



SONG SPARROW

Winter 2023 Vol. 53 No. 3
www.napasolanoaudubon.com

WINTER 2023-2024 CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

- Nov. 13 Mon. Two Day Trip - Pinnacles National Monument
- Nov. 19 Sun. Beginner Bird Walk, Am. Canyon Wetlands
- Dec. 2 Sat. Sutter Buttes
- Dec. 15 Fri. Benicia CBC Pre-Count
- Dec. 18 Mon. 76th Benicia CBC
- Jan. 1 Mon. 51st Angwin CBC
- Jan. 11 Thu. Speaker Series: Raven Predation of Snowy Plover Nests
- Feb. 8 Thu. Speaker Series: Internet of Wings
- Mar. 14 Thu. Speaker Series: Bluebird Recovery Program

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



GREAT HORNED OWL / BECKY MATSUBARA

FUNDRAISING APPEAL

This is our **major fundraiser** of the year intended to raise funds to support our School Education Programs, Monthly Speakers, Field Trips, Christmas Bird Counts, and other annual expenses.

Please see Page 2 for more info and what you will receive for your donation.

Please consider giving any amount you can. We greatly appreciate it.



BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER / MARK STEPHENSON

Why Birds Matter: Our Heritage and Our Future

By Pam Condos

If you were alive in the year 1970, more than one in four birds in the U.S. and Canada have disappeared within your lifetime.

The North American bird population is down by 2.9 billion breeding adults, with devastating losses among birds in every biome. The scale of loss is unlike anything recorded in modern history. More than 90% of the total loss of birdlife in the U.S. and Canada comes from just 12 common avian families, including sparrows, blackbirds, and finches. However, not all the news is dire. Some groups of birds are doing well, and for good reason—governments and societies have invested in saving them.

The reasons for such staggering loss are multi-fold and complex:

- **Habitat loss from climate change and human development:** Over the years humans have expanded their footprint, resulting in habitat loss for birds. Less habitat means less space to find food, mates, nest, and raise young. As a result, there are fewer offspring and dwindling bird populations.
- **Invasive species:** Birds, animals, and even man have the ability to adapt to changes in their environment but this takes time, even generations. Even the introduction of one invasive bird species can have a dramatic impact on bird populations. Birds don't have time to adapt when humans unfairly introduce invasive species to their habitat.

Continued on page 7

President's Corner

By Mark Stephenson, NSAS President



By now you have probably read the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology's Report that since 1970, over the past 50 years, we have lost nearly 3 Billion Birds.

Those of us who have been birders throughout this time period have personally experienced this great decline in the numbers of birds and witnessed as more species have become threatened and endangered. It is estimated that more than 1-in-4 birds have vanished from the earth.

Undoubtedly, there are many factors behind this loss. However, first and foremost, is the loss of habitat! Our continued rampant, world-wide, development of our natural environments; filling in marshes, plowing up prairies, and cutting down forests; has dramatically decreased habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Another major factor is the continued use of pesticides. Although the use of DDT was banned in the early 70's, the chemical industry has continued to alter the chemical make-up of pesticides in their efforts to eradicate insects. One of the most prolific techniques today is to soak and coat virtually all agricultural seeds with neonicotinoids, (neonics for short) a chemical with a half-life of 2-3 years that has entered our soils, waterways, and food chains. *It is virtually impossible to find seeds for corn, sunflowers, soy and many vegetables that are not coated with neonics.*

Although not as severely toxic as DDT, the newer chemicals have resulted in the dramatic loss of bees and other pollinators, sparrows, and other grassland birds, as well as many other seed and insect-eating birds. The EPA has studies that show that neonics are harmful to an ever widening range of species: from bumblebees, prairie chickens, and even whooping cranes, to chinook salmon. (<https://biologicaldiversity.org>) In an organic farm, it is the birds, lizards, mice and other insectivores that keep the insect populations in check, resulting in a healthy farm and a flourishing, nontoxic environment. *However, our modern day, industrial farms have created a sterile environment, filled with harmful chemicals, that is virtually lifeless.*

A simple truth discovered by Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson and many other naturalists in the 1900's is that all life is interconnected. How we treat our fields, farms, marshes and forests, is connected to the health of our soil, water, insects, birds, mammals and ourselves. What we do to one organism will effect all others.

