



SONG SPARROW

Fall 2019 Vol. 48 No. 2
www.napasolanoaudubon.com

FALL 2019 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- Aug. 25 Sun. **Beginning Bird Walk – Trancas Crossing Park, Napa.**
- Sep. 12 Thur. **Feathers and Flight: A Journey to the New World Tropics – Cordelia Library, Fairfield**
- Sep. 21 Sat. **Mendocino Field Trip**
- Oct. 10 Thur. **Midway Albatross – Cordelia Library, Fairfield**

For additional weekend Bird Walks, please sign up for our Field Trip email alerts. Because these can be subject to cancellation, they are not listed here.

For more info, to sign up for email alerts, or to join our chapter, please go to:
<https://napasolanoaudubon.com>



Fall Walks & Activities

Watch your email inbox and our website for more Fall walks and activities.
napasolanoaudubon.com

Ash Throated Flycatchers and Tree Swallows

by Terry England — photographer and bird lover

My adventure started when I noticed a post on the Napa-Solano Audubon Nestboxes Facebook page, sharing pictures of some Ash Throated Flycatcher's eggs in one of the nestboxes at Newell Preserve. This got me excited because I encountered one of these birds near that location a few years ago and fell in love with how cute it was. I made up my mind to take my camera and investigate whether I could get a view of it from the trail.

I was quickly rewarded with a lot of parenting activity the first morning. My finger was on the trigger when a fun interaction occurred between the

of Tree Swallows swooped up to the Flycatcher's nestbox, trying to get to the entrance while one of the Flycatchers dove in to shoo them away. It seemed the Swallows worked together — occupying one Flycatcher, while the others made their way to the entrance. I never saw any of the Swallows actually enter the box, and I assume the other Flycatcher was inside protecting the chicks. Once the skirmish was over and the Flycatchers were victorious, it appeared all was well and both of the Flycatchers were back, bringing food to their chicks.

This was a photographer's dream to get such action.



parents. One bird approached the entrance with food in its mouth, but had to back up and let the other bird out. It waited on the roof of the box while the 2nd bird departed, then jumped off the roof and maneuvered in flight to be able to approach the entrance again. I had my camera on "rapid-shoot" mode, so I had the good fortune to capture all of this as a sequence of shots.

On my second visit to the site, I happened to be at-the-ready when a group



President's Corner

Sally Baumer, NSAS President

First and foremost, I want to thank all our volunteers that helped with all aspects and projects of NSAS; we couldn't do it without you!

We had a very productive and busy year for 2018-2019. In our area of education we joined forces with the City of Napa Parks and Recreation Department to do special walks which introduced birding to seniors, children and a special bi-lingual walk. These very successful walks were led by our Education Coordinator, Crystal DeMarco and a Napa Park Ranger. Crystal was also quite busy doing classroom presentations which also included outdoor activities as well and participated in the Solano Ag Day for 3rd graders. I was able to assist Crystal and we met over 3000 3rd graders from schools throughout Solano County.

Crystal and Jeff Bonneville worked hard with bluebird box monitoring along with many volunteers. A big thank you goes to Jeff for cleaning and repairing the boxes so they would be a safe and sanitary place for birds to build nests. The results were 98 Bluebirds that fledged and 72 Tree Swallows as well. The tallies from our monitors were uploaded to the Cornell University Nestwatch.org site to help track bird populations nationwide.

A special thank you goes to Andrew Ford who has been leading our bird walks on weekends. Andrew works full time so we are so very fortunate that he volunteers his time to NSAS. Also I would like to thank Wendy Cole and Bruce Thomson who put together some terrific birding trips. Last but not least a big thank you to our Board of Directors and Patricia Gaither who has provided refreshments at our program meetings (now vacant).

VACANT POSITIONS

We are in need of a Vice President, Education Chair, Communications Chair, two Directors at Large, Hospitality Chair (maybe two people sharing this position), and someone to lead Beginner Bird Walks twice a month.



Volunteering is a great way to learn new skills, grow a deeper network within our communities, give back in a meaningful way, and have a lot of fun in the process!

