



Song Sparrow

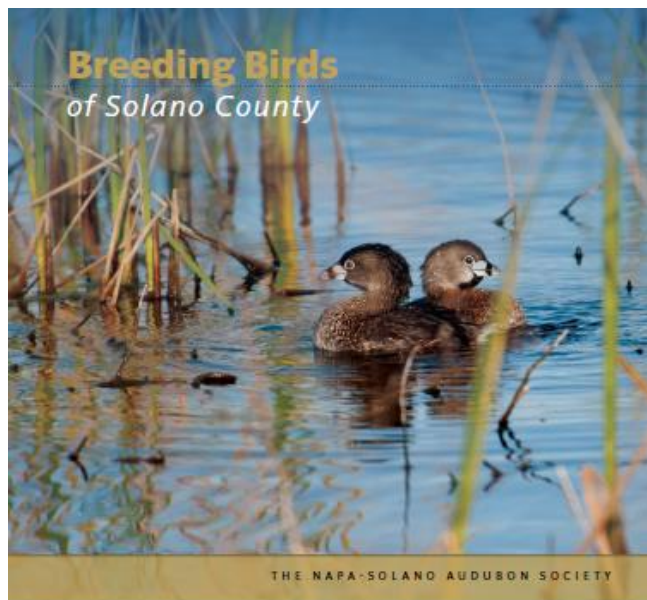
Newsletter of the Napa-Solano Audubon Society
Volume 41 No. 1 Spring 2014

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

Breeding Bird Atlas Update

This beautiful book will be coming your way soon! It's 224 pages with 150 species accounts and range maps, 345 gorgeous color photos by our own members and other local photographers, and an extensive biogeography discussion with habitat photos and large vegetation maps.

Just a few weeks away from going to the printer's, it may take a few months for the binding, printing, and shipping to be completed, but we hope to have it in your hands by late spring.



Cover Photo by Heide and Randy Couch

The beautiful front cover of the Atlas depicts a mated pair of Pied-billed grebes, while the back cover shows their nest with baby birds - the ultimate goal of breeding.

A Farewell and a New Beginning by Cheryl Harris, President

It's been a fun 'ride' these last 9 years. My stint as president of Napa Solano Audubon, although bumpy on occasion, has been a very fun adventure-- visiting classrooms, building bird boxes with kids, planting hedgerows for wildlife, leading workshops, planning events, participating in the CBCs and other Citizen Science projects and more. Then there's the joy of discovering the many beautiful places and birds of Napa County on our wonderful Friday morning bird walks.

...And hanging out with you, dear friends, at our membership tables in American Canyon Wetlands, Rush Ranch, Earth Day and Flyway Festival events. I can now look back with pride at so many of our NSAS accomplishments---our Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas, Angwin and Benicia Christmas Bird Counts, the Hummingbirds at Home and Habitat in the Vineyards projects, expanded field trips, our new series of beginning bird walks and children's events. It has been a very rewarding volunteer commitment from which I must now depart. But now, I am heartened by the wonderful new energy that has enlivened our organization. Wendy Schackwitz has agreed to take on a greater leadership role - I hope you will welcome her as your new NSAS President.

Volunteering--Those of you who have worked with me on one of our many projects or events deserve a huge pat on the back (and we'll give you one! See calendar date May 13). Others can enjoy these successes too. Volunteer with NSAS!! Whether in small ways, just a couple of hours, or in larger ways (like serving on the Board)--there are opportunities for everyone.

Take on a project; help with a youth activity; research, monitor and gather baseline data; raise your voice and make a difference in your community! Remember - we are a volunteer organization and rely on YOU to achieve our successes.



Current Board, first row l to r: Wendy Schackwitz, Education; Diane Ley, Secretary; Cheryl Harris, President; back row, l to r: Jane Hicks, Member-at-large; Dave McMullen, Webmaster; Bruce Thomsen, Field Trips Co-Chair; John Glover, Vice President; Robin Leong, CBC. Not pictured: Bob Martin, Treasurer; Mary Wilson, Membership; Wendy Cole, Field Trips Co-Chair.

Volunteer opportunities? What can YOU do? Help with outreach--chat with visitors at our membership table for a couple of hours at one of these upcoming events -- Napa Earth Day or Rush Ranch Open House; help plan and participate in a book signing event in Benicia, Fairfield or Vacaville. Help plan our Fall evening programs. Love Facebook or other social media? Help post NSAS activities and photos from time to time. Can't get out and about easily - work from home!! Watch for newspaper articles of interest on birds, wildlife, and conservation issues, then clip and save to share with the Conservation Committee. Help make your concerns known!

