



SONG SPARROW

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www.napasolanoaudubon.com

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As President for Napa-Solano Audubon, I couldn't be prouder of our volunteers, members, and donors across Napa and Solano counties. Your generous support has enabled us to advance knowledge of birds and their ecosystems and help kids and their families connect with and appreciate nature.

With your help we recently published a 6-year survey of the breeding birds in Solano County, monitored the nesting success of bluebirds and herons, and educated the public on how to track the migration of hummingbirds. We provided a week-long summer camp in American Canyon and presented to local schools on topics from developing backyard habitat to understanding behaviors. And our free Beginning Birding workshops encourage families to get outside and see the world around them.

Our goals for the coming year are even more exciting and ambitious. We are expanding our Bluebird Nest Box Monitoring Program, where our volunteers install nest boxes on or near school grounds and teach students how to monitor nesting activities. The students will collect and analyze their data and submit their results to the national NestWatch program. This provides valuable nesting sites for bluebirds, as well as involves students in actively collecting and analyzing data that will be used for conservation.

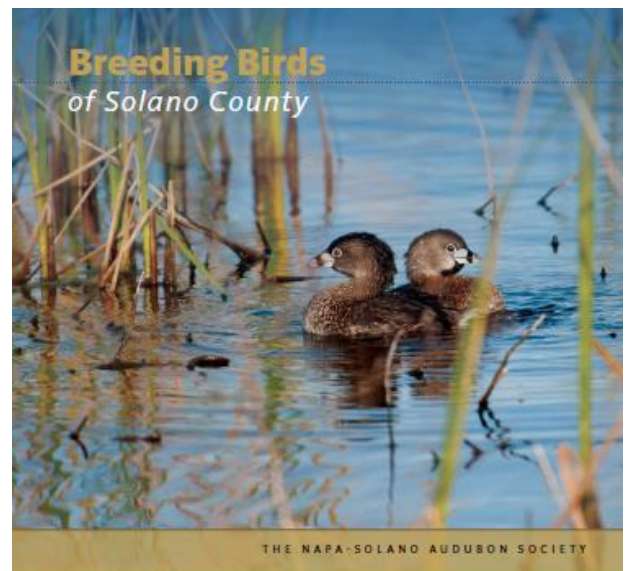
We will also be launching our first annual Christmas Bird Count for Kids, as part of the 115th annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count.

All of these projects take time and money. Please consider supporting these projects either through a generous donation to our organization or through volunteering. Again, a sincere thank you! You are the reason we are successful and impactful. And happy holidays to you all!

--Wendy Schackwitz, NSAS President

IT'S FINALLY HERE!

The wait is over! After what seemed like an eternity, the shipment containing our *Breeding Birds of Solano County* books finally arrived from Italy. Ten years in the making, including six years of extensive field work, the *Breeding Birds of Solano County* covers more than 150 species with in-depth researched descriptions, full color range maps, and hundreds of beautiful photographs of all species and their habitats.



Cover Photo by Randy & Heide Couch

This groundbreaking work is the result of the tireless efforts of more than 75 Citizen Science Volunteers, organized and trained by the experienced Breeding Bird Atlas Survey team of Murray Berner, Robin Leong and Mike Rippey.

There will be multiple opportunities over the next few months to view and purchase this beautiful book. If you are planning on getting one for yourself or as a Christmas gift, please be aware we have a limited number of copies, and they are very popular. For more information on where to view and how to purchase, go to our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com.

