



SONG SPARROW

Spring 2019 Vol. 47 No. 1
www.napasolanoaudubon.com

SPRING 2019 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- Mar. 06 Wed. Nature Explorations For All Abilities - Napa.
- Mar. 14 Thur. General Mtg: Falconry
- Mar. 16 Sat. Sunol Regional Wilderness Field Trip
- Mar. 19 Tues. Youth Ag Day - Vallejo
- Mar. 30 Sat. From Acorn to Mighty Oak: Talk & Hike - Napa
- Apr. 06 Sat. Una Caminata en el Parque, Bilingual Family Hike - Napa
- Apr. 10 Wed. Let's Paint a Bluebird Nestbox! Craft & Bird Walk - Napa
- Apr. 11 Thur. General Mtg: Birds of Owens Lake
- Apr. 12 Fri. Olympic BirdFest 2019
- Apr. 13 Sat. Earth Day Event, Guided Hike, American Canyon
- Apr. 19 Fri. Millikin Reservoir (NSAS members only)
- Apr. 22 Wed. Earth Day
- Apr. 24 Wed. Earth Day: Bluebird Nestbox Presentation, Donaldson Way Elementary, Am. Canyon
- Apr. 27 Sat. Rush Ranch Open House
- May 09 Thur. Volunteer Appreciation, Board of Directors Election & Presentation

For additional weekend Bird Walks, please sign up for our Field Trip email alerts. Details for these walks are emailed two days before the walk and are not listed above. Please go to <https://napasolanoaudubon.com> for more info, to sign up for email alerts, or to join our chapter.



BECKY MATSUBARA / WIKICOMMONS

2017, 2018 Benicia Christmas Bird Count

by Robin Leong

The results of the 2017 CBC were finally published in early December, 2018. The Benicia CBC tied for 30th with 170 species, using species as criteria to rank the best CBCs. One-hundred-seventy is in rarefied air as only 6 other Benicia counts had 170, over 71 years of CBCs. In 2017 Benicia led the nation in Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite and Black Rails. This should not be startling as the 15 mile diameter circle has about 1/3 marsh. It is the 8th time we have led in White-tailed Kite, 4th time in Northern Harrier and this is after I knocked down the numbers due to possible double counting. For Black Rails, I don't knock down numbers, and it is the 15th time the Benicia count led the nation with this species. We had 25 Black Rails in 1998, the highest count for this species in the first 100 years of CBC!

Preliminary results of 2018 show we had about 166 species counted by just 85 intrepid counters. With a very generous donation from Valero Benicia Refinery we were able to charter a boat that took us from Benicia, through Grizzly Bay on up to Montezuma Slough Bridge. With 6 people on board we counted 14,000 diving ducks and 3 loons. This would not have been possible without a boat.

Thanks to all those involved in the count and our post pot luck dinner. Special kudos go out to NSAS, Valero Benicia Refinery, Dolphin Charters, Round Table Pizza in Southampton, Solano Land trust and over 120 property owners that allowed us to count on their properties. I hope you can join us for the 73rd.

President's Corner

Sally Baumer, NSAS President

I would like to address a couple of topics including our Annual Appeal and board positions. I did discuss board positions last time but I feel I do need to bring it up once again, so please forgive me for being repetitious.

First of all, I would like to thank everyone who responded to our Annual Appeal! Your donations are greatly appreciated and help us with our educational program, speakers and other areas that our dues just don't cover. We are especially grateful because we realize funds are tight with so many in need.

Elections are coming up in May and will be here before you know it. We're losing our Education Chair, Eric McKee. Eric has been on the board for four years and has done an outstanding job working with Crystal DeMarco, our Environmental Education Coordinator. Eric will finish his term through June and then will enjoy some much needed personal time. Please start thinking if this is a position you would like to volunteer for.

We're still in need of a Vice President who could eventually take over the Presidency. I will stay on for one more year and this would enable the V.P. to learn the position of President and be part of the Board.

We also need a Communications Chair, which entails being Editor of the Newsletter & promoting our activities to local news organizations. Qualifications include the ability to write occasional articles, and have editing ability.

We have hired a graphic designer to do the layout of the newsletter. This is something I have been doing along with a great deal of help from Diane Ley who did the Winter newsletter for me.

Please consider how you can be part of this organization to help keep it running smoothly.

HOW NOMINATIONS WORK

To nominate yourself or someone else for these positions, or if you have any questions about the roles or responsibilities, simply email us at: **admin@napasolanoaudubon.com** or bring your nominations to the meeting on May 9th, at the Florence Douglas Senior Center.

Please Note: All NSAS members are encouraged to attend, as voting may only be done in person.



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

SUPPORT NAPA-SOLANO AUDUBON

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

You can do all this online by using the **Donate, Join** or **Buy Now** buttons on our web page, or you can use the form below and mail it in:

- \$25 Individual Membership
- \$35 Family Membership
- \$65 *Breeding Birds of Solano County*
- \$ _____ Donation

Total \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Please make all checks payable to: Napa-Solano Audubon Society, and mail to: PO Box 10006, Napa, CA 94581

Thank you!