As an organization, we are committed to preserving, a major portion of our natural environment, to set aside habitat for our native plants and wildlife. We hope you will join us in keeping yourselves informed, lobby for reasonable, balanced, thoughtful development in our community and beyond, and in our efforts to encourage non-toxic, agricultural practices, that lead to a healthier environment, not only for birds, but for all life on our planet.

(Please read Pam Condos' article, "Why Birds Matter", pg. 1, for more information on this topic.) ♦

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Board Meetings are open to members.

If you wish to attend, please call:
(707) 246-2795.

DONATIONS APPRECIATED!

Napa-Solano Audubon Society welcomes gifts of funds, stock, or property, and bequests in general, or in honor of the memory of a loved one. Gifts may be directed to any NSAS project.

Unspecified gifts will go for Education, Conservation or other projects. Since NSAS is an all-volunteer organization, 100% of your donation goes to this chapter. **All gifts are tax-deductible.**

FUNDRAISING APPEAL

This is our **major fundraiser** of the year intended to raise funds to support our School Education Programs, Monthly Speakers, Field Trips, Christmas Bird Counts, and other annual expenses.

Our Fall Fundraising Appeal Letter is already in the mail, so please be on the lookout for it!

- Non-members will receive annual membership for gifts of \$25+
- Donations of \$200 will receive a copy of Hermann Heinzel's book "*Birds of Napa County*".
- Donations of \$300 will receive one of our new Kestrel T-Shirts;
- Donations of \$500 will receive a hard copy of our "*Breeding Birds of Solano County*".

Please consider giving any amount you can. Thank you!

RENEWAL REMINDER: If you forgot to renew your **NSAS Membership** that expired earlier this summer, please visit our website & click on the **JOIN** button.
Thank you, we appreciate your support!



Or, point your phone's camera on the code and follow the link.

Calendar of Events



PROGRAMS

Note: Programs are held on the second Thursday of the month in location and via Zoom. We encourage everyone to attend. You will be sent the meeting details in our regular eBlasts.

RAVEN PREDATION OF SNOWY PLOVER NESTS

Thursday, Jan. 11, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Cal Poly Humboldt Wildlife Department

Location: Benicia Library & Zoom



SNOWY PLOVER / STEVE BERARDI

The U.S. Pacific Coast population of the Western Snowy Plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*; plover) has declined due to loss and degradation of coastal habitats, predation, and human disturbance. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the subspecies in 1993 as threatened under the Endangered Species Act due to the population declines and habitat loss. Predation of nests and chicks has been identified as an important cause of historic population declines, and thus, most predator management actions for this subspecies are focused on reducing this pressure.

In recent years, common ravens (*Corvus corax*; ravens) have become the most common & pervasive predators of plover nests and chicks, especially in areas with subsidized food sources for ravens and sites without predator management. Harriers and Peregrines have an impact to a lesser degree. You may have encountered roped off areas along the coastal dunes or even Raven Cages, that are designed to protect Plover nests from Ravens by keeping them away from their chicks.

Join us for a fun evening of learning more about our endangered Western Snowy Plovers.

THE INTERNET OF WINGS: How the Data Revolution Is About to Change the Way You Bird

Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Nathan Pieplow

Location: Luthern Church & Zoom

What if your phone could pick out rarities for you from a flock of birds? What if it could tell you exactly where an individual migrant came from and where it is going?

These technologies already exist, or soon will. In this talk, Nathan Pieplow will discuss how cutting-edge innovations in bird tracking and automatic identification can enhance conservation, supercharge citizen science, and broaden the appeal of birding.

You'll learn how the song of a White-crowned Sparrow communicates not just its species identity, but its street address.

You'll learn what happened when a flock of curlews ran into a snowstorm, and how we know. **And you'll learn** how YOU can collect the data needed to reverse declines in bird populations.

BLUEBIRD RECOVERY PROGRAM

Thursday, March. 14, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Speaker: Mike Azevedo & Georgette Howington

Location: Benicia Library & Zoom

Taken from Mt. Diablo Audubon:

Bluebirds, like many other secondary-cavity nesters, lost much of their natural nesting habitat. Bluebirds and other species of cavity nesting birds need our help through restoring spaces for their nesting and conservation. With that goal in mind, the California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP) has undertaken a nest box program to help the secondary-cavity nesting birds. Since 1994, CBRP nest box monitors have installed & monitored thousands of nest boxes with astounding results.

Monitoring your own Bluebird Trail is conservation in action and Citizen Science. It's rewarding, fun and a way to connect with Nature that will never cease to amaze you.

