



the SONG SPARROW

FALL 2018, Vol.46 No.2

FALL 2018 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE



- Sat, Aug 4 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Sat, Aug 18 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Sat, Sept 8 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Tues, Sept 11 **Program**
- Sat, Sept 22 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Sat, Sept 22 **Visions of the Wild, Vallejo**
- Sat, Sept 22 **NapaSan District Open House**
- Sat, Oct 6 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Tues, Oct 9 **Program**
- Sat, Oct 20 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Tues, Nov 13 **Program**

Go to www.napasolanoaudubon.com for more info or to sign up for email alerts.

New Board Member

Barbara Navolanic, Program Chair



Barbara Navolanic has been a resident of Benicia since 1980 and is a retired Nursing Services Director for Solano County Public Health. She and her husband enjoy traveling, birding and fishing. Barbara is new to NSAS and looks forward to working to

promote the mission of conservation of birds, other wildlife and healthy ecosystems.

President's Corner

I am a dedicated lazy birdwatcher. I like nothing better than to sit in a comfy chair with a cool beverage or a cup of coffee and wait for the birds to come to me. I have had hawks come swooping in, Creepers and Nuthatches scurrying up and down trees and Towhee's scratching about. In the quiet you see more of their behavior and get a better insight into their life. With the help of some scattered seed I have had the pleasure of watching many of the ground feeding birds come for breakfast and linger a while. Eventually most moved on except for a pair of Towhees which seemed to take up residence in the surrounding area.

One day as I was looking out my sliding back door one of the Towhees flew in and landed on top of my umbrella. Boy was he squawking and carrying on! I was intrigued so I stayed and watched and to my surprise he flew to the fence then back to the umbrella then to the fence, again and again, all the while making an enormous racket! This wild and crazy behavior continued for about 10 minutes when all of a sudden Mrs. Towhee popped out from under a bush and began pecking around. A minute later, and much to my surprise, a little ball of fluff scurried out from under the shrub and tried to get some seed like Momma. This little fellow had almost no tail and must have just fledged so it couldn't really fly. Well Mr. Towhee was quite the guardian of his little family and Momma and baby were quickly sent scurrying back under the bush, much to Mr. Towhee's relief.

Though I do love going birding on a nice long walk, just sitting quietly or gazing through a window can always bring unexpected pleasures.

Sally Baumer, President

Thank you, Board Members & Volunteers!

by Sally Baumer, President

We're extending a big "thank you" to all of those who have supported our organization and have made it the success that it is.

First, I would like to recognize our Board. John Glover has served as Vice President for many years and has now decided to step back since he is retiring and will be doing a lot more travelling. This position is now vacant so if you think you would like to be a Board member, please let me know. Diane Ley has also resigned as Program Chair and as our Admin. We are really going to miss her! Those remaining on the Board are myself as President, David Kassel, Treasurer; Helena Kassel, Secretary; Nancy Piotrowski, Conservation; Eric McKee, Education; Carol Boykin, Field Trips; Robin Leong, MAL; Jane Hicks, MAL and Bob Martin, MAL. I would like to welcome Barbara Navolanic who has volunteered as our Program Chair and Patti Heidl as Membership Chair.

We have some very special volunteers that have donated a great deal of their time and deserve special recognition. Diane Ley has been Program Chair, Admin and filled in on vacant Board positions. Jeff Bonneville has done tremendous work with the Bluebird Boxes. He has repaired, cleaned, installed and monitored them as well as teaching how to monitor. I would also like to thank Patricia Gaither who has provided refreshments at our General meetings. Others that have done a great deal are Wendy Schackwitz, Citizen Science; Bruce Thompson and Wendy Cole, Field Trips; Laura Schermeister, Newsletter and Website, and Andrew Ford for all the Bird Walks he has led.

Also, thank you to our volunteers that helped with tabling events, Bluebird monitoring and CHIRP Festival: Carol Boykin, Mo Mosher, Betty Labastida, Jane Hicks, Robin Leong, Margaret Barson, David & Helena Kassel and Lauri Puzo, Mike Schackwitz, Eric McKee and to any and every one that I may have missed.

What Hatched This Summer?

by Crystal DeMarco, Education Coordinator

Our nestbox monitoring volunteers had quite the busy Spring and Summer season, with wonderful notes coming in from the field. To track the progress of the 70 nestboxes at 8 sites currently being monitored in Napa County, dedicated citizen scientists headed out to their sites weekly to quietly peek in on the nestboxes, while attempting to disturb the occupants as little as possible.

