



# SONG SPARROW

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[www.napasolanoaudubon.com](http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com)

## WINTER 2019 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- Dec. 14 Sat. CBC for Kids
- Dec. 15 Sun. Pre-Scout Benicia  
CBC Field Trip
- Dec. 16 Mon. Benicia CBC
- Jan. 01 Wed. Angwin CBD
- Jan. 25 Sat. Sandhill Crane Fly-out

For additional weekend Bird Walks,  
please sign up for our Field Trip email list.  
These can be subject to cancellation, and  
therefore are not listed here.

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



### Winter Walks & Activities

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

[napasolanoaudubon.com](http://napasolanoaudubon.com)

### Volunteers Needed!

Please contact Sally Baumer:  
[sally.birder@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sally.birder@sbcglobal.net) to  
find out how you can help.

Volunteering is a great way to meet  
new people & make a difference.



MICHAEL STOLTZMAN

## A Photographer's Love of Burrowing Owls

by Michael Stoltzman

The story began this past spring with one of my annual bird photography trips to Florida. Each trip I attempt to not only visit some of my personal favorites but also branch out and explore new spots, always in hopes of finding a "first".

Staying in the greater Orlando area, a friend and I decided to travel south to try and find Burrowing Owls at Brian Piccolo Park in Cooper City. At the time I had never had the opportunity to find these little guys. Little did I know of the journey these little owls would take me on. Knowing we only had the chance to shoot in the afternoon and the following morning I was very anxious if we would find them. As we arrived at the park it didn't take long as the park is home to a plethora of burrows and proved to be a fantastic shoot.

A week later, while visiting friends in Cape Coral, I learned that Cape Coral is home to some of the greatest concentrations of Burrowing Owls in North America. I could not drive more than a few blocks without finding active burrows and found myself photographing them each day for the next week.

Returning home to Solano County, I found myself wishing I had the same opportunity that I had in Florida. Of course, I knew the Bay Area had small populations of Burrowing Owls but also knew that many of these areas were

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# President's Corner

Sally Baumer, NSAS President

With the fiscal year in full swing, our chapter is experiencing many changes. Our Education Chair has left the Board and our Education Coordinator, Crystal DeMarco and her family has moved out of the area. After a great deal of discussion at our last Board meeting it was decided not to fill the Education Coordinator position at this time. Funding for this position was to come from grants and only a small amount of matching funds from NSAS. We have learned that the grants are much harder to come by and far more funds were necessary from our treasury. This was going to put us in a perpetual negative position. With uncertain leadership in the 2020-2021 fiscal year, oversight and supervision of this position was very iffy. Unfortunately, some of the partnerships we have made in the community had to be suspended for lack of manpower.

We need volunteers to help out with some of the existing projects. **We are still in need of help with the Beginning Bird Walks** so please give some thought to volunteering. If we could put together a team of birders to lead some of these walks, the burden would not fall on any one individual. **I am very grateful to Holly Jessup** who has agreed to take over the Blue Bird Box monitoring and possibly the Lake Dalwigk survey. **Thank you Holly for your help!**

We also need more monitors for Alston Park in Napa and help with cleaning and maintaining the boxes.

**I am very proud of all we accomplished with Crystal over the last two years.** We had great impact with our educational programs in the schools and our partnerships with Napa Parks & Rec Dept., the Napa Library, the Fairfield Library and others. However, going forward we will be simpler as we see what the future brings. ❁

# Burrowing Owls

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either closed to the public or decimated by development. Then I wondered, could I find them in Vacaville?

After some exhaustive research I located a few online articles that were years old. I was not ready to give up and decided to reach out to the NSAS. With the help of your own Sally Baumer I began to connect the dots. Using both the information I had found online coupled with the information Sally gave me I decided to take a chance and see if I could find them. Again, the anxiety began to rise, was there actually a chance that I could find them? Just like that as I was driving down the street I saw what I assumed was an owl. Picking up my binoculars, I began to have a quick peek at my first Western Burrowing Owl. I could not believe it! I just found an owl, just a few miles



MICHAEL STOLTZMAN

from the house.

To date I have located several active burrows and have been privileged to observe the growth of this year's owlets. I have also learned that there is a high probability that the site is going to be developed, leading me to ask myself what will happen to this colony. I am hopeful that each time I observe them will not be the last. ❁



# Christmas Bird Count

**Napa County Library is hosting the 6th Annual CBC4Kids on Saturday, Dec. 14, 8:30 - 12:30.**

For more information, contact Althea Kent: 707-253-4079 [althea.kent@countyofnapa.org](mailto:althea.kent@countyofnapa.org)



**The 73rd Benicia CBC is on Monday, Dec. 16, followed by a potluck dinner.**

The Benicia CBC circle includes Benicia, East Vallejo, Cordelia, West Suisun City and parts of Grizzly Island. For details, contact Robin Leong: [robin\\_leong@netzero.net](mailto:robin_leong@netzero.net)

*Robin could also use a volunteer to help coordinate the potluck.*



**The 49th Angwin CBC is on Wednesday, Jan. 01, 2020**

**A potluck and catered dinner will follow.**

The count area includes central Napa Valley, Pope Valley, Lake Hennessey and Lake Berryessa.

For details, contact Murray Berner: [vireocity@hotmail.com](mailto:vireocity@hotmail.com)

# Volunteer Opportunities

We need volunteers to lead beginning bird walks twice a month. We also have vacant Board positions:

- Vice President
- Education Chair
- Communications Chair
- Director at Large and most importantly
- A new President to take over July 1st

Please contact Sally Baumer: [sally.birder@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sally.birder@sbcglobal.net)

We also need volunteers to help repair and monitor nest boxes. Please contact Holly Jessup: [hollyjessup14@gmail.com](mailto:hollyjessup14@gmail.com).