NAPA VALLEY GIVE! GUIDE



One easy way to donate to our chapter as part of your year-end giving is through the **Napa Valley Give!Guide** campaign which runs from Nov 1 through Dec 31. The Give!Guide offers a quick and easy way to make tax-deductible donations online or

by check to your favorite Napa Valley non-profit organizations, and we hope we are one of your favorites. And you don't have to live in Napa to make a donation. For more information, go to napavalleygiveguide.org. A special thank you to **Napa Bookmine** for supporting us and offering \$20 gift certificates to the first five \$100 donors to Napa Solano Audubon. Donors are also given a chance to win an additional special incentive on the day they make their donation. We thank two of our members who have donated to this special incentive pool—Cheryl Harris who is offering a personalized 2 hour tour of the Martha Walker Garden in Skyline Park, and Pamela Rose Hawken who is offering an 11" x 14" signed and matted photograph of your choice from her extensive gallery of beautiful photos. Just check the Give!Guide website to learn about the incentives for each day of the campaign.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT FOR KIDS

Join us for the first **Annual Napa County Christmas Bird Count for Kids** at Connolly Ranch, 3141 Browns Valley Rd, Napa, CA on **Sunday, December 7** from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm. Every year, thousands of volunteers around the Americas go out during the holidays to survey birds in their areas, with the results being used by scientists to monitor the health of bird populations and guide conservation action.

In this half-day event, youngsters will be introduced to the skills they need to participate in a Christmas Bird Count, organized into teams, and led on walks, with the goal of identifying and recording every species of bird seen. All teams will then gather to share their results and celebrate a successful day of field work as we organize their data for submission to the national database.

Families with children, ages 8 to 16 are invited to this half-day event. Pre-registration and a \$5 registration fee are required. All children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Participants should wear comfortable hiking shoes, dress in layers, and bring a brown bag lunch and binoculars (if possible). A limited number of loaner binoculars will be available. Go to our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com to register and learn more.

FOR THE LOVE OF BIRDS

What is Citizen Science and how can you participate? Discover fun activities for young and old alike: Christmas Bird Counts, Bluebird Nestbox monitoring, Breeding Bird studies, and the Hummingbirds@Home project. Join Dr. Wendy Schackwitz, President of Napa Solano Audubon, to discover how you can get in on these fun, healthy winter and spring activities and contribute to science as well. Wendy will present the history of Christmas Bird Counts (CBC), how they can be fun for everyone (amateurs welcome), when they are happening and how to sign up. She will also introduce this year's CBC for kids. Additionally, Wendy will introduce the brand new Audubon publication: *Breeding Birds of Solano County*. Those who have pre-purchased the book are welcome to bring it along for a book signing by the authors. To be held at Napa County Library, 580 Coombs St. 7:00 pm, Wednesday, December 3.

AMERICAN CANYON BIRDWALKS

Join us for Beginning Birding Walks and Workshops at American Canyon Wetlands on Wetlands Edge Road and Eucalyptus Drive, usually on the first Saturday of the month. Workshops begin at 9 a.m. near the Wetlands parking lot, followed by bird walks at 9:30 until noon. Walks are on flat ground and appropriate for all ages (children must be accompanied by an adult). Bring binoculars if you have them and water. Contact Wendy at napa-solano-birds@outlook.com for more information.

January 3: Hummingbirds@Home & Bird Walk

Learn about a citizen science project that not only gathers information about hummingbirds, but focuses on the habitat upon which they rely. Participants of the workshop will receive a 'Hummingbirds at Home' kit, with wildflower seeds of native California flowers, materials for creating a hummingbird feeder from recycled materials, and more.

February 14: The Great Backyard Bird Count & Bird Walk

This weekend is the national Audubon Great Backyard Bird Count, and this workshop will show you how you can participate. 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 7th: Basic Bird Identification & Bird Walk

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!

MORE PROGRAM CHANGES

We're making a few more changes to our monthly general meetings in an effort to increase attendance. We tried Thursday nights this fall, but that didn't work for many of you, so we are moving back to the **second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.** We are also moving to a different venue to attract more members from northern and eastern Solano County and to make it easier for people coming from Napa County now that improvements to Highway 12 have been completed. For the months of January, February and March, we will be meeting in the Fairfield-Cordelia Library Meeting Room at **5050 Business Center Drive** off of Green Valley Road in Fairfield. Please note this **new day of the month and new venue for our programs.** Go to our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com for directions.