With the use of mirrors and smart phones they record the nesting attempts by Tree Swallows and Western Bluebirds. The results are still in the midst of being compiled, but initial reports are astonishing! At the most productive site, the Napa Resource Conservation District Huichica Creek Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Vineyard, David and Helena Kassel recorded 46 Tree Swallows and 18 Western Bluebirds fledging their nests. Four of the ten nestboxes had second broods to brag about as well. The sustainable practices such as no pesticides or herbicides, and active native plant restoration activities, have truly paid off for the local

cavity nesting bird populations.

In a far more urban and busy location, the new nestboxes at Vintage High School, monitored by Katya Kimpton, an Environmental Science student, yielded 7 Western Bluebird fledglings in the first season. And yet one more site of note was the Newell Preserve in American Canyon, monitored by Jeff Bonneville, these nestboxes were the happy home to 28 Tree Swallows and 18 Western Bluebird fledglings. One of our volunteers, Terry England, also started a Facebook page for the nestbox monitors where photos and field notes could be shared.

Our chapter is ever grateful to the time and efforts of all of the nestbox monitors and a full report on the season totals will be forthcoming. If you or someone you know are interested in volunteering for a hands-on bird conservation project such as this one, please contact Crystal DeMarco at crystal.napasolanoaudubon@gmail.com.

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.

Eelgrass in the San Francisco Bay

Tuesday, September 11, 7pm

Over half of California's eelgrass acreage is found in San Francisco Bay, a stronghold for eelgrass on the Pacific Coast as the species experiences significant declines locally and abroad. The San Francisco beds are crucially important for commercially and ecologically valuable species (like Pacific herring and Dungeness crab) that rely on eelgrass for nursery sites and habitat structure, as well as the hundreds of thousands of wintering birds that rely on the Bay's eelgrass during their migration. Within San Francisco Bay, Richardson Bay contains the second largest and most resilient eelgrass bed. In this presentation, Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg will discuss recent scientific analysis conducted by Audubon California staff to better understand the damage we've seen in the Richardson Bay eelgrass beds and actions on the horizon to halt and reverse that impact.

Rebecca Schwartz Lesberg is the San Francisco Bay Program Director, Audubon CA. Within her role at Audubon CA, Rebecca uses science-based conservation to protect one of North America's most important estuary systems through restoration, policy, and management.

50 Years of Saving Rivers

Tuesday, October 9, 7pm

2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. This 50-year-old law is the nation's primary river conservation tool, which prohibits new dams and diversions on protected rivers. Steve Evans from California Wilderness Coalition (CalWild) explores the Act's 50-year legacy of protecting free-flowing rivers and streams throughout the state. California has 747 miles of nationally protected rivers and streams, as well as thousands of miles of waterways eligible for federal protection. Even in these politically troubled times, there is legislation pending in Congress that will more than double the miles of protected rivers in the state.

This program is essential for any citizens interested in securing protection for California's most treasured rivers and streams, which are in turn critical for the survival of many bird species and general ecosystem health.

Steve Evans, the CalWild Rivers Program Director, has been involved in the protection of more than 480 miles of wild and scenic rivers in the last 30 years

Visualizing an Accountable Organization with the Audubon Conservation Tracker

Tuesday, November 13, 7pm

Birds are experiencing a variety of threats, and to identify and reduce these threats and conserve bird populations requires a knowledge of population trends over long time scales across North America.

Geographer Gregg Verutes will share an interactive report for the Black Oystercatcher in coastal California to demonstrate how the National Audubon Society is tracking conservation successes, failures, and funding opportunities. He will also demo a new Christmas Bird Count (CBC) trends map viewer with a focus on changing populations of robins, sparrows, and other common birds that Napa-Solano Audubon Society finds in large numbers. Numbers found on CBCs could well reflect the productivity of species during the breeding season.

Gregg Verutes is a Data Visualization Specialist with the National Audubon Society. He's currently building National Audubon Society's data visualization and reporting systems to communicate sustainability science through storytelling, serious games, and interactive visualization.

FIELD TRIP

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

Rodman Preserve

Saturday, September 22, 9:00am
Leader: Roberta Lyons

Rodman Preserve, owned by Lake County Land Trust, is not open to the general public. The main purpose of the acquisition project was to preserve the natural habitat of the Rodman Ranch and Preserve and to facilitate the continued health and existence of the many nesting, breeding, and feeding areas for wildlife.

This easy 1.1 mile hike takes about 90-minutes, looping around an

oak-studded hillside with panoramic vistas of the Rodman Slough and the north end of Clear Lake, across to Bartlett Springs. From local history to flora and fauna galore, there is something here for everyone.

