



SONG SPARROW

Winter 2016, Vol. 43 No. 3
napasolanoaudubon.com

Speaking Out for Birds

Napa-Solano Audubon publishes 54-page booklet about birds and climate change

Climate change is one of the most important issues facing the world. As temperatures rise, every plant or animal will be affected in some way.

In 2014, the National Audubon Society published a study describing the impact of climate change on the birds of the United States and Canada.

While broadly reported at the time—even Stephen Colbert mentioned it on his show—the study hasn't received much attention since. So, last year, Napa-Solano Audubon President Wendy Schackwitz decided to do something about it.

"The results of the climate study weren't getting out," Ms. Schackwitz said, "so I wanted to spread the word and help inspire

action."

She applied for a grant to fund a booklet about the study, but was initially denied. After deciding to collaborate with Audubon chapters across the state, she was awarded a grant from National Audubon to write about the study and how climate change is likely to impact birds in California.

Over the course of nine months, Ms. Schackwitz and her team worked steadily to create a booklet that was scientifically accurate, inspiring, and relevant across California.

Designer Laura Erickson created the layout and graphics and gathered photos to help tell the story, while writer Alex Greene authored descriptions of the key ecosystems in California

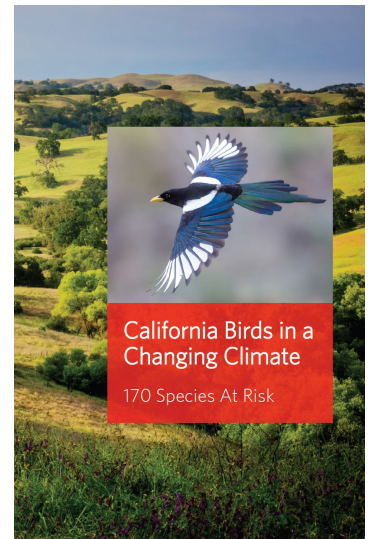
and accounts of species from each area.

The problem with the national study, said Mr. Greene, is "thinking on a national scale is difficult," so focusing just on California made the topic more approachable. "We were able to reveal the local impacts of climate change on familiar California birds."

The resulting 54-page booklet makes the science behind the Audubon study understandable, while being beautiful and interesting.

"Clearly presented hard data and simple suggestions for personal change give every reader the chance to participate in something big on a small scale," said Ms. Erickson.

Thanks to the grant from National Audubon, the

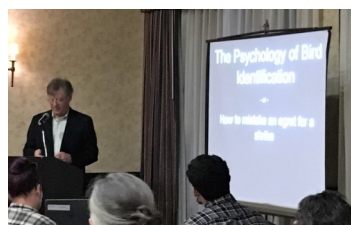


booklet is available for free. PDF versions may be downloaded from napasolanoaudubon.com by clicking the "Climate" link, and printed copies are available at many NSAS events.

Audubon Flocks to Yosemite

More than 100 Audubon chapter leaders and members from across the state, including seven from NSAS, gathered at Tenaya Lodge in Yosemite in November for the first Audubon California Assembly in five years.

During two days of workshops and discussions, attendees learned new tools for helping birds and growing their chapter. Topics ranged from building bird-friendly communities and water policy, to social networking and increasing



Ornithologist David Sibley presenting his keynote

membership diversity.

Chapters also shared success stories about partnering with local governments and organizations to protect birds. Ventura Audubon, for instance, de-

scribed how they helped to make a local beach into a pet-free zone to protect nesting Snowy Plovers and Least Terns.

Leaders discussed setting shared conservation priorities across chapters. Climate change and building bird-friendly communities were rated as the highest priorities by attendees, even over issues like water use and wetlands.

The session was kicked off by David Sibley, whose keynote address was about

the psychology of bird identification in a speech titled, "How to Mistake an Egret for a Shrike." Field trips on the final day to alpine meadows and forests found birds from Mountain Chickadees to a pair of Black-backed Woodpeckers flaking off bark together.

In 2017, National Audubon is holding their conference on July 14-17 in Park City, Utah, with registration opening next year. The next California Assembly will be in 2018.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Our recent election has shown that we are a nation divided. And every time I turn on the TV or radio, I am reminded at just how deeply this division runs.

As I ponder how we can heal and move forward, I think about the Audubon family, which spans across this division.