Like to write? We need letters to the editor, interesting articles for our newsletter and website, and help in research and writing grants. Most of these volunteer tasks can be a fun learning experience, requiring little or no knowledge of birds. We need fresh ideas and skill sets. Consider joining our board. Please let us know if you are interested; we will provide job descriptions, a support team and more. Here are some of our volunteer possibilities. You have the talent – let us know your interests, and we will find a place for you. Help is needed in:

- Finance
- Education
- Membership
- Outreach
- Volunteer Coordination
- Conservation
- Hospitality
- BBA Promo and Sales

See brief job descriptions in the enclosure and on our website.

Meet New Field Trip Co-Chairs

NSAS has two new Field Trip Co-Chairs—Wendy Cole and Bruce Thomsen. Bruce and Wendy agreed to share the responsibilities of this position; we are very grateful to them both for coordinating our upcoming field trips.



Bruce Thomsen spent his career as a State Park Ranger in the Sierra foothills before retiring in 2005. He and his wife moved to Napa last year from Columbia, CA, where Bruce had been involved with the Central Sierra Audubon chapter.

Looking for volunteer opportunities in his new home base, Bruce decided to get involved with our chapter and assume the duties of Field Trip Co-Chairman.

Wendy Cole has lived in St. Helena since 1982, where she and her husband raised their two sons. She began birding that same year. Her love of the outdoors, hiking, camping, and plants prompted her to



serve on the board of the Napa Valley State Parks Association and work seasonally for the Napa County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. She is also a previous coordinator for the Angwin Christmas Bird Count.

Wendy and Bruce will be conducting a planning session for next year's field trips on March 14th. If you have ideas on places you'd like to bird or want to join them in this planning session, please contact Bruce at brucecthomsen@yahoo.com.

American Canyon Bird Walks and Workshops

Our Beginning Birding Walks will continue at American Canyon Wetlands with short workshops just prior to the walks. Workshops and activities 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). So, come join us! For more info, check our website or contact Wendy at napa-solano-birds@outlook.com. Walks and discussion topics include:

March 8: 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.

June 7: Adaptations - Feathers - Birds are the only living things that have feathers. Humans have a long history of fascination with feathers, using them as decorations, in our bedding, and as inspiration for developing the airplane. During this workshop we will explore a little of this history, as well as discuss all of the functions a feather has for birds.

July 1: Adaptations - Feet – Did you know some birds can't walk? Or that birds use their legs as a thermostat? Some even use their toes as bait while fishing! During this workshop we will explore the different things birds use their feet for.

August 2: Adaptations - Beaks – Ever wonder why some bird's bills are so different from another? Why does a duck have such a wide bill, a hummingbird such a long skinny bill, and why is the flamingo's bill "upside down?" We will explore why bird bills have become the way they are.

Programs & Events

General Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month 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, refreshments, and finally, a special presentation or guest speaker. Nature and bird book exchanges will continue over the next few months.

Tuesday, March 11, 7 p.m. - ***“Projects of the Solano Land Trust”***

Learn how birds are part of Solano Land Trust's work to permanently protect natural areas, working farms, and ranchlands in Solano County. Birding opportunities are some

of the most popular ways people connect to these lands. Solano Land Trust staff, Sue Wickham and Natalie DuMont, will talk about the Land Trust's events and volunteer program, including monthly citizen science activities and ongoing projects in which you can get involved. Volunteer, Earl Swenerton, will talk about the new bluebird box monitoring program he is developing for Lynch Canyon's many bluebirds.

Tuesday, April 8, 7 p.m. – ***“Where do all the "hot chicks" hang out? Locating Birding Hotspots”***

Wonder where the best birding locations are in our area? Have you ever been traveling and wanted to know where to find the bird missing from your life list? Join Wendy Schackwitz as she explores the many tools that are available to help you plan your next birding outing, as well as locate a few local hotspots.

Tuesday, May 13, 7 p.m. – ***“Meet the Photographers from the Breeding Bird Atlas” plus Elections and Volunteer Appreciation Party***

This program will feature select photographs from the Solano County Breeding Bird Atlas. The photographers who took those photos will describe how they got “the shot.” We will also have Board of Directors elections during this meeting and a special salute to our volunteers with appetizers, desserts, wine, beer and some surprises.

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: Several of our upcoming field trips require RSVPs.** Contact the trip coordinator if you plan to go on a trip.

“Elkhorn Slough and Moonglow Dairy” – Saturday, March 15. Leave 7:00 a.m. and return 5 p.m

Join us at the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve, MoonGlow Dairy and nearby areas located north of Monterey. 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.