FIELD TRIPS

Note: Field Trips are open first to NSAS Chapter Members. There is often a limit of 12-15 participants and on a first sign up, first-served basis. So be on the lookout for Monthly Trip Notices and be the first to sign-up! If space is available, it will open to non-members shortly before the trip heads out.

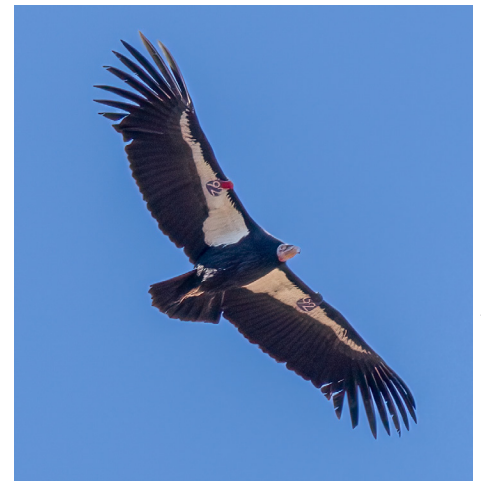


Sign up for all our Weekly Walk & Field Trip Notices on the NSAS homepage by clicking on the "Subscribe to Email Updates" link, or point your phone camera on the QRCode above.

THE PINNACLES NATIONAL MONUMENT

Mon., Nov. 13 - Tues., Nov. 14, 2023 begins at 8:00 a.m.

Leader: Mark Stephenson



CALIFORNIA CONDOR / MARK STEPHENSON

Home to the California Condor, the Pinnacles National Monument hosts many other riparian and chaparral species. The Condors reside on the cliffs along the High Peaks Trail along with Prairie Falcons, Golden Eagles and Canyon Wrens. Birding at Pinnacles National Park likely reaches its peak with a sighting of the endangered California Condor. But with the park's varied habitats of chaparral, oak/pine woodland, riparian, grassland, and scree communities, and its location on the migratory Pacific Flyway, birders can hope to see some of the 180 other species that have been observed in the park. From Western Tanagers, California Quail, Oak Titmice, found



in the Oak Woodlands, to California Thrashers, Spotted Towhees, and Bushtits found in the Chaparral habitats, to House Wrens, Black Phoebe, Yellow Warblers, and even Yellow-breasted Chats that frequent the shaded riparian area.

If we are successful birding all the locations at the Pinnacles on Monday, we may head over to Elkhorn Slough for a fun day of Estuary birding on Tuesday. Elkhorn Slough is known to be one of the best migratory shorebird stopovers on the West coast, so we're sure to find lots of shorebirds, ducks, geese, herons and egrets.

Look for Bruce Thomsen's eBlast and join us for our fun November Field Trip which will be a 2 day trip!

SUTTER BUTTES

Sat., Dec 2 / Trip is Full!
Leader: Wendy Cole

The Sutter Buttes include a variety of habitats and micro-climates attracting a variety of migrating birds and residents. On this trip we will hike through the varied Butte landscapes from ranch land and grazing meadow habitats, to blue oak savannah woodlands, to live-oak thickets, riparian corridors, and open craggy hillsides. Our trip will include a 3-5 mile hike with plenty of stops along the way to look for plants, birds, and other wildlife.

Carpooling from: Sweeney Sports in Yuba City and/or Cordelia Library at 5:30 a.m.

Stay tuned for the eBlast from Wendy Cole to sign up for this exciting trip!

BENICIA PRE-COUNT

Fri., Dec. 15, 8:30 a.m. - Noon
Leader: Robin Leong

For those of you who enjoy birding areas close to home, or who plan on participating in this year's Benicia Christmas Bird Count and would like to get a head start, this trip is for you! Robin will take you to a number of the Benicia CBC's local hotspots to look for exciting birds that have arrived in time for this year's CBC. **Meet at Wardlaw Park dog park off of Ascot.**

CALL FOR CBC VOLUNTEERS

Our NSAS Annual Christmas Bird Counts (CBC's) are just around the corner. Napa-Solano Audubon sponsors two CBCs. We always have a great time counting birds during the day, and celebrating with lots of camaraderie at our tasty compilation dinners that follow!

Please come join us this year. We can't do it without you!

Benicia CBC: Contact Robin Leong
Robin_Leong@sonic.net

Angwin CBC: Contact Murray Berner
vireocity@hotmail.com

UPCOMING NSAS FIELD TRIPS

Details as we get closer to the dates.