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.

FROM HUNTER TO ARTIST TO CO-WORKER

The Evolving Relationship Between Raptors & Humans
Thursday, March 14, 7:00pm



Discover the ever evolving relationship between humans and birds of prey through falconry. Learn how falconry evolved to become a sport, and even an art form when more efficient methods of hunting were developed. And finally, how falconry evolved even further to become an effective tool at removing nuisance bird species from various locations such as: airports, refineries, landfills, and agricultural areas.

Rebecca Rosen has been a falconer since 2003. During that time she has trained and flown a variety of birds of prey, such as hawks, falcons, and owls. She has used raptors to keep birds away from locations such as airports,

landfills, refineries, warehouses, and vineyards. She has created educational programs & will be opening a falconry school to teach people about birds of prey, their training and vital role in nature and in human affairs.

BIRDS OF OWENS LAKE

Thursday, April 11, 7:00pm

Owens Lake was once a full, thriving lake until the water resources were diverted to Los Angeles in 1913. The lake dried up and became a major dustbowl and health hazard. Currently water is once again filling some of Owens Lake by springs and streams. A resurgence of migratory waterfowl are once again using parts of the lake as a stopover.

Rich Camino of Yellowbilled Tours has been birding northern California for 52 years. Rich is inspired by adventure, finding new birding areas, birding his local patch, leading Yellowbilled Tours birding field trips and having fun along the way. Rich appreciates the value birding brings to our life and believes that birding field study has a social component. Rich is an active field leader and conservation advocate for Marin Audubon and served as Ohlone Audubon Conservation Chair for 8 years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION, AND MORE!

Volunteer Recognition, and a Presentation By Mark & Lucas Stephenson On Their "Biggest Week" In Ohio

Thursday, May 9, 7:00pm

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, wine, and sparkling drinks. Then, Mark & Lucas Stephenson will give a presentation on their "Biggest Week" of birding in Ohio.

FIELD TRIPS

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

SUNOL REGIONAL WILDERNESS

Saturday, March 16, 8:30am

Leader: Constance Taylor, Naturalist

We will meet up at the Sunol Green Barn Visitor Center on Geary Road in Fremont. Naturalist Constance Taylor will guide us for about two hours. We will plan on walking about 3 miles, and can continue exploring afterwards, on our own, if we wish.

Alameda Creek harbors an inviting creek-side community of Alder, Willow and Sycamore. Coast live oaks abound with Valley and Blue Oak, Elderberry, Madrone and Gray Pine. Some of the main habitats are grasslands, oak savannah, bay/oak woodlands, and riparian corridors. There are often Yellow Billed Magpies, lots of Acorn Woodpeckers, and if we head up the ridges to Flag Hill we might get lucky and see Golden Eagles, Kestrels, and many other types of raptors. As many as 20 to 40 bird species are often seen in a single morning!



ACORN WOODPECKER

SARAH STIERCH/ WIKICOMMONS

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MILLIKEN RESERVOIR

This is a NSAS members-only trip. Limited to 17 participants.

Friday, April 19, 7:30 a.m.

Leader: TBA

Situated below Atlas Peak, Milliken reservoir is a remote source of Napa city water. 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. The gravel road loop from Atlas Peak Rd to the lake and back is about 2.2 miles with a few modest grades. Wildflowers should be blooming too!

This area is not open to the public, but the Napa Water Department has granted us half-day access to the property.



JUNIOR AUDUBON

Join our kid-friendly birding group 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. Please go to: <https://apm.activecommunities.com/naparec>

NATURE EXPLORATIONS FOR ALL ABILITIES

Wed., March 6, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Join Napa-Solano Audubon for a bird walk for younger birders! Trancas Crossing Park is a 33-acre park at the northern tip of the Napa River Trail. It has public river access, wide paved walking paths, a restroom, a small parking lot & a wheelchair-accessible parking lot located inside the park.



PETER E. HART/ WIKICOMMONS

LET'S PAINT A BLUEBIRD NESTBOX!

Wed., April 10, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Craft and Bird Walk at Alston Park. Ever wonder how a Bluebird Nestbox is made or how to take care of your own nestboxes? What makes it just right for Western Bluebirds? Paint a nestbox and take home your own plans.



Join NSAS at the Rush Ranch Open House!

**Saturday, April 27
10:00am-3:00pm**

Join us at the annual Rush Ranch Open House. Enjoy the day with live music, art shows, raffles, and many activities for every age.

Admission is free!

