



the SONG SPARROW

SPRING 2018, Vol.46 No.1

SPRING 2018 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE



- Sat, Mar 3 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Tues, Mar 13 **Program**
- Sat, Mar 17 **Field Trip**
- Sat, Mar 17 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Sat, Apr 7 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Tues, Apr 10 **Program**
- Apr 13 - 15 **Olympic Peninsula Birdfest**
- Apr 14 - 15 **Napa Native Plant Sale**
- Fri, Apr 20 **Field Trip**
- Sat, Apr 21 **Earth Day Events**
- Sat, Apr 21 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Wed, Apr 25 **Solano Comm. College Earth Day**
- Sat, Apr 28 **Rush Ranch Open House**
- Sat, May 5 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Sat, May 6 **Walk at Il Fiorello**
- Tues, May 8 **Program**
- Sat, May 19 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Sat, May 26 **Field Trip**
- Sat, Jun 2 **Beginning Bird Walk**
- Sat, Jun 16 **Beginning Bird Walk**

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

President's Corner

I recently had a wonderful opportunity to do trip to Sierra Vista, AZ to visit my son and do a little birding. Sierra Vista and the surrounding area is a wonderful birding location because of its proximity to Mexico with varied terrain and habitats. The area is made up of many "sky islands" surrounded by a "sea" of grass. The islands are lone mountains that are not in a range such as the Sierra Nevada Mountains. This creates all the wonderful habitats for migrating birds and those that live there year round.

However, it seems that the winter months are not the best time of year to bird there, but I was not to be discouraged! During a visit to the beautiful Chiricahua National Park, I had the opportunity to find Mexican Jays including a juvenile with a varied colored bill. On another day in Sierra Vista we went down to the San Pedro River, merely a stream now, but with water year round. Much to my delight there were Pyrrhuloxia by the numbers. Wow! This was a bird I have been dying to see. Further down the river we found a watering hole for Sparrows. They were so much fun to watch, splashing in the water, hopping around on logs and scurrying about. There were also Green Tail and Albert's Towhees scratching in the dirt and much more. Last but not least we came across a pair of Black Bellied Whistling Ducks. I was absolutely thrilled! They are very shy and quickly flew, but oh what a sight.

So my birding friends, if you think the time of year is bad or the location quiet, you will never know what you will find until you look. Oh yes, I loved being with my son!

Sally Baumer, President

Board Elections in May

Want to learn new skills?

Grow a deeper network within our communities?

Give back in a meaningful way?

We encourage you to help us out by joining our board or becoming a Committee Chair! Annual elections for board positions will be held during our evening program on May 8th. The positions up for nomination are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. All current officers are offering to mentor newly elected individuals to ease them into their new roles.

This year, our current Vice President, John Glover, is retiring after many years of service. We thank John for his service, but this means we are in particular need of nominees for Vice President. We also need a new Membership Chair, Communications Chair, Program Chair and Events/Volunteer Chair (a non-board position).

To nominate yourself or someone else for these positions, or if you have any questions about the roles or responsibilities, simply email admin@napasolanoaudubon.com or bring your nominations to the meeting in May. All NSAS members are encouraged to attend, as voting may only be done in person.

Matilija Poppies
by Endre Balogh



APRIL 14-15

Native Plant Sale!

Napa's chapter of the California Native Plant Society hosts twice-yearly native plant and wildflower sales at Skyline Park in Napa. The next sale will be April 14-15. For more information, see their web site at www.napavalleycnp.org.

Thank You, Wendy!

Wendy Schackwitz joined our chapter as our Education Chair in 2013. During this time, she started the Beginning Bird Walks and Workshops, launched a Junior Audubon Program and an annual Christmas Bird Count 4 Kids.

The following year she was elected as our chapter president and set up several citizen science projects to monitor local bird populations. Wendy was a tireless grant writer and fundraiser for our chapter, organizing our annual CHIRP Festival and other events. She forged relationships with both Audubon California and National Audubon and won a grant to write our popular booklet, *California Birds in a Changing Climate*, which is being used by Audubon Chapters throughout California. She served briefly as Executive Director until this December.