# 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.

## BENICIA CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT PRE-COUNT SCOUTING

Sunday, December 15, 2019  
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Leader: Robin Leong

Join Robin Leong to scout several locations in advance of the Benicia Christmas Bird Count. Preview several areas in the 15 mile diameter Benicia Christmas Bird Count (BCBC) circle. You will learn 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 16th Christmas Bird Count. We will bird until approximately noon. Bring snacks and/or lunch.

**For more information please contact:**  
Robin Leong  
Email: [robin\\_leong@netzero.net](mailto:robin_leong@netzero.net)

## WOODBIDGE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE CRANE FLYOUT

Saturday, January 25, 2020



BECKY MATSUBARA

The Woodbridge Ecological Reserve is divided into two parcels, known as the South Site and North Site. Tours meet 90 minutes before sunset at the South Site where docent guides meet attendees and give a presentation.

Tours involve very little walking so you may want to bring a camp chair if you would like to sit and view the birds.

**It is recommended that you dress warmly**, especially during the winter months as it can be damp and chilly. It is also suggested that you bring binoculars and/or spotting scopes for up-close viewing but, you can easily enjoy the cranes with unaided eyes

and ears. *You may want to bring a light snack and water for your tour.*

**Portable toilets are available.** North Site has an ADA-compliant facility.

Guides may take tour groups down Woodbridge Road via car caravan to see cranes and other wildlife using the grainfields and marshes along the road. Your docent guides are trained in crane ecology, the area's natural history and the Reserve's habitat management, and want your experience to be memorable and educational. Tours usually conclude a half hour after sunset with the anticipated fly-in of the cranes at the North Site where a viewing shelter allows us to be hidden from the incoming birds.

Additional details will be sent out prior to the field trip.

## WALKS FOR EVERYONE PLEASE NOTE:

**Walks will be announced via our "field-trip e-blast".**

**Beginning bird walks are suspended until we get volunteer leaders.**

## Conservation Advocacy

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

**You love the birds and the birds need you.** The latest data show serious declines in North American birds. According to a Sept. 19 article in Science Magazine, **three billion** North American birds have vanished since 1970\*. *This means we need to spread our enjoyment of birds and interest in helping them to survive even more.*

**Start locally. For example, help protect Fagan Marsh.** While everyone likes the idea of waterfront trails, trails have costs. Did you know there can be dead zones of 1000 feet or more on either side of a trail? So even "small extensions or short bridges" can have very large impact. Many trails are not regularly monitored to insure folks and pets stay on the trail, and even worse damage is possible. Sadly, for some species, this can mean they will perish entirely in that area. *With Fagan Marsh, we have specific concerns because it has the highest concentration of the California rare and endangered Black Rails in the*

*Bay Area. Fagan Marsh also has the Federally rare and endangered Ridgeway's Rails and several other bird species.* The marsh is their home; they have nowhere else to go. So, we oppose anything that will further fragment or disturb their habitat. Alternative trail routes abound and need to be encouraged. You can help by talking about these issues with neighbors, your city and county representatives and commissioners, write letters to the editors of local papers, and speak out to protect the marsh and its inhabitants.

**Some good news:** *AB454 was signed into law protecting birds against federal rollbacks!\*\**

And remember — your help is valuable, whether you spend an hour or become a regular volunteer. **To learn more, send an email to [napiotrowski@yahoo.com](mailto:napiotrowski@yahoo.com).** I am happy to answer questions, or add you to our committee or advocacy action list. ❁

\*<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2019/09/three-billion-north-american-birds-have-vanished-1970-surveys-show>

\*\*<https://ca.audubon.org/news/victory-audubon-sponsored-bill-protecting-californias-migratory-birds-signed-law>



# Mendocino Coast Field Trip

by Bruce Thomson

The morning of September 21 dawned clear and mild in Fort Bragg, CA, a great day for birding along the Mendocino coast. Ten members of NSAS met 10 members of the Peregrine Audubon Society and our leader Ryan Keiffer. We began the day at Laguna Point in MacKerricher State Park. We birded the cove then headed out on the boardwalk over a marsh to the rocky coastal area. We observed among other birds; Pelagic and Brandt’s Cormorants, Pacific Loon, Rhinoceros Auklets, Surf Scoter, Black Oystercatchers, Black Turnstones, Common Murre, Osprey, and a Tufted Puffin (thank you Lucas). A walk on the beach next to the MacKerricher Haul Road, yielded a Pectoral Sandpiper.

The weather was warming up and we headed to Fort Bragg and inland to Rose Memorial Park (cemetery). We stopped for lunch and found a plethora of small birds, along with a Downey Woodpecker.

Our next stop was Mendocino Headlands State Park. Numerous trails are on the headlands about 50 feet above the surrounding rocky coast. Our surprise bird there was a “white” Black Oystercatcher standing on the rocks with other oystercatchers. What a catch!



Our last spot was Navarro Beach, part of Navarro River Redwoods State Park. We moved up river along an active riparian zone which proved to be very productive.

Probably the most exciting bird of the trip was a difficult to identify (because it would not sit still in the trees) Chestnut-sided Warbler. After much discussion and observation Mark finally got a photo of it.

Some other areas to visit are: Albion River Campground, Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden, Noyo Headlands and Harbor, and Lake Cleone (on the road to Laguna Point).

It was a beautiful day along the Mendocino coast with perfect weather, meeting new birding friends and topped off by a wonderful dinner in Fort Bragg arranged by Carol. ❁