3521 Grizzly Island Road,
off Highway 12

For more information, go to:
solanolandtrust.org/events

COMMUNITY BIRDING

All ages are welcome on these community birding and building hikes. For more information, go to our website or contact Crystal DeMarco:

crystal.napasolanoaudubon@gmail.com

FROM ACORN TO MIGHTY OAK

Special Talk and Nature Hike With a Napa Park Ranger at Westwood Hills Park

Sat., March 30, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Meet a Napa Park Ranger! Here we will explore Westwood Hills park with a Ranger. We will go over the basics of using binoculars, field guides, and birding apps. This delightful, hilly, 106-acre park is dense with Oaks and Eucalyptus trees and is a haven for Wrens, Hummingbirds, and Towhees.

UNA CAMINATA EN EL PARQUE

Bilingual Guided Family Hike at Westwood Hills Park

Saturday, April 6, 2:00-4:00 pm

Join us for a unique Spanish/English Bilingual family-friendly hike! With the help of a translator, we'll talk about the most common birds in Napa and learn about *nuestras parques* - all of the amazing parks and trails available in the City of Napa!



May Walks & Activities

Watch your email inbox and our website for upcoming May activities.
napasolanoaudubon.com

Conservation Advocacy

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

Do you like to read? Do you like to attend city council meetings or regional government events? If so, you may be an excellent addition to the conservation committee I chair for NSAS.

The Bay Area is growing each year in terms of new businesses, housing developments, and infrastructure changes. While all of this is usually good, sometimes things can happen where there might be an inadvertent change that is not helpful to birds and their environment.

If you're interested in improving your town in Napa or Solano County and making it a safer place for our avian friends, consider helping our chapter take care of our counties!

By helping us identify, evaluate, monitor, or respond to project plans would be an asset, whether you spend an hour or become a regular volunteer. Attending a meeting in your community will help us keep an eye on things. It might only be a time or two each year, but it would make a difference.

If you're interested in learning more about ways to contribute to NSAS with a minimal amount of time, send an email to napiotrowski@yahoo.com. I would love to work with you.

Also, Audubon California will have its **Annual Advocacy Day** in June, usually on the 2nd or 3rd Wednesday, in Sacramento. If you'd like to attend with me, please let me know. As soon as the date is posted on their site, I will notify you.

"Bringing Back the Natives" Garden Tour & Talks

Sunday, May 5, 10:00am - 5:00pm

Thirty five bird & butterfly friendly, pesticide-free, water conserving, low maintenance home gardens containing 60% or more native plants will be open to view on Sunday, May 5th, at various home gardens throughout Alameda & Contra Costa counties. More than 40 garden talks will be offered throughout the day.

<http://bringingbackthenatives.net>



California Native Plant Sale & Wildflower Show April 13 & 14

More than 1,000 Plants for sale, over 100 drought tolerant native species plants.

Experts on hand to answer your questions.

Docent-led wildflower walks on April 13th.

Free Admission to Skyline Park during the sale and wildflower show.

Native gardens are a healthy choice for birds and other living creatures!

Presented by the Napa Chapter of the California Native Plant Society
For more information: www.napavalleycnps.org



STAN SHEBS

THE WILDFLOWER SHOW

Over 100 plants that have defied the drought will be displayed.

SKYLINE WILDERNESS PARK

2201 Imola Ave, Napa



The 16th Annual Olympic Birdfest

April 12-14

Sequim, Washington

Experience the spectacular landscapes of the Olympic Peninsula. You just might go home with a new bird for your life list!

For more information:

<http://www.olympicbirdfest.org>
or call (360) 681-4076, or email:
info@olympicbirdfest.org



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Napa, CA 94581

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Napa-Solano Audubon Society

Monterey Field Trip

by Sally Baumer, NSAS President

Recently we had a wonderful NSAS field trip to Monterey. The Bay Area was inundated with smoke from the fires and though there was some in the Monterey region, it was a welcome relief from the intensity that we were experiencing. We were able to meet up with former members, Ken and Deanna Skolnik, who recently moved down there. With the guidance of our trip leader and former park ranger, Bruce Thompson, and Ken and Deanna, we visited some great birding spots.

Our first stop was Garrapata State Park, a beautiful bluff overlooking the ocean. The highlight of that area for me was not so much the birds that we saw but the mammals. There was a raft of Sea Otters wrapped up in kelp, bobbing up and down with the waves looking like giant fuzzy sausages. Also to our delight was a Humpback whale, swimming in fairly close. We got a full tail view as it dove and were then thrilled when it came back up, straight out of the water and spy-hopped. Not long after that we watched a feeding frenzy of Sea Lions porpoising, Gulls and Pelicans diving and the water was roiling as the school of fish tried



to escape. What a sight to see!

Another stop was Salinas State Beach. There were deer amongst the dunes, and down at the shore a colony of Snowy Plovers. Lots of Sanderlings were chasing the waves along with dozens of Long Billed Curlews, Marbled Godwits and Surf Scoters, bobbing in the waves. Then off to Moonglow Dairy where they allowed birders access to the Salinas River. There were lots of birds and water fowl and much to our surprise, a calf being born.

Please be sure to join us on our next adventure. You never know what you may find!