We are a beautifully diverse and inclusive community: Republican, Democrat, and third party; Hispanic, Black, and White; straight and LGBTQ; young and old; religious and atheist. And while these differences may divide us politically, our birdie buddies show that we are not as divided as it feels.

Our shared passion for birds brings us together. We come together as we explore our world as friends at our walks, or to share stories at our monthly programs. We come together to protect our birds by saving their habitat and supporting policies that are good for them. Now, more than ever, we need to remember that we are a united people.

Help heal this nation by showing that we, despite our different outlooks, do great work together! Join us on one of our Christmas Bird Counts and collect data on the health of our bird populations. Relax with us at one of our upcoming programs where we learn to be better stewards of our planet. Bring our community together by volunteering at one of our outreach programs and sharing our common vision. And please, be kind, patient, and tolerant of each other.

— Wendy Schackwitz,
napa-solano-birds
@outlook.com

Get Involved with Advocacy

Nancy A. Piotrowski, Ph.D., NSAS Conservation Chair

NSAS has been busy with conservation advocacy. In August, we visited the office of Assembly member Dodd to ask for support on state bills affecting birds that were related to climate change (SB 32), reducing super pollutants (SB 1383), and working to protect and manage natural and working lands as part of meeting the state's climate change goals (SB 1386).

We also expressed support for local Measure T, which creates a Pacific Flyway Center in the Suisun Marsh area, and with leaders at the National Audubon Society board meeting and California

Audubon Assembly.

Our good news? All three bills chaptered into law in September, Measure T passed, and we strengthened the advocacy network at the local, state, and national levels!

With newly elected officials moving into their roles in 2017, we have opportunities to begin new relationships with them, letting them know about NSAS, our interests, and concerns. If you are interested in learning how to do this, or getting involved by writing letters, visiting legislators, making phone calls, doing research, or being the eyes and ears

on the ground, let me know.

Just send an email to napiotrowski@yahoo.com with your contact information and interests. I am your new Conservation Chair and I look forward to working with you. I bring about 40 years of experience writing letters to legislators about environmental issues, and 10 years of actively engaging with elected officials at the local, state, and national levels as a public health advocate.

We have a great group of folks advocating on behalf of birds and would love to have you, too!

New Partnership with American Canyon

Alex Greene, NSAS Education Coordinator

A wonderful new partnership is shaping up between Napa-Solano Audubon Society and the City of American Canyon. This small city is easily overlooked, squeezed between Napa and Vallejo, but it has a lot going for it.

Two of its open spaces, American Canyon Wetlands and Newell Preserve, are some of the best birding locations in our area. Our Napa County Beginning Bird Walks rotate between these parks to take advantage of their contrasting habitats and bird communities.

This September we began working more closely with American Canyon Parks and

Recreation. Our first project was to build and install 10 bluebird boxes at Newell Preserve, which provides excellent habitat for cavity-nesting songbirds. With the help of volunteers and the California Conservation Corps, the boxes were installed on October 1. Now American Canyon Parks and Rec is looking for locals to play a role in the miracle of nesting season by monitoring these boxes during spring.

This partnership, like everything we do, is another way to help connect people to the beauty and mystery of the natural world. We're already looking forward to our next events with



Stacey Johnson of American Canyon Parks & Rec installs a bluebird box.

American Canyon Parks and Rec: a Night Critters walk on January 28th and a Native Plant Installation on March 18th. We hope you'll join us!

A BIT O' BIOLOGY: HOW DO BIRDS SURVIVE WINTER?

- Yellow Warblers eat primarily insects, which die off here in winter. So, they migrate thousands of miles to Central America and South America to find an ample food supply.
- Chickadees can lower their body temperatures by 15°F at night, reducing energy use by 25%. Even so, they can lose up to 10% of their weight each night by shivering to stay warm!
- Acorn woodpeckers preserve their food by drilling small holes in trees, inserting one acorn in each hole. As the acorn dries, it is moved to a smaller hole for better preservation.

Calendar of Events

PROGRAMS

Programs will be held at the Florence Douglas Senior Center, 333 Amador Street, Vallejo, on the second Tuesday of each month at 7pm (unless noted).

No Program in December

Our volunteers will be busy with Christmas Bird Counts. Please join us — all experience levels welcome! Information about the Counts is on the following page.

Woodpeckers of the North Bay Tuesday, January 10, 7pm

Woodpeckers have captured the human imagination for generations. The distant sounds of pecking, flashes of red plumage, and inevitable disappearance into the shadows of the forest evoke a sense of wonder about these extraordinary yet elusive creatures.



