



SONG SPARROW

Winter 2018 Vol. 46 No. 3
www.napasolanoaudubon.com

Winter 2018 Calendar at a Glance

Sat, Dec 1	Beginning Bird Walk
Fri, Dec 14	Pre-Scout Benicia CBC Field Trip
Sat, Dec 15	CBC4Kids
Mon, Dec 17	Benicia CBC
Tues, Jan 1	Angwin CBC
Sat, Jan 5	Beginning Bird Walk
Thurs, Jan 10	Program
Sat, Jan 12	Field Trip
Wed, Jan 16	Teens and Tweens Birding Hike
Sat, Jan 19	Birding for Adults: Fun Over 50
Sat, Jan 26	Beginning Bird Walk
Wed, Jan 30	Junior Audubon
Sat, Feb 2	Richardson Bay Waterbird Fest
Sat, Feb 2	Birding for Adults: Fun Over 50
Wed, Feb 6	Junior Audubon
Sat, Feb 9	Beginning Bird Walk
Thurs, Feb 14	Program
Wed, Feb 20	Junior Audubon



President's Corner

This is the time of year when we think about giving to others, and in the spirit of giving we are asking that our members become involved in our chapter governing Board. Our Vice President position is still vacant and really needs to be filled. The Vice President backs up the President when the President is unavailable for an event. Because our chapter does not have a succession policy in which the Vice President automatically becomes President at the end of the current President's term, this leaves us in a difficult position, hoping that someone will volunteer to be President. Ideally, another Board member would step up to be President, as they would have the appropriate background to move forward. My term as President is for one year and not to exceed three. I am in my second year and am not sure if I can continue for a third. What will happen if no one steps up? This is something our members need to give this some serious thought.

We also desperately need to fill our Communications Chair position, which is responsible for our website, newsletter, and occasionally helping with brochures. Preferably, we need someone with web experience, editing and design background. We would certainly appreciate a volunteer, but we may need to hire a person on a part-time contract basis.

So please give some consideration to our organization and how you can help out. I really appreciate it and wish you the happiest of holidays!

Sally Baumer, President

A BIT OF HISTORY ON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go hunting with their guns, and whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, who was concerned about declining bird populations, proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them. We are still carrying on that tradition 119 years later with three separate Christmas Bird Counts in December and January. Birders of all levels are welcome, from feeder-watchers and field observers to count compilers and regional editors. Know that your efforts are making a difference for science and bird conservation.

Kids 6-18 and their parents are invited to **Napa County's 5th Annual CBC4Kids** from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon on **Saturday, Dec 15**. Kids learn how to use binoculars, go on a short birding walk and share their findings and enter them on eBird. Contact Crystal DeMarco for details at crystal.napasolanoaudubon@gmail.com or go to our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com for more info.

The **72th Benicia CBC** is on **Monday, Dec 17**, followed by a potluck dinner. The Benicia CBC circle includes Benicia, East Vallejo, Cordelia, West Suisun City, and parts of Grizzly Island. Contact Robin Leong at robin_leong@netzero.net for details.

The **48th Angwin Christmas Bird Count** is on **Tuesday, Jan 1**, and a potluck and catered dinner will follow. The count area includes central Napa Valley, Pope Valley, Lake Hennessey and Lake Berryessa. Contact Murray Berner at vireocity@hotmail.com for details or to sign up.

Calendar of Events

PROGRAM CHANGES

We are making a few changes to our monthly general meetings in an effort to increase attendance. Beginning in January, we will be meeting on the **second Thursday of the month at 7 p.m.** We are also moving to a different venue to attract more members from Fairfield, Suisun and Vacaville, and to make it easier for people coming from Napa County. We will meet at the **Fairfield-Cordelia Library Meeting Room** at 5050 Business Center Drive off of the Green Valley Road exit. Please note this new day of the month and location for our speaker programs.

No program in December.

Ticks and Lyme Disease

Thursday, Jan 10, 7pm

Lyme disease is the fastest-growing vector-borne disease in the US today with the CDC estimating 330,000 NEW cases every year. Colloquially referred to as "nature's dirty needles," ticks harbor a wide range of bacteria, viruses and parasites that can cause serious - even deadly - diseases in humans. Tick-borne diseases are on the rise throughout the US, and it's very important that people working or recreating outdoors are aware of the risks around tick bites in order to protect themselves. It's vital to understand the potential long-term, serious impact of a tick bite, recognize the early symptoms of a tick-borne infection, know how to advocate for yourself with medical professionals and know the correct treatment.



Jo Ellis, Director of Education Outreach at Bay Area Lyme Foundation, will cover topics such as: how to prevent tick bites; how to recognize the symptoms of Lyme

disease; what kind of rashes to watch for; which tick removal strategies are effective; how to save a tick for testing; and answer issues in current diagnostics like why is it so hard to diagnose Lyme.