MEET OUR 2018-2019 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Natalie Ritter is a graduate of American Canyon High School. She has been a very active volunteer at the Marine Mammal Rescue Center with a strong interest in marine sciences. Natalie will be attending Whitman College in Washington with a major in biology.



Sophia Jacobs is a graduate of Benicia High School. Sophia has a keen interest in the environment and established an environment club at her high school. She will be attending U. C. Santa Barbara, majoring in Environmental studies.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

PROGRAMS

Programs are held on the second Thursday of the month at the Fairfield-Cordelia Library Meeting Room at 5050 Business Center Drive in Fairfield, except for the May 9th meeting which will be held at the Florence Douglas Senior Center at 333 Amador Street in Vallejo.

FEATHERS AND FLIGHT: A JOURNEY TO THE NEW WORLD TROPICS

September. 12, 7:00 - 9:00pm



BENNY JACOBS-SCHWARTZ



BENNY JACOBS-SCHWARTZ

Bird guide, naturalist & photographer, Benny Jacobs-Schwartz will take us on a gripping journey throughout the New World Tropics. His dazzling bird photos, captivating videos, and animated story telling brings a slice of the tropics to California. Topics of migration, tropical speciation, and drivers of bio-diversity, this media rich journey will share some of the fascinating and unique birds that inhabit the new-world tropics. Sure to both educate and entertain, this presentation will leave you with a deeper understanding of tropical ecology and knowledge about where some of our backyard birds spend their winters!

Benny Isaac Jacobs-Schwartz owns and operates a bird guiding business and lifestyle brand called BIRDS by BIJS (pronounced Bee-jus). Working seasonally as a naturalist guide, expedition trip leader, and international bird guide, Benny works in a variety of locations and which recently brought him to such exotic places like coastal Alaska, Trinidad and Tobago, and the Ecuadorian cloud forest.

When not trip leading or following birds across the world he is at home growing his business. BIRDS by BIJS, initially begun in response to many requests for urban birding outings, the business has now grown to encompass; a nature inspired clothing line, bird photography and wildlife documentaries and of course local and international bird watching tours.

Seasonally Benny or BIJS, is based in Los Angeles, where he leads public and private birding adventures to urban hotspots. He is also a passionate photographer, specializing in birds. Benny hopes his love of the natural world will inspire others to conserve the open spaces around them and look up more often from their phones!

MIDWAY ALBATROSS

October 10, 7:00 - 9:00pm

Cordelia Library



DAN CLARK, USFWS / WIKICOMMONS

Midway Atoll is the site of the world's largest albatross nesting colony as well as numerous other globally important species such as the endangered Hawaiian monk seal and Laysan Duck. Found few places on Earth,

the work conducted by the nesting albatross census team, or "bird counters", on Midway Atoll provides vital information to researchers, managers, conservation groups, and the global community interested in preserving and protecting seabirds and their nesting habitats. Since 1991, the annual census of Mōlī (aka Laysan Albatrosses [Phoebastria immutabilis]) and Ka'upu (aka Black-footed Albatrosses [Phoebastria nigripes]) on Midway Atoll has provided precise information regarding the numbers of nesting albatross pairs on the three islands there. Midway Atoll is also the home of Wisdom, the oldest known wild bird tracked in the Bird Banding Lab's database

JD Bergeron is Executive Director of International Bird Rescue located in Fairfield, CA. JD was one of just 18 volunteers who participated in the 2019 annual nesting albatross census on Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge. The census occurs once each year between mid-December and the first week in January. The Refuge is located within the Papāhanaumokuākea Marine National Monument, approximately 1,350 miles northwest of Honolulu. JD brings home all the latest information, amazing visuals, and some words of wisdom learned from a month among these majestic seabirds to share with our community.

Monterey Bay Birding Festival 2019

September 20-22

For more information:
montereybaybirding.org

Watsonville Civic Plaza
275 Main Street
Watsonville, CA 95076

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FIELD TRIPS

Note: Most field trips require RSVPs to the trip coordinator. Please go to: <https://napasolanoaudubon.com> for additional logistics and carpool info.