Even though she is no longer on our board, Wendy will continue her work with birds through bioacoustic monitoring projects. You can learn more about this at our March program. Thank you, Wendy, for everything you have done for our chapter and your tireless commitment to helping our feathered friends!



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.

Bioacoustic Monitoring Tuesday, March 13, 7pm

Recent surveys show a dramatic 63% population decline of Tricolored Blackbirds in only 6 years. Current management techniques might be helping this species to rebound, as the latest survey shows a 22% population increase. To date, nesting success is evaluated by in-person visits. Because the number of colonies vastly outnumber the researchers and volunteers available to monitor them, colonies can only be visited at best a few times a month, or only a few times for the entire breeding season. This provides only snapshots of the timing and success of nesting, and often leaves frustrating gaps in understanding how a colony performed in a breeding season. To address this, scientists tested the feasibility of using audio recordings to enhance their understanding of the nesting cycle. Known as Bioacoustic Monitoring, this technique has revealed the exact timing of courtship, incubation, hatching and fledging of a Tricolored Blackbird colony.

Dr. Wendy Schackwitz will demonstrate how bioacoustic monitoring is being used on local colonies in Solano County and how this new monitoring technique can be used to track the impact of climate change and habitat loss on multiple species of birds and other animals.

Suisun Wildlife Center Tuesday, April 10, 7pm

Suisun Wildlife Center is dedicated to the rescue of native California wildlife and to the preservation of the Suisun Marsh, working through the dual avenues of wildlife rescue and release and environmental education. Since 1977 they have released over 17,000 wild birds and animals back to the wild in Solano County. This digital presentation will cover the history and functions of the Suisun Wildlife Center, and participants will enjoy a close look at birds of prey. The rescue and release of native wildlife will be discussed, and the natural history, habits, and reason for non-releasability of our animal guests will be covered.

Monique Liguori is the Education Director at the Suisun Marsh Natural History Association and was a long-ago recipient of one of Napa-Solano Audubon's scholarship programs. She will be joined by two non-releasable birds from the center for this entertaining program.

Board of Directors Election, Volunteer Recognition, and Something Special Tuesday, May 8, 7pm

Our monthly programs will break for the summer with the election of our Board of Directors and a celebration of our extraordinary volunteers. We'll have hors d'oeuvres, desserts (cake!), wine, and sparkling drinks. Then, our own John Glover will do a presentation on "Winter Birds and Snow Monkeys in Japan" before he leaves us for the next chapter in his life.

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 Crystal DeMarco at crystal.napasolanoaudubon@gmail.com for more information.

Beginning Bird Identification

Saturday, March 3, 10am
Stanly Ranch Wetlands (A hike in partnership with the Land Trust of Napa County)

Saturday, March 17, 9am
Rockville Hills Regional Park

How do birders tell all the different species apart? Hear tips for finding and identifying typical Northern California birds, including how to use clues such as habitat type, silhouette, and behavior.

Birds & Blooms

Saturday, April 7, 9am
American Canyon Wetlands

Saturday, April 21, 9am
Benicia State Recreation Area

What are the adaptations that birds have to their flowering and fruiting botanical counterparts? What beak shapes makes a bird better suited for crushing seeds or fruit or sipping nectar? Learn about the purpose of such a wide variety of fascinating beak shapes.

Courtship & Nesting

Saturday, May 5, 9am
Newell Canyon Preserve

Saturday, May 19, 9am
Lagoon Valley/Pena Adobe
Regional Park

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.

Feathers & Flight

Saturday, June 2, 9am
American Canyon Wetlands

Saturday, June 16, 9am
Lake Solano Park

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.

WEEKLY SATURDAY WALKS

Andrew Ford leads half-day bird walks most 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.

FIELD TRIPS

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

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Saturday, March 17, 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. 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 blackbirds, black-crowned night heron, red-tailed hawk, peregrine falcon, and white-tailed kite.