February 3rd & 4th: Sacramento Wildlife Refuge and Colusa WR, Gray lodge WR, with Sacramento Audubon leaders.

March: Bobcat Ranch (if all goes well)

April: Marin's Las Gallinas Water Treatment Plant & Sonoma's Reclamation Road

May 10th - 13th: Ashland, Oregon "In Search of Great Grey Owls" with Harry Fuller

WEEKLY WALKS

Please note: we no longer list Weekly Walks here, as Andrew chooses each location based on the latest bird sightings. **He will send out an email invite each week with locations and details.** Walks are usually from 8:00 am-Noon. **Please sign up for his emails on our website.**

BEGINNER BIRD WALKS

Beginner Bird Walk Sundays at the Wetlands Edge Park in American Canyon. Be on the lookout for our email blasts in March. *For more info, contact Tom Slyker: SolanoBirder@gmail.com* Discover the magic of birding on these gentle, yet inspiring walks. **Open to all.**

AMERICAN CANYON WETLANDS

Sunday, Nov. 19th, 9:00 a.m. - Noon
Leader: Karina Garcia



Christmas Bird Count

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**The 76th Benicia CBC
Monday, December 18th, 2023.**

The Benicia Count was founded by Benician Emerson Stoner in 1930; 93 years ago! This year, Tom Slyker will be assisting Robin Leong in organizing this fun event.

The Benicia CBC circle includes the communities of Benicia, East Vallejo, Cordelia, West Suisun City, as well as parts of Grizzly Island. *If all goes well, we'll even send a boat out to Grizzly Bay!*

We have many teams, with experienced leaders and various levels of hiking & walking difficulty, so let Robin & Tom know if you'd like to participate.

Please consider joining us regardless of your level of birding expertise.

Our compilation dinner: TBA

For details & how to participate:
contact Robin Leong: 970-234-5727
or Robin_Leong@sonic.net

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**The 51st Angwin CBC
Monday, January 1, 2023**

Start the New Year off with a blast by participating in the Angwin CBC!

Birding opportunities are available throughout the count circle including the Napa Valley, Pope Valley, Lakes Berryessa, Hennessey, and Angwin.

We have an excellent crew of experienced area leaders so everyone is encouraged to take part. The count is an important measure of local birdlife, and has gained added importance as a tool to monitor changes in numbers and distribution of birds in the wildfire burn zone that impacted about forty percent of the count circle in 2020.

Our compilation dinner:

The Carnegie Building
1360 Oak Ave. St. Helena, CA 94574
at the corner of Oak Ave & Adams St.

For details & how to participate:
contact Murray Berner:
vireocity@hotmail.com

Why NSAS Opposes the Proposed Solano County Flannery Development Project

By Mark Stephenson

Solano County has long been one of the jewels of the Bay Area. Despite significant development in Fairfield, Vacaville, and Dixon, large portions of Solano County lands have been held as family farms for many generations. This farmland, “historically used for grazing cattle and sheep,”⁽⁶⁾ is in the middle of Solano County which also produces wheat, barley, hay and alfalfa, encompasses small vineyards, and orchards of apples and walnuts. Besides supplying our markets with food and textiles, these farms have been the residence and wintering grounds of several rare plants and endangered animal species. With acres of grasslands and unique vernal pools that make up this habitat, a number of endemic plants and birds call this land their home.

According to reports from television, newspapers and legislators, “a mysterious group of investors,”⁽²⁾ the Flannery Associates, *that used “a Delaware LLC,” to keep their identity hidden from the public,* “is backed by a cadre of billionaire tech investors from Silicon Valley... intending to override the local zoning that protects Travis Air Force Base, farmers, and the wind industry to build a Megacity east of Fairfield.”⁽³⁾ Flannery Associates has, for the past 5 years secretly and surreptitiously spent upwards of “\$800 million to buy 140 properties, amassing a 55,000-acre portfolio of farmland”⁽²⁾ located in the heart of Solano County.