MENDOCINO FIELD TRIP
Saturday, Sept. 21, a multi-day trip
Leader: Bruce Thomsen



INGIRD TAYLOR / WIKICOMMONS

We will be birding several places along the Mendocino coast and inland areas. Fall brings many wintering birds and migrants through the area. Additional information will be forthcoming as the trip is finalized. Sign-ups will begin when the e-blast is sent out.

For questions please contact:
Bruce Thomsen
Email: brucecthomsen@yahoo.com
Mobile: 209-728-4631
Land: 707-224-1906

WALKS FOR EVERYONE

TRANCAS CROSSING PARK
Sunday, Aug 25, 10:00 - 11:30 a.m.
640 Trancas St., Napa, Ca 94558
This walk is co-sponsored with Napa Parks and Recreation Department.

Trancas Crossing Park is a 33-acre park at the northern tip of the Napa River Trail. The park has public river access, paved walking trails, restroom, and a small parking lot. Please bring binoculars if you have them, water, and wear sturdy walking shoes.

Contact: Andrew Ford,
ajf51@humboldt.edu

To register: https://apm.activecommunities.com/naparec/Activity_Search/birding-walk/12094

Directions: From the 29 Northbound, exit Trancas. Make a right, go East on Trancas for 1 mile, make a left at Old Trancas Road, go 90 feet. Make a right to stay on Old Trancas Road, the Parking Lot is at the first left. Sign says Trancas Crossing Park. Meet at the first small parking lot. Additional ADA accessible parking is available if you drive over the small bridge over the creek.

SUPPORT NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON

If you're already a member, then **Thank You!** If not, then please consider becoming a Chapter Member, buying our book *Breeding Birds of Solano County*, or donating today.

You can do all this online by going to our website and choosing the **Donate, Join** or **Buy Now** buttons.

napasolanoaudubon.com



BECKY MATSUBARA

We Need You!
Help Save Birds
& their Habitats.

Contact Nancy Piotrowski to find out how you can help:
napiotrowski@yahoo.com



PHOTO BY BECKY MATSUBARA

Visit the Napa-Solano
Audubon Society at the
VISIONS OF THE WILD
ART & FILM FESTIVAL

Join us for our table event on
Sept 14th, from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
napasolanoaudubon.com

Conservation Advocacy

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

We have had a busy couple of months for conservation issues. On legislation in progress in California, in May, in conjunction with other Audubon chapters and Audubon California, we had productive meetings with state legislators in Sacramento. We went in to discuss migratory bird protection, endangered species protection, climate change adaptation and equity in access to nature and environmental education. Also discussed was the reduction of plastics, desert protection amendments to the use of anti-coagulation rodenticides (AB1788), and state budget investments in working lands as part of the strategy to getting California to carbon neutrality by 2045.

Before the visits, there were several preparatory conference calls, as well as an in-person meeting the morning of advocacy day. Since that time, we have seen only one bill suspended (AB209), with all others moving through. The desert protection item is now chaptered to law. The

items on anti-coagulation rodenticides, plastic reduction, migratory bird protection, and endangered species protection are in appropriations reviews. Investments in achieving carbon neutrality were also in the budget, but it looks like continued work regarding integrating working lands will be needed. Similarly, the items on access to nature and environmental education were generally positively received (AB556 and AB1300), but amendments are in progress.

Thank you to all who wrote in on AB1788. We received immediate feedback that our calls made a difference to our assembly members. Additionally, there was interest in further discussion between Audubon members and business owners who need help managing pests, where owl boxes and other methods may be preferred to rodenticides!

There are far more issues on the table, more than can be covered in this one article. In our next issue I will discuss more areas of concern and how we are working for solutions.