Jeffery Martin's lecture and video explore the foraging strategies of our eight North Bay woodpecker species. Jeff will examine the anatomy of feet, tail, tongue and head which enable agile vertical climbing, adept grabbing of prey, and protection from concussion and dust inhalation. From the exquisite green and rose-colored Lewis's Woodpecker to the dazzling Northern Flicker, and more, we take a close-up look at the worlds of our eight North Bay Woodpeckers.

Mr. Martin is a Marin County videographer and naturalist. His films, "Woodpecker Haven" and "Birds of Lake Solano and Putah Creek," are shown regularly at the Lake Solano Visitors Center. In his "day job," Mr. Martin is a clinical psychologist and associate clinical professor at UCSF School of Medicine.

February Program Tuesday, February 14, 7pm

The speaker for the February

program is still being finalized. Please check our web site for updated information.

BIRDING WALKS

Andrew Ford leads half-day bird walks many Saturday mornings at various locations in Napa and Solano counties. Schedule is dependent on leader availability.

Details for these walks are emailed Wednesday before the walk. Sign up for the email announcements on our website.

Creatures of the Night Saturday, Jan 28, 5 – 7pm Leader: Alex Greene, NSAS Education Coordinator & Stacey Johnson, American Canyon Program Coordinator

Come and learn about the creatures that are awake while we are asleep! Discover how owls, opossums, bats, and other animals use senses other than sight to find food and survive in the mysterious realm of the night. Wear warm clothing. Meet at Newell Canyon Preserve parking lot. Hot apple cider will be available prior to the hike.

BEGINNING BIRDING

Walks and workshops aimed at Beginning Birders are held twice a month on Saturdays. All workshops begin at 9am, followed by bird walks at 9:30am until noon. Contact Wendy Schackwitz at napa-solano-birds@outlook.com for more information.

Boxes for Birds! Saturday, Jan 7, Newell Canyon Preserve Saturday, Jan 21, Pena Adobe Regional Park

Learn about the birds that use cavities for nesting and how building and installing nest boxes can provide



them with much-needed habitat.

Hummingbirds Saturday, Feb 4, American Canyon Saturday, Feb 18, Rush Ranch

Learn about how to identify the three hummingbird species found in our area and how hummingbird ranges are changing due to climate change.

FIELD TRIPS

Note: Most field trips require RSVPs to the trip coordinator. See napasolanoaoudubon.com for additional logistics and carpool information.

Benicia Christmas Bird Count Pre-Scout Saturday, Dec 17, 8:30am Leader: Robin Leong

Join leader Robin Leong to scout several locations in advance of the Benicia Christmas Bird Count (CBC). Preview several areas in the 15-mile diameter Benicia Christmas Bird Count 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 19 CBC.

We will bird until approximately 2pm. Please bring something to eat if you would like lunch or a snack during the trip. Meet at in the South Regatta Parking lot (end of the road close to where it meets Carquinez Straits) in Vallejo at 8:30. For more information, contact Robin Leong at robin_leong@netzero.net

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Saturday, Jan 21, 8:30am Leader: Bruce Thomsen

The Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area is approximately 16,600 acres of wetland just west of Sacramento along the Causeway in Yolo County. The area is a major wintering ground for waterfowl and shorebirds along the Pacific Flyway.



Naomi Ballard

We will spend the day driving along the levee roads and walking along designated trails in the wildlife area. Waterfowl, shorebirds, Marsh Wren, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Sandhill Crane, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Peregrine Falcon, and White-tailed Kite are just some of the birds we might see.

Bring lunch, water, hat, raingear (it's January). RSVP by January 14 to Bruce Thomsen at brucecthomsen@yahoo.com or call (707) 224-1906 or cell (209) 728-4631. If responding by email, please include your home and cell phone numbers.

Reclamation Road on Hwy 37
 Saturday, Feb 4, 9:30am – 11am
 Leader: Sonoma Land Trust Docent Bird Guide

Each year, hundreds of thousands of birds migrate to the San Francisco Bay estuary and stay for the winter. These include many species of shorebirds, including the Willet, Greater Yellowlegs, Long-billed Curlew, Least Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper and Dunlin, which are commonly seen at Sears Point at this time of year. We will join Sonoma Land Trust's docent bird guides for a walk along the tidal marshlands to observe these and many other bird species who use this rich habitat with its abundance of food.