HOW CITIZEN SCIENCE IS HELPING US UNDERSTAND CLIMATE CHANGE AND GUIDE DECISIONS - Tuesday, January 13 | 7 p.m. | Fairfield-Cordelia Library Meeting Room

The Audubon Society includes a national organization, hundreds of local chapters, and tens of thousands of volunteers across the country. Does any of this matter? What kind of impact does all of this energy have? Learn about the areas of focus for Audubon, emphasizing the activities of our local chapter, and understand how we are affecting everything from raising a new generation of environmentally-minded citizens, to protecting important habitat and understanding global climate patterns. See how the data our volunteers have collected helps create the reports that Audubon is featuring for the Climate Initiative and helps make local decisions about conservation. Dr. Wendy Schackwitz is President of Napa Solano Audubon, scientist at the Joint Genome Institute, and an avid birder with more than 500 birds on her life list.

EXPLORING THE COLOMBIAN SOUTHWEST ANDES AND INTERMOUNTAIN VALLEYS - Tuesday, February 10 | 7:00 p.m. | Fairfield-Cordelia Library Meeting Room

Experience the visual beauty and unique songs and calls of the birds of the varied habitats of southwest Colombia, from the intermountain valleys, cloud forest, freshwater lagoon and rivers, to the paramo, a treeless zone high in the Andes. Photos, video and a soundtrack of recordings are seamlessly integrated into the presentation, all taken on a two-week trip to several natural locations and parks in Colombia. Gordon Beebe is President of Madrone Audubon Society, project coordinator for the Sonoma County Breeding Bird Atlas, a Saturday bird walk leader, and the website editor for Madrone Audubon.

THE PLIGHT OF THE TRICOLORED BLACKBIRD Tuesday, March 10 | 7:00 p.m. | Fairfield-Cordelia Library Meeting Room

The population of California's iconic tricolored blackbird has suffered a dramatic decline in the past six years—64% since 2008, according to a survey coordinated by the University of California, Davis. The state is now home to just 145,000 of these birds, which live almost exclusively in California. Years ago the population numbered in the millions. Robert Meese, UC Davis Staff Research Associate, and coordinator of the 2014 Tricolored Blackbird Statewide Survey, presents the reasons for the decline and where we can focus our recovery efforts.

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS

Specific field trip and carpool information is always on our website. Sign up for the email notification list on our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com to receive detailed field trip information or special announcements. **Note:** Some field trips require RSVPs to the trip coordinator.

PRE-CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT SCOUTING Sat., December 13 | 8:30 a.m. | Leader: Robin Leong

Preview several areas in the 15 mile diameter Benicia Christmas Bird Count (BCBC) circle. You will learn how to estimate the number of species seen, as well as tally as many species as possible. Since this field trip is during the count period, species can be counted as a Count Week species if they are not seen on the December 15th Christmas Bird Count. We will bird until approximately 2 p.m. **Directions:** Meet in Benicia at the end of First Street at the Fishing Pier parking lot at 8:30 a.m. where we will set up carpools. **Bring:** Water, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, and something to eat, if you would like lunch or a snack during the trip. Dress in layers.

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE WOODBRIDGE SANDHILL CRANE FLY-IN Sat., January 24 | Leave 1:00 p.m. and return by 7:30 p.m. | Leader: Woodbridge Ecological Reserve docent

This docent-led tour is 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. and consists of viewing Sandhill cranes and other unique wintering waterfowl, hearing a presentation on Sandhill cranes and their Reserve habitat, and viewing the cranes' impressive, nightly behaviors at a location that is only open to the public during these special tours. Docent guides are trained in crane ecology, the area's natural history and the Reserve's habitat management, and want your experience to be memorable and educational. Tours usually conclude a half hour after sunset with the anticipated fly-in of the cranes at

the North Site where a viewing shelter allows us to be hidden from the incoming birds. It is an awesome sight to view these magnificent birds warbling and flying in to roost for the night. Cost is approximately \$5 - \$10 per person. Trip is limited to 30 people and **requires reservations**. Please contact Wendy Cole at beehaven2@comcast.net by January 17 to make your reservation. **Bring:** Water, lunch, \$ for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, layers. Carpool directions on our website.