Citizen Science

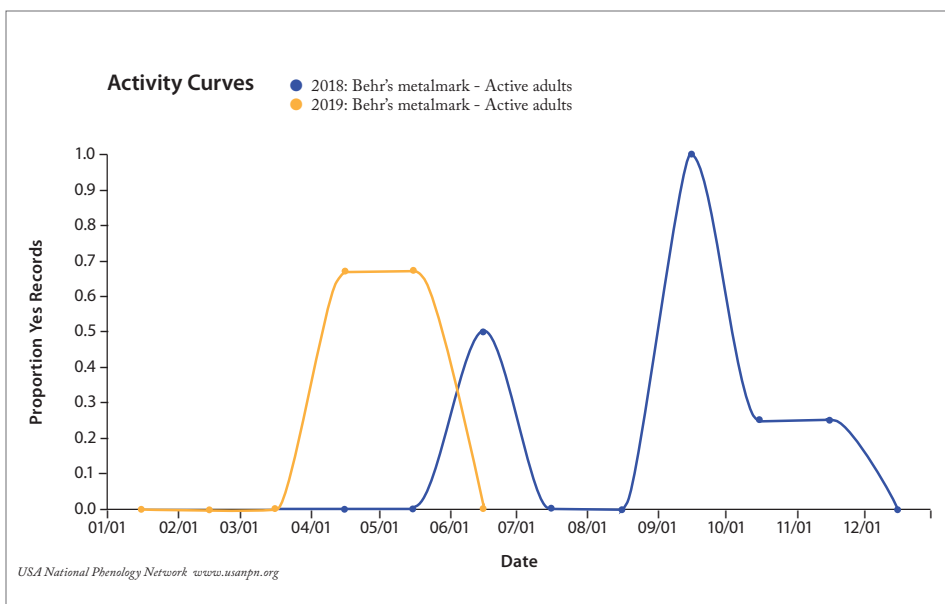
This is an excerpt from *Natures Notebook* a project of USA-NPN June 2019

Napa Solano observers, Betty Labastida, Helena Kassel and Tom Slyker have been watching a pair of Black Phoebe nests at their Bridge site at Wetlands Edge Park in American Canyon. They recorded 2 adults and

at least 3 fledglings at that time and were very excited. At this point in the year, they are observing similar birds each week. The observers Betty, Tom, and Helena look forward to seeing Night Herons come back again and line

the edges of the ponds.

Observer Tom Slyker noted “with the start of my second year of this project I’m beginning to understand how the populations of birds change with the rhythms of the seasons. I’ve always tracked the changes of the seasons based on changes of plants and trees and maybe the hibernation pattern of our pet tortoise until it decided to wander off and leave us. I never considered the changing of bird populations and my time with this bird seasons project has enabled me to see and learn and enjoy the changing patterns of bird populations with the flow of the seasons. Plus, American Canyon Wetlands is a unique open space and I really like being there. “



USA National Phenology Network www.usanpn.org



Education and NSAS

by Crystal DeMarco, Environmental Education Coordinator

With help from a Napa County Wildlife Conservation Commission grant, NSAS has been able to make great strides in environmental outreach in Napa County.

With the 2018-19 Napa County grant award, we focused on providing engaging in-classroom programs. We reached over 1300 students in Napa County, and presented to over 60 classrooms!

Despite the soggy spring, many of these classrooms enjoyed outdoor birding “field trips”, exploring their campuses, school gardens, and nearby parks. For some of these students, this was their first time using binoculars, and for most it was their first time learning to identify birds. Ms. Jeanne Hillyard, the AP Environmental Science teacher at American Canyon High School organized a special field trip for her students this spring to Lake Hennessey, where I co-led the hike along the lake shore, and up along the ridge. The class enjoyed watching Osprey, Western Grebes, Acorn Woodpeckers, and more. Ms. Hillyard says that this field trip “brought their curriculum on Biodiversity to life.” We hope to make trips like this possible again in the future.

NSAS has been fortunate to again receive a grant from Napa County for the upcoming school year. The value of community science, the how’s and why’s of bird songs, bird nesting, and plants for birds, are just some of the topics currently offered. With a grant from National Audubon Society we are working on a project of creek restoration at Donaldson Elementary School in American Canyon.

Further support for the environmental education program comes from a partnership with the *City of American Canyon*, the *Napa County Library* and *Solano County Fish and Wildlife*. Funding from NSAS chapter membership dues help to provide funding for school visits and family and youth events in Solano County as well.

Donations towards the education program are needed and greatly appreciated. Your support directly creates more bird-friendly and environmentally aware communities.