Members of Redbud Audubon will join us for our walk, and then we will enjoy lunch on the porch of the Nature Center. Our leader is generously providing drinks. This is a great opportunity to meet fellow birders from Lake County and tour a new area.

New Board Member

Patti Heidl, Membership Chair



Once upon a time Patti Heidl's Second Grade was offered an awesome opportunity to learn about birds by Pat Hildreth. That led to the installation of a seed feeder on the Oak outside the classroom's window. Project Feeder Watch participation and careful scrutiny of the feeder friends came next. Later, kids and parents participated in The Great Backyard Bird Count.

Finally, retirement arrived and it was time for Patti to spread her wings. While enjoying a Community Oil Press Day with husband Bill at Il Fiorello, two NSAS folk encouraged NSAS Membership. The rest is history... great beginning bird walks, informative Audubon chapter meetings, super Field Trip adventures, and making the acquaintance of new friends and avians!

Conservation Advocacy

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



Nancy Piotrowski, second from left

Spring and Summer 2018 have been active times for conservation issues. In June we, in conjunction with other Audubon chapters and Audubon California, had success with the passage of Proposition 68. Known as the California Clean Water and Safe Parks Act, this proposition reinforces conservation goals around water, the Salton Sea, coastal habitat protection, working lands, and the conservation of priority bird species. It also provides for increased access to the state's outdoors, particularly in urban park-poor areas. Specific funds of \$2.83 billion were for parks and natural resources funding investment in parks and their maintenance, trails and creek restoration, and work on the Salton Sea. Another \$1.27 billion is for water reliability, such as clean drinking water projects, ground water cleanup and sustainability, and flood protection. State conservancies projects such as vital landscape conservation work, and ocean, bay, and coast protections are to receive \$767 million for state conservancies. Also \$442 million is to address climate adaptation ensuring habitat connectivity, collaborations on climate-smart farm practices, and rivers and waterways restoration.

Work continued with Audubon California at the 2018 Advocacy Day, Wednesday June 20. Members from across the state met in Sacramento to talk with our elected legislators and their staff members to ask for their support on vital legislation. One of the most important items was related to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) advocating for legislation to shore up protections for birds in the state while designees in the federal government are diluting and gutting national protections. AB 2627 is the bill we supported for this work. Look for updates on this matter mid-August.

Advocacy is a useful tool. If you are interested learning more about these issues, send an email to napiotrowski@yahoo.com.

Scholarships

For a third year, NSAS has awarded two \$2,000 scholarships to Napa and Solano County students who have demonstrated a clear interest in pursuing a career related to environmental studies or conservation. This year's recipients are Allisia Sandoval from Vacaville High School, and Kiwa Anisman from Vintage High School in Napa. Allisia will be attending UC Berkeley where she will major in Environmental Studies with an emphasis in policy and administration. Kiwa will attend Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, as a Political Science major with an emphasis in Environmental Studies with the goal of working in the field of environmental law. Congratulations!

Napa-Solano Audubon is offering two scholarships each year to assist local graduating high

students who wish to continue their education at a Community College or four-year university in the fields of environmental science/studies, natural resource management, forestry, ornithology, wildlife and fisheries, conservation biology, parks and recreation or other related areas. If you know a student in Napa or Solano Counties who wishes to pursue a degree in any of these fields, please let them know about our scholarship program.

These scholarships are made possible through the generosity of our members who donated to our Scholarship Fund. If you would like to donate to this fund, you can mail a donation to NSAS, PO Box 10006, Napa, CA 94581 or donate online on our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com. Please specify that your donation should be applied to the NSAS Scholarship Fund.



Kiwa Anisman



Allisia Sandoval

Your Donation for Birds and Their Habitats

\$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

Join or Donate Online!

To become a member, donate online, or to order your copy of *Breeding Birds of Solano County*, go to
goo.gl/2oj2uw



napasolanoaudubon.com

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NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON SOCIETY



Photo: ca.audubon.org

Your Legacy

Your support has been important in helping NSAS promote conservation and the scientific understanding of wild birds and their habitats.

A gift through your estate plan can provide NSAS with the continued ability to always be there for the birds in Napa and Solano Counties.

VOLUNTEER!

Are you looking for a worthwhile volunteer opportunity where you can learn new skills or give back in a meaningful way? Well, we would love to have you.

We are currently looking for volunteers to fill the following positions:

**Vice President
Communications Chair
Volunteer & Events Chair**

If you are interested in any of these positions or any other NSAS volunteer opportunities, please contact Sally Baumer at sally.birder@sbcglobal.net.