The Parent Company of this group is called California Forever, and has required land-owners to sign “non-disclosure agreements”⁽⁴⁾ so they could secretly continue to acquire one farm at-a-time. According to testimony by Congressman John Garamendi, in some cases it appears they are using “secrecy, bullying, and mobster tactics to force generational farm families to sell their land.” They have had teams of lawyers “threaten to file... lawsuits” against families who refused to sell. Since most of these landowners were unable to afford the legal fees to contest this large developer’s law firms, they were eventually “forced to sell their generational heritage.”⁽³⁾ Just as concerning, much of

their land “encircles Travis Air Force Base.”⁽²⁾ Potential home owners, living adjacent to the base, would be in direct conflict with the Airbase’s security as well as noise levels produced by this strategic air base, due to the constant take-off and landings of their large military aircraft. The map of their acquisitions shows how this development would tear up the the generational farms in the heartland of Solano County. *Do the citizens of Solano County really want the Flannery LLC to develop a “Megacity?”*⁽¹⁾

But that is not all that is at stake! In addition to the grasslands, pastures, and orchards found in this area, the Solano prairies encompass Vernal Pools which support a menagerie of rare plants and endangered animals. Vernal pools are a type of temporary wetland, “formed where a hard underground layer prevents rainwater from draining downward into the subsoils.”⁽⁹⁾ They are one of the most ecologically sensitive and unique ecosystems on earth and the Solano County prairies are home to this endangered habitat. “Estimates suggest that close to 90 percent or more of the vernal pool habitat in the Central Valley and in other parts of the state have been lost.”⁽⁹⁾ *Vernal pools support over 200 species of plants with over 100 of these species endemic to California, and found nowhere else on Earth making them especially unique.*

There is more to this important article. Continue reading on the NSAS website: <https://tinyurl.com/NSAS-Flannery>

References:

1. CBS News Channel 13 8/23/23 - Could a New Megacity Be Coming to Solano County?
2. S.F. Chronicle - J. K. Dineen - 8/25/23 - Mystery Developer Creates ‘Game of Thrones’ Type Drama with \$800 Million Land Grab
3. Press Release 8/29/23 - Garamendi Testifies Before California Legislature Senate Committee on Agriculture
4. S.F. Chronicle by J.K. Dineen - 9/3/23 - ‘So Arrogant it’s Amazing’: Solano County Ranchers Decry Tech Billionaires’ Land Grab
6. Wanda Williams, (Solano County District 3 Supervisor), in the Daily Republic 9/22/23 - Solano Voices: Keeping an Eye on Flannery and their Plans
9. California Vernal Pools: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Plants/Vernal-Pools>



AMERICAN KESTREL / KELLY COLGAN



DOUGLAS MESA MINT / JAMES GAITHER



PACIFIC CHORUS TREE FROG / COASTSIDE LAND TRUST

Bluebird Nest Box Monitoring 2023

by Tom Slyker



There are a dozen locations in Napa & Solano Counties, including Alston Park, Wetlands Edge Park, and Lynch Canyon where you will find nesting boxes that are being monitored by NSAS Citizen Science volunteers.

From March till late July these boxes are visited on a regular basis to provide optimum nesting conditions for the birds and to document the results of the nesting season as part of the California Bluebird Recovery Program's focus on growing the population of Bluebirds in our area.

Thanks to the efforts of Helena and David Kassel, Kelly Pepper, Wendy Cole, Elena Franceschi, Karina Garcia, Lou Penning, Maggie Hall, Liz Nicolaou, Marcy Lavender, Pam Condos, Angie Cistone-Zierenberg, Miriam Siegel, Mickey Riva, Carol Boykin, Mo (Betty) Mosher, Tom Slyker, Maureen McCullough, Jeanne Hillyard, Jeff Bonneville, Patti and Bill Heidl, Adrienne Molieri, Evan Bremer, and Janelle Hall we were able to monitor 163 nesting boxes during 2023.

With regards to the 2023 season, the wet weather in the spring seemed to slow the start of nesting for the Bluebirds and the late start meant fewer second nesting efforts. The result was a 10% decrease in Bluebird eggs being laid compared to 2022 (see chart below).

Although we had higher losses for the nests this year vs. 2022, we had a 20% increase in the number of TRES eggs this year. These birds did not seem to be bothered by the weather and they started laying eggs the same time as last year.

The Tree Swallows were able to increase their nesting output this year, possibly because they were not seeing

early competition from the Bluebirds for the nesting boxes. Unfortunately, the Tree Swallows also saw higher losses to eggs and nestlings. In the end the total number of Swallows fledged was the same as 2022 even though we had many more eggs. In conclusion, we had a similar total number of eggs from all species in 2023 as were observed in 2022, however we observed 50 fewer birds fledging in 2023, a 10% decline in productivity for this season.