Please RSVP by March 12 to Bruce Thomsen at brucecthomsen@yahoo.com.

Milliken Reservoir

Friday, April 20
7:30am - 12:30pm
Leader: TBD

Situated below Atlas Peak, Milliken Reservoir is a remote source of Napa city water. Not usually open to the public, the City of Napa Water Department has granted us half-day access to the property. We will take a circuitous route to reach the lake, passing through blue oak woodland, the old Camp Milliken, a little Douglas fir forest, and skirt the canyon below the dam. Because all of this area burned in the recent fires, the birds might be scarce, but they will all be either hardy survivors or pioneers, such as Wrentit, Rock Wren and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. The wildflowers will be abundant, as they are following fire--a great opportunity to observe the recovery process at the height of the spring season. This is a NSAS members-only trip, limited to 17 participants.

Please RSVP by April 14 to Wendy Cole at beehaven2@comcast.net.

Bird Walk at Il Fiorello Olive Grove

Sunday, May 6, 9am
Leader: Jane Hicks

Join us for a morning bird walk with light refreshments at Il Fiorello Olive Oil Company's olive grove, located in Suisun Valley west of Fairfield. There is a \$10 charge for the walk which includes Il Fiorello's seasonal scones, coffee service, and infused water served in the shady portico after the walk. We will walk the perimeter of the property, through the groves, and along the irrigation canal for approximately two hours.

Over fifty species of birds have been seen on the property, including bald and golden eagles and many other species of raptors, water birds, passerines, and owls. Limited to 15 participants.

Please RSVP by April 21 to Jane Hicks at hixholtz@earthlink.net.

Fairfield Osborn Preserve

Saturday, May 26
Leader: TBD

This 450-acre preserve owned and managed by Sonoma State University, lies on the northwest flank of Sonoma Mountain. There are eight plant communities within the property, oak woodland being the dominant type.

Other communities include chaparral, Douglas fir woodland, native Bunch grass, freshwater marsh, vernal pool, pond and riparian woodland. The flora is extremely diverse including many native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, lichens and mosses. More details to follow on our website.

Please RSVP by May 19 to Wendy Cole at beehaven2@comcast.net.



Did you see the Summer Tanager?

Members' Corner

Summer Tanagers rarely show up in the bay area, especially in winter. They are usually found in the southern or eastern states and can migrate as far south as Mexico, Central America and northern South America. So when Wendy and Mike Schackwitz spotted one in American Canyon Wetlands during Christmas week, the word went out on our Facebook page, and many of our members were able to view this bright red bird in a eucalyptus grove. He stayed around for about a week—a nice holiday gift for our birders.



3rd Annual CHIRP Festival

Join us in April for a month of fun activities to celebrate Spring and raise money for Napa-Solano Audubon! We'll have a Bird-a-thon and a few special walks to exclusive locales.

All proceeds go toward Napa-Solano Audubon Society's education and conservation efforts, including Junior Audubon, in-classroom teaching, habitat and nest monitoring, and more!

Check our website for more information soon.



OWLS – Silent Hunters of the Night

Suisun Wildlife Center will present a two-night event on the owls of North America. The first evening includes an audio-visual presentation on native California species of owls with a close-up view of the Center's non-releasable owls. The next afternoon and evening Robin Leong will lead an Owl Walk.

Call 707-429-4295 to register for this May 18 & 19 event. Fees are \$20 for one, \$35 for two, and \$10 for children. Limited to 30 participants.

Baby Great Horned Owls Photo by Tom Muehleisen

Your Donation for Birds and Their Habitats

\$25 Individual Membership \$35 Family Membership \$65 *Breeding Birds of Solano County* \$_____ Donation
Membership \$_____ + Donation \$_____ + _____ Copies of *Breeding Birds of Solano County* \$_____ = Total Enclosed \$_____
Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____
Address _____ City State & Zip _____

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



NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 10006
NAPA, CA 94581
napasolanoudubon.com



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:

- Membership Chair
- Communications Chair
- Volunteer & Events Chair
- Program 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.