Why We Love Cranes

Thursday, Feb 14, 7pm

February is one of the last months of the year that we can view cranes in our area. Nationally renowned crane expert, Paul Tebbel, will present an entertaining hour on the life history and behavior of cranes, as well as a substantial amount of info on where to find cranes in Northern California in the winter.

Paul Tebbel is the Executive Director of the Rowe Sanctuary, former Executive Director of Effie Yeaw Nature Center, the former Executive Director of Friends of the River, and a Sanctuary Director of the National Audubon Society. He has led many tours to view cranes along the Delta.

FIELD TRIPS

Note: Most field trips require RSVPs to the trip coordinator. Go to www.napasolanoaudubon.com for additional logistics and carpool info.

Benicia CBC Pre-Count Scouting

Fri, Dec 14, 8am to 2 pm

Leader: Robin Leong

Join Robin Leong to scout several locations in advance of the Benicia Christmas Bird Count. We will start at the Lynch Canyon parking lot and preview several areas in the 15 mile diameter Benicia Christmas Bird Count (BCBC) circle. We will learn

FIND US ONLINE!

For more details on all of these events or to sign up for email announcements about walks and field trips, check our website at napasolanoaudubon.com.



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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 17th Christmas Bird Count. We will bird until 2 PM or so. Please bring binoculars, layered clothing and something to eat, if you like. Heavy rain will cancel the walk.

Sears Point Wetlands and Shollenberger Park

Sat, Jan 12, 8am

Leader: TBA

On this field trip, spend the first part of the morning birding the Sears Point Wetlands project (also known as Reclamation Road). The wetlands project is located at the northern end of San Pablo Bay and consists of the bay tidal zone and adjacent wetlands. Low tide is projected for the day at 11:54 am. We will then drive to Shollenberger Park in Petaluma for more birding. Please **RSVP by January 7, 2019** to Bruce Thomsen at BruceThomsen@yahoo.com, cell 209-728-4631, home 707-224-1906.

JUNIOR AUDUBON RESUMES

NSAS continues its kid-friendly birding group, Junior Audubon, for bi-monthly walks led by Crystal DeMarco in City of Napa parks! This is a wonderful opportunity for young ones to learn about local ecosystems and the birds that inhabit them. Registration is free, and available through the City of Napa Parks and Recreation at <https://apm.activecommunities.com/naparec/Home>.

- Wed, Jan 30, 2 pm – Oxbow Preserve River Habitats Bird Walk
- Wed, Feb 6, 2 pm - Kennedy Park Duck Walk
- Wed, Feb 20, 2 pm - Alston Park Raptor Watching for Kids

All walks are 2 to 4 pm. Additional details will be announced on our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com.

BIRDING FOR ADULTS: FUN OVER 50

We are excited to launch a brand new walk! "Fun over 50" walks are geared towards active adults over 50 and will cover more detailed information about beginning birding and resources for starting out in this fulfilling outdoor pursuit. We will discuss popular field guides, weigh the pros and cons of various free birding apps, and discuss binoculars and scopes. Registration is free, and available through the City of Napa Parks and Recreation at <https://apm.activecommunities.com/naparec/Home>

Oxbow Preserve

Saturday, Jan 19, 2 pm to 4 pm

1028 McKenzie Drive in Napa, CA. Directions: From the intersection of First Street and Silverado Trail, drive north on the Silverado Trail for .2 miles. Make a left at McKenzie Drive. Drive west for 400 ft. and park at the Oxbow Preserve. This is a narrow residential public access road, so please drive slowly.

Alston Park

Saturday, Feb 2, 2 pm to 4 pm

2037 Dry Creek Road in Napa, CA. Directions: From 29 Northbound, make a left at Trower Ave., follow Trower for one mile going west to where it ends at Dry Creek Rd. Make a right at Dry Creek Rd., and an immediate left into the parking lot. Sign says Alston Park. Meet at the North end of the parking lot.

TEENS AND TWEENS BIRDING HIKE

Wed, Jan 16, 3 pm to 4:30 pm

Bring your friends for a winter afternoon hike into Westwood Hills Park. We'll take a route to the top of the park where there are amazing views of the Napa Valley and beyond. We'll review helpful outdoor apps such as All trails, Audubon and E-bird. Then we'll have a quiet sit at the top of the park under a majestic ancient Oak tree while learning about the nature surrounding you. A fun and challenging up-hill hike suitable

for youth (ages 12 to 17), and their families.

3107 Browns Valley Road in Napa, CA. From 29 Northbound, exit 1st Street, make a left, going west towards Browns Valley. Drive approximately 1 mile. Parking lot will be on the left.