After lunch there is the option to go on to Schollenberger Park in Petaluma. No RSVP required. Meet at parking area on Reclamation Road just south of the Lakeville Hwy and Hwy 37 intersection.

Owling in the Napa Valley
 Sunday, Feb 12, 4pm – 10pm
 Leaders: Robin Leong and Ted Wooster

Ever been "owling?" Remove the wax from your ears and join local owl experts Robin Leong and Ted Wooster for a trip that offers experience with and information about owls, their habitat and calls. Bring binoculars, snacks, flashlights, sturdy shoes, warm clothing, and walkie talkies if you have them.

RSVP to Robin Leong at robin_leong@netzero.net. Meet at Napa Valley Museum parking lot at 55 Presidents Circle, Yountville, CA, 94599, adjacent to the Lincoln Theater at the California Veterans Home.

JUNIOR AUDUBON

For information about guided walks for teens and pre-teens, contact Alex Greene, accidentalshrike@gmail.com



Greg Hume

FALL CALENDAR AT A GLANCE



- Sat Dec 3 Napa CBC4Kids
 - Sat Dec 3 Peña Adobe Bazaar
 - Sat Dec 17 Benicia CBC Pre-Count
 - Mon Dec 19 Benicia CBC
 - Fri Dec 30 Sonoma CBC
 - Sun Jan 1 Angwin CBC
 - Sat Jan 7 Beginning Bird Walk Program
 - Tue Jan 10 Program
 - Sat Jan 14 Junior Audubon
 - Sat Jan 21 Beginning Bird Walk
 - Sat Jan 21 Yolo Bypass Field Trip
 - Sat Jan 21 Richardson Bay Waterbird Festival
 - Sat Jan 28 Creatures of the Night
 - Sat Feb 4 Beginning Bird Walk
 - Sat Feb 4 Reclamation Rd Field Trip
 - Feb 10 -12 Pacific Flyway Festival
 - Sat Feb 11 Junior Audubon
 - Sun Feb 12 Owling in Napa Field Trip
 - Tue Feb 14 Program
 - Sat Feb 18 Beginning Bird Walk
- Go to napasolanoaudubon.com for more info or to join our email list.



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facebook.com/NapaSolanoAudubon

Winter Birding Festivals

Richardson Bay Waterbird Festival
 Jan 21, Richardson Bay Audubon Center

Celebrate scaups, scoters, cormorants and more! Naturalist-led walks and field trips, boat trips, sketching class, and much more. richardsonbay.audubon.org/programs/waterbird/festival

Pacific Flyway Festival
 Feb 10-12, sites around the bay

Event to celebrate the migration through San Francisco Bay of millions of shorebirds, ducks, geese, and hawks at the peak of migration. Walks, birding expo, and wildlife art show. Details are still being finalized, but check their web site for updates. sfbayflywayfestival.com

Christmas Bird Counts for All Ages

Join the fun as we conduct our annual CBCs! 2016 will be the 117th year that Audubon has conducted counts. Birders of all levels are welcome!

Kids 7-18 and their parents are invited to Napa County's 3rd Annual CBC4Kids from 9am to 12:30pm on Saturday, Dec 3. Kids learn how to use binoculars and go on a short birding walk. Register at our website: napasolanoaudubon.com

The 70th Benicia CBC is on Monday,

Dec 19, followed by a potluck dinner. Contact Robin Leong at robin_leong@netzero.net for details or to sign up.

The 46th Angwin Christmas Bird Count is on Sunday, Jan 1, and a potluck and catered dinner will follow. Contact Murray Berner at vireocity@hotmail.com.

Last year, the Benicia count reported 163 species, and Angwin reported 136. Help us find more this year!

BirdSeasons Project Takes Flight

Every year, birds go through cycles of life events as the seasons change, from migration, to mating and raising young, to migration again.

This circle of life is well understood, but scientists don't understand exactly how the timing of these events changes from year to year, especially given warming of the world's climate. Are birds nesting earlier or later than they used to nest? If so, by how much? And what is the impact on their chicks?

Understanding this is important for setting conservation priorities and policies. For example, knowing that nesting is happening earlier might impact the timing of removal of invasive plant species,

when farmers harvest crops, or hunting season schedules.

So, NSAS and other Audubon chapters across California have launched a project to help gather data.

Called "BirdSeasons," this project involves volunteers meeting at a specific location every week and looking for some key species. They record the number of each species they see, as well as the types of behaviors the birds are performing. The findings are entered into a national database that is free for anybody to access.