Bring: Lunch, \$s for carpool gas, comfortable walking shoes, binoculars, layers. Please **RSVP** to Carol Boykin at carol.boykin@att.net by March 7.

“Bouverie Preserve” – Saturday, April 12. Leave 8:30 and return by 2:30 p.m.

The 535-acre Bouverie Preserve, owned and operated by Audubon Canyon Ranch is located in Sonoma Valley near Glen Ellen. It is home to diverse native ecosystems including oak woodlands, mixed evergreen forests, riparian woodlands, chaparral and grasslands. Bouverie Preserve's landscape is dominated by Stuart Creek and includes 130 species of birds, 350 species of flowering plants, and numerous large mammals such as the bobcat, gray fox, coyote and mountain lion. A Bouverie docent will lead participants who will form small groups based on hiking abilities and interests. Reservations are required, and a small donation will be requested. Please **RSVP** to Wendy Cole by April 4th at beehaven2@comcast.net.

“Eastern Kern County Desert Oases for Spring Migration” – Weekend Trip for NSAS Chapter Members Only –April 26 & 27

Experience Spring Migration in SE California: Butterbrecht Springs and Indian Wells Valley (Inyokern & Ridgecrest), desert oases, plus Kern River Valley. This field trip will be offered to NSAS Chapter members only and will require a modest donation from each attendee. Maximum number of participants has been set at 12. Participants will travel on their own to meet Leader Bob Barnes at 6:00am on Saturday. Those who wish to stay into Monday will visit Kern Refuge and other hot spots with Bob. See our website for more information. A detailed itinerary, directions and suggested accommodations will be provided. Please RSVP & send a check for \$25 to reserve your space by April 1. Mail to NSAS, PO Box 10006, Napa, CA 94581 and email a note to Field trip Co-chair Bruce Thomsen at brucecthomsen@yahoo.com.

“Bethel Island and East County” – Saturday, May 17

Paul Schorr will lead this field trip through the eastern parts of Contra Costa County and Bethel Island. More information will be posted soon on our website. **Contact:** Bruce Thomsen at brucecthomsen@yahoo.com.

“Mono Lake” - June 7 – 8

A major stopover on the Pacific Flyway, Mono Lake hosts over 98 species of water birds. The diversity of habitats in the surrounding area creates a wide range of birding opportunities. A guide from the Mono Lake Committee will meet us at their headquarters at 8:00 am on Saturday, June 7, and will lead us on an exploration of areas around Mono Lake.

After an afternoon break, we will resume birding in the early evening. Accommodations can be found in Lee Vining, CA. RSVP to Bruce Thomsen at brucecthomsen@yahoo.com or Wendy Cole at beehaven2@comcast.net. Check our NSAS web site for more information. Participants are responsible for their own travel arrangements.

Help Us Save Money

Notice something different with this newsletter issue? Due to printing and postage cost increases, we have decided to mail our newsletter to chapter members only. National Audubon Society members who live in Napa and Solano counties will be sent the newsletter electronically or can access it on our website. Please consider receiving your newsletter electronically--it's like a donation. It saves paper, printing and postage costs, providing funds for our educational programs instead. To do this, send an email to membership@napasolanoaudubon.com.

2014 Calendar At-a-Glance

Sat, March 8	Beginning Bird Walk & Bird Identification Workshop
Tues, Mar 11	Program: Projects of the Solano Land Trust
Fri, Mar 14	Field trip planning session
Sat, Mar 15	Field Trip: Elkhorn Slough-Moonglow Dairy
Sat, April 5	Beginning Bird Walk & Bird Song Workshop
Tues, April 8	Program: Locating Birding Hotspots
Sat, April 12	Field Trip: Bouverie Preserve
Sat, April 19	Earth Day Napa Valley (Table event)
Sat, April 26	Rush Ranch Open House (Table event)
April 25 – 28	Weekend Field Trip: Eastern Kern County Desert Oases for Spring Migration
Sat, May 3	Beginning Bird Walk & Nesting Workshop
Tues, May 13	Program: Photographers of the Breeding Bird Atlas plus Elections & Volunteer Appreciation party
Sat, May 17	Field Trip: Bethel Island and East County
Sat, June 7	Beginning Bird Walk & Feathers Workshop
June 6 – 8	Field Trip: Mono Lake
Sat, June 28	Osprey Days and Potluck Picnic - TBD
Sat, July 5	Beginning Bird Walk & Bird Feet Workshop
Sat, Aug 2	Beginning Bird Walk & Beaks Workshop

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