14
- **Elkhorn Slough and Moonglow Dairy** – 3/15/14
- **Del Puerto and Mines Road** – 4/12/14
- **Kern River Preserve and Nearby Desert Environs** – 4/26 & 27/14
- **Bethel Island and Black Diamond Mines Park** – 5/17/14
- **Mono Lake** – 6/21 & 22/14

Details will be posted soon on our website at [www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com) and Facebook page.

## Beginning Bird Walks in American Canyon Wetlands

Join Wendy Schackwitz for beginning bird walks in American Canyon Wetlands at Wetlands Edge Road and Eucalyptus Dr. on Saturday, September 7 and October 12, 10 a.m. - noon.

## Weekly Bird Walks in and around Napa and Solano Counties

We have weekly morning bird walks every Friday. Please check our website at [www.napasolanosudubon.com](http://www.napasolanosudubon.com) and Facebook for any last-minute updates regarding our walks.

## NSAS Board Officers

President	Cheryl Harris	707-294-6423
Vice President	Dr. John Glover	<a href="mailto:jglover1969@gmail.com">jglover1969@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Dr. Robert Martin	<a href="mailto:rkjbhome@gmail.com">rkjbhome@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Diane Ley	707-552-2905

Please check our website for a complete list of Board members. The Board meets in the evening on the last Thursday of the month, and all members are welcome. **Board Elections** will be held at our September 10 general meeting and the current Board slate is offered for re-election. Other nominees are welcome. If you are interested in serving on the board, please contact Cheryl Harris at 707-294-6423 or [cherylharris@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cherylharris@sbcglobal.net).

## Major Donors

The following major donors have contributed significant support to our Breeding Bird Atlas, programs and projects.

THANK YOU!

* Sheila Byrne	* Pacific Gas & Electric
* Craig Cummings	* Solano Land Trust
* Jane Hicks	* Valero Benicia Refinery
* Sue Johnson	* Dr. Don Wong
* LSA Associates	* Zynga Inc.
* Cheryl & Gordon Murphy	* & an Anonymous Donor



Clark's Grebe Family – Photo by Bob Lewis

## We Need Your Help

**Want to help with our upcoming event -- “An Avian Afternoon in the Country?”**

We are actively seeking volunteers to help with this Rush Ranch event on October 27. Please contact Sylvia Klenz at 707-252-7819 or [srklenz@aol.com](mailto:srklenz@aol.com) if you would like to help in any way. We need hors d'oeuvres, drinks (wine, beer, water, etc.), silent auction help (donating items yourself, helping procure donations, picking up donations, and help during the event), help at the welcome table, with set-up, with tear-down, clean up, etc. All hands welcome!

**Share your expertise, or give a little time and energy to help make our NSAS projects a success!**

There are openings on most committees---Field trips, Education, Programs, Conservation, and Publicity & Outreach. If you are interested in helping at any level or wish to serve on the board, contact Cheryl Harris at 707-294-6423 or [cherylharris@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cherylharris@sbcglobal.net).

## 2013 Calendar At-a-Glance

<b>Sat, Sept. 7</b>	Beginning Bird Walk, American Canyon
<b>Tues, Sept. 10</b>	General Meeting/Program: <i>Photographing Birds – A Personal Viewpoint</i>
<b>Sat, Sept. 14</b>	Field Trip: <i>San Mateo Coast</i>
<b>Sat, Sept. 28</b>	Event: <i>Harvest Day at Erickson's Ranch in Suisun</i>
<b>Sat, Oct. 5</b>	Field Trip: <i>Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge, Coyote Hills Regional Park, Hayward Shoreline</i>
<b>Wed, Oct. 9</b>	Joint Meeting with CNPS/Program: <i>Hummingbirds and Other Pollinators and the Plants They Love</i>
<b>Sat, Oct. 12</b>	Beginning Bird Walk, American Canyon
<b>Sun, Oct. 27</b>	Event: <i>An Avian Afternoon in the Country</i> at Rush Ranch
<b>Sat, Nov. 16</b>	Field Trip: <i>Skaggs Island</i>
<b>Tues, Nov. 12</b>	General Meeting/Program: <i>Bird Identification Made Fun and Easy: A Legacy for Future Generations</i>
<b>Sat, Dec. 14</b>	Field Trip: Pre-Christmas Bird Count Scouting
<b>Mon, Dec. 16</b>	Benicia Christmas Bird Count

Watch for email updates or check the NSAS Website at [www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com) for more information. You can also go to our Facebook page. **Note:** you do not need to join Facebook to view our information.

Napa-Solano Audubon Society  
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**Member Alert—Discount Available for NSAS members**

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. We are pleased to announce the following benefits for new members and members who renew:

- A 10% discount on the purchase of the *Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas* when it springs forth in December of this year
- Selected field trips offered to members only

The current membership year is until July 2013 through June 2014. So there is plenty of time to enjoy these benefits and participate in an active conservation and education organization. To join or renew, please complete the form below.

**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!**