At American Canyon Wetlands, volunteers have been meeting every Monday since January, watching for seven species and noting their activities. Last month, for instance, they watched a

female Mallard apparently egging on her mate to chase off other males, a behavior called "inciting" and a signal that courtship activity is occurring.

Unlike data from eBird, this consistent collection of data with a focus on behaviors allows data to be compared across years. A related project focusing on plants found that spring is arriving earlier in 75% of National Parks across the US, which has huge implications for how parks are managed.

In 2017, NSAS is looking for more volunteers to cover the American Canyon site and to expand the project to Solano County. If you would like to help, or for more information, email napa-solano-birds@outlook.com

LOST AND FOUND

In 1880, Wells Cooke began recording the arrival and departure date of birds in the Mississippi Valley, and asked his friends to do the same.

The newly formed American Ornithologists Union took note of the project and helped expand the project nationwide until it was ended in 1970.

For over 30 years, the data sat in boxes until USGS researchers re-discovered it and launched a project to make the data accessible. They scanned the records, and recruited volunteers to transcribe them.

Today, over one million records have been transcribed and several papers published. Scientists found, for instance, that Ruby-throated hummingbirds are now arriving 11-18 days earlier, depending on latitude, than they did before 1970.

Members' Corner

Napa resident Kitrak Sutherland was surprised in September to discover a white bird on the ground near her house.

"It hopped and scratched like a towhee," she said, although it definitely was not colored like a towhee.

She reached out to NSAS, and President Wendy Schackwitz identified the bird as a leucistic Spotted Towhee. Leucistic animals lose some

or all of the ability to produce pigments in hair or feathers, although unlike albinism, not in the eyes.

Curious about her visitor, Kitrak filled her notebook with sketches and drawings of the bird as its feathers have changed over time, and was inspired to paint this watercolor! Nice job, Kitrak!

Share your story or photo about birds by emailing it to napa-solano-birds@outlook.com



Artist: Kitrak Sutherland

Support Napa-Solano Audubon!

2016 has been busy! We held our first Bird-a-Thon as part of our CHIRP! Festival, reached 775 students during the school year, and awarded \$4,000 in scholarships (our first in several years). Recently, we have increased our efforts in activism by appointing a Conservation Chair to our board, and participating in Audubon California's Advocacy Day in Sacramento. To continue expanding, we need your support! Consider becoming a Chapter Member, buying our *Breeding Birds of Solano County* book, or donating today.

\$25 Individual Membership \$35 Family Membership \$65 *Breeding Birds of Solano County* \$_____ Donation
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Send this information and make all checks payable to: Napa-Solano Audubon Society, PO Box 10006, Napa, CA 94581

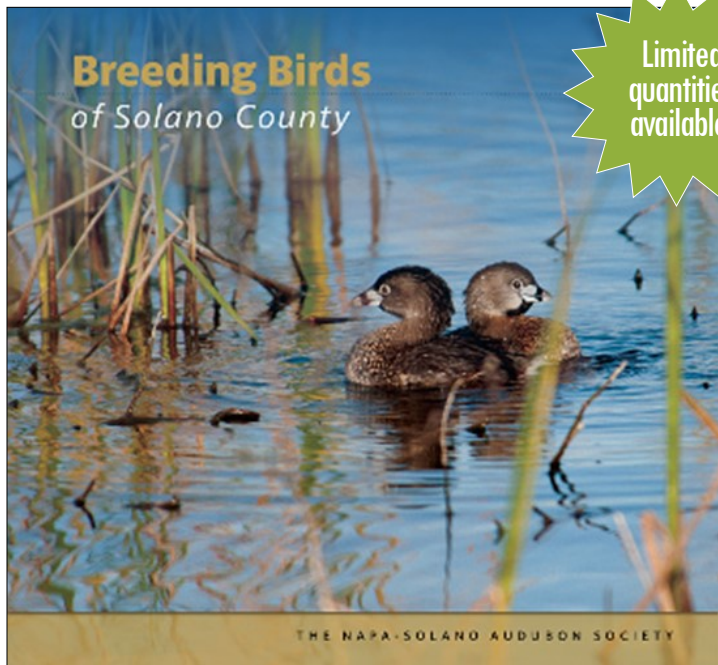
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INSIDE:
New booklet about birds and
climate change published by NSASI!

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