YOLO BYPASS WILDLIFE AREA

Sat., February 21 | Leave 8:00 a.m. | Leader: Carol Boykin

We will go on an auto-tour of the 16,000-acre Yolo Wildlife area and view flooded seasonal and permanent wetlands and native grasslands. We will see ponds full of migrating and resident waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, raptors and wading birds. **Destination Location:** To the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, take I-80 East to Davis and Mace Blvd. Exit. Turn left at the end of the off-ramp (Chiles Road). Go straight through the next light and travel approximately 4 miles to the end of the road. Do not go under the highway. Go up onto the levee and wait to carpool with the rest of the group. **Bring:** Lunch, water, \$ for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, and dress in layers--possible cold breezes. Carpool directions on our website.

LAKE SOLANO COUNTY PARK

Sat., March 14 | Leader: TBD

This trip to Lake Solano is in conjunction with the Ohlone Audubon chapter. Lake Solano County Park lies adjacent to the quiet-water stretch of Putah Creek. There is a lot of mistletoe in the trees that attracts phainopeplas, which are resident here in small numbers. More information about this trip will be available on our website.

SUTTER BUTTES

Sat., March 28 | Leave 6 a.m. | Leader: Pete Sands, Docent Sutter Buttes Land Trust, CBC organizer

This hike provides access to the privately owned Sutter Buttes valleys, hillsides, and peaks. Guides share its unique origin and history and examine a natural ecology that has become increasingly rare in our time. We will look for migratory birds in the Sutter Buttes, an area only visited with a docent from the Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust. This is an easy 3-mile walk laced with wildflowers in bloom. Trip is limited to 12 people, costs \$25 and **requires reservations**. Please contact Wendy Cole at beehaven2@comcast.net by March 21 to make reservation. **Bring:** Lunch, water, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, and dress in layers. Carpool directions on our website.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT THIS YEAR

We hope you can join the fun as we carry out the 68th Benicia Christmas Bird Count on Monday, December 15. Birders and helpers of all levels welcome! We will follow with a sumptuous potluck dinner at the Florence Douglas Senior Center. Help is needed with both the bird count and potluck. Contact Robin Leong at robin_leong@netzero.net for more info. The 43rd Angwin New Year's Day Angwin Christmas Bird Count takes place on January 1, followed by a potluck dinner. Contact Murray Berner at vireocity@hotmail.com for more info. *Breeding Birds of Solano County* will be available for purchase at the dinners.

SUPPORT US THROUGH AMAZON SMILE

If you are ordering gifts for Christmas or at any time of the year through Amazon.com, consider using Amazon's fundraising program, **AmazonSmile**. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible purchases to the non-profit of your choice, at no cost to you when you shop at smile.amazon.com. Go to smile.amazon.com and enter **Napa Solano Audubon** in the **Search** field. Then click **Select** and shop as you normally would.

WINTER 2014 CALENDAR AT-A-GLANCE

Wed, Dec. 3	For the Love of Birds – Napa Library
Sun, Dec. 7	Christmas Bird Count for Kids
Sat, Dec. 13	Field Trip: Preview of the Benicia Christmas Bird Count
Mon, Dec. 15	Benicia Christmas Bird Count
Thurs, Jan. 1	Angwin Christmas Bird Count
Sat, Jan. 3	AC Bird Walk & Hummingbirds@Home Workshop
Tues, Jan. 13	Program: Audubon's Climate Initiative
Sat, Jan. 24	Field Trip: Woodbridge Sandhill Crane Fly-in – Reservations Required
Tues, Feb. 10	Program: Exploring the Columbian Southwest Andes
Sat, Feb. 14	AC Bird Walk & Great Backyard Bird Count
Sat, Feb. 21	Field Trip: Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Sat, March 7	AC Bird Walk & Basic Bird Identification
Tues, March 10	Program: Plight of Tricolored Blackbird
Sat, March 14	Lake Solano County Park
Sat, March 28	Sutter Buttes - Reservations Required

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