BIRDING WALKS

Saturdays or Sundays

Expert birder Andrew Ford leads weekly walks, when available, in various locations in Napa and Solano Counties. Details for these walks are emailed two days before the walk. Be sure to sign up for these email announcements by clicking the *Email sign-up* link on our website at www.napasolanoaudubon.com.

BEGINNING BIRDING

Usually on two Saturdays each month, we offer walks and workshops for beginning birders, alternating between American Canyon Wetlands, Newell Open Space Preserve and various locations in Solano County. All workshops begin at 9 am., followed by bird walks at 9:30 am until noon. Contact Crystal DeMarco at crystal.napasolanoaudubon@gmail.com for more information or go to our website.

Great Horned Owls at American Canyon Wetlands

Saturday, Dec 1, 9 am to noon

Did you know that Great Horned Owls can be found from Alaska all the way down to Patagonia? Or that they sometimes nest in old eagle or crow's nests to save time? Join Napa-Solano Audubon for a workshop on Great Horned Owls. We'll learn about what makes these predators so successful, and why they nest so early in the spring. Recently, Great Horned Owls have been spotted roosting in the eucalyptus trees right next to the trail at the wetlands!

Newell Preserve Bird Walk

Saturday, Jan 5, 9 am to noon

If the winter weather has you spending more time indoors, join us for a workshop and walk at Newell

Open Space Preserve! There is a moderate up-hill grade to the Eucalyptus grove where White-tailed Kites are frequently seen hunting and roosting. Sightings have also included Golden Eagles and Northern Harriers.

Lagoon Valley Bird Walk

Saturday, Jan 26, 9 am to noon

The workshop will be followed by a walk along the freshwater lagoon, and up to a redwood grove. Past sightings at this 470-acre park have included the Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Hooded Oriole.

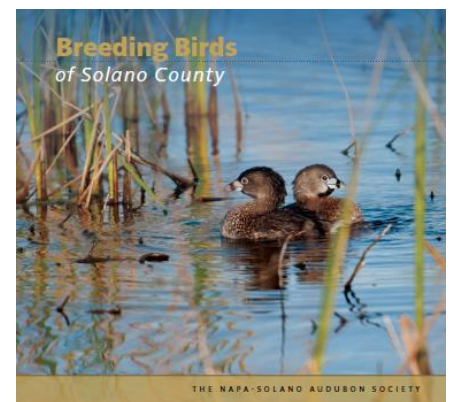
American Canyon Wetlands Bird Walk

Saturday, Feb 9, 9 am to noon

Family-friendly beginning bird walk at American Canyon Wetlands where you will see many species of birds, including Western Bluebirds, Anna's Hummingbirds, Black Phoebes, many species of sparrows and blackbirds, hawks, finches and shorebirds. This trail is flat and mostly smooth, and great for all abilities.

MORE PLACES TO BUY OUR BOOKS

If you're looking for Christmas gifts, **Vallejo Bookstore** at 624 Marin Street in Vallejo is now carrying our book *Breeding Birds of Solano County*. Many of you have a copy of our landmark atlas, but if you are new to our chapter or know someone who is just getting into birding, this is a beautiful way to learn about the birds that breed in Solano County.



You can also find our book at **Visit Vacaville** in the Nut Tree Mall or order from our website.



Audubon Education Programs Engage High School Youth!

by Eric McKee, Education Chair

Over the course of the 2017-18 school year Crystal DeMarco, NSAS Education Coordinator, worked under a grant from Napa County RCD and US Environmental Protection Agency to work with students across Napa County to engage youth in birding programs. As a part of the RCD LandSmart Youth Stewards program, Crystal developed a native nesting box curricula to promote nesting habitat at three sites: Sheehy Creek near American Canyon, Salvador Creek at Vintage High School, and Alston Park in Napa.

As a service-learning project to restore habitats to these three environments, 111 environmental science students installed, monitored, and maintained 14 Western Bluebird nesting boxes, one Barn Owl nesting box, and one American Kestrel nest box. Crystal engaged students on their field days with curricula and activities that supported scientific observation and climate change adaptation in the western United States. Additionally, the partnership extended to the Napa Youth Stewardship Council, guiding a cohort of 21 Napa County high school students in an after school leadership program.

These students learned how to guide and educate the public about the importance of bird life, and led activities to help engage the community in bird observation and appreciation. Through this program students guided community members in the installation of two Barn owl nesting boxes, the planting of riparian native grasses, and guided a community hike at Westwood Hills Park to teach participants about bird life.



Environmental education programs are significantly lacking at the high school level in most counties, and this curricula and engagement demonstrated the significant impact of NSAS staff and education programs in the community.