Every year we try to add more boxes to continue to expand the Bluebird population. *However, to increase the number of boxes we need more volunteers to monitor them through the nesting season.* For the volunteers it is an opportunity to get outside and spend an hour or two walking and talking with companions and enjoying the outdoors. *You will experience the joys of watching a family of birds raise their young and fledge a new brood of nestlings. You'll also experience the despair of losing a box of nestlings to predation or abandonment.*

Occasionally you will experience the unexpected like having a box that one week contained Tree Swallow (TRES) eggs and the next week Western Bluebird eggs mixed in. Eventually the Bluebird eggs hatched, nestlings fledged, and we were left to wonder whatever happened to the TRES that originally started the nest. So, if you would like to try your hand at monitoring nest boxes and celebrate the arrival of spring with the birth of new baby birds, we could definitely use your help for our 2024 monitoring season.

Please contact Tom Slyker at solanobirder@gmail.com if you are interested in this opportunity or would like more information about nest box monitoring. ♦

Bluebird Box Totals / Napa & Solano County 2022 & 2023					
2023	Eggs	Dead	Predated	Fledged	Unhatched Egg
Tree Swallow	301	42	26	200	31
Western Bluebird	487	76	70	276	65
Ash-Throated Flycatcher	27	0	5	22	0
Total	815	118	103	498	96
2022	Eggs	Dead	Predated	Fledged	Unhatched Egg
Tree Swallow	244	17	16	194	15
Western Bluebird	537	65	86	331	52
Bewick's Wren	7	0	0	7	0
Ash-Throated Flycatcher	20	3	4	12	1
Total	808	85	106	544	68

Why Birds Matter: Our Heritage and Our Future

Continued from page 1

- **Predation by outdoor cats:**

Predation by domestic cats is the number-one direct, human-caused threat to birds, that could easily be changed, in the US and Canada.

- **Glass collisions:** Nearly every major city has dozens of incredibly tall buildings, many with shining glass. Each year it's estimated between 100 million and 1 billion birds lose their lives from glass collisions in the U.S.

- **Additionally, pesticides, sport hunting, and diminishing water supplies** also contribute to declining avian populations. *These are many of the same reasons all wildlife have plummeted globally as threats stretch from the Arctic to the tip of South America.*

Why should we care that birds are disappearing? We should care because birds are telling us the health of our nation is at stake. They are the "canary in the coal mine." Their losses are a harbinger of what human beings face. Birds rely on nature just as we do- for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat. As they lose habitat, from large stands of native forest, to open meadows, wetlands and marshes, we too are losing those resources. Birds are essential to our ecosystem and are crucial for people and our planet to thrive. Many species are voracious predators of pests. Barn Swallows can consume as many as 60 insects per hour! Numerous species eat berries, and then distribute seed-strewn droppings, ensuring that new plants and trees continue to sprout. Some birds eat rodents, keeping those populations in check. A pair of barn owls can consume over 2,000 rodents during their breeding season. Specific species are the ultimate animal sanitation workers.

For example, vultures are the only vertebrate animals that eat carrion exclusively (other scavengers, like coyotes, also hunt for food). When vulture populations fall, the number of rotting carcasses on a landscape goes up. This means a higher risk of disease for humans and other animals. Additionally, birds are just beautiful, filling our world with song and joy.

"We should care because birds are telling us the health of our nation is at stake."

When we help birds thrive, we sustain the essential lands and waters needed for abundant wildlife, resources, and well-being. Efforts focused on conservation present complexities in bird protection such as high costs, unclear decision making, or trade-offs that may protect one species but are not ideal for another. Additionally, some conservation actions provoke tensions with economic interests. That said, sustained efforts have proven beneficial to some species. For example, four decades of wetlands conservation have generated spectacular comebacks of ducks and geese and improved water quality for people. Applying this winning formula in more habitats will help our nation's birds and natural resources rebound.

There's more to this important article. Please continue reading on our website:
<https://tinyurl.com/NSAS-WhyBirdsMatter>

Birding Blog

by Carol Boykin

Everyone loves a walk in nature. Trees, flowers, scrubs, and of course birds.

Sadly, there are some who aren't so respectful, and toss trash on the ground instead of a receptacle. I'm sure everyone who reads this article would never be guilty of that!

However, we have all seen trash and walked by it. After all, who wants to pick up "ICK"?

Coastal cleanup was on September 23rd. Betty Labastida, one of our members, chairs this event every year. I went and worked for an hour. She had buckets, grabbers and co-ordinated where to go, and took care of the garbage every one brought back. It was a long day for her.

Next year NSAS will make sure every member is aware of this as I'm sure there are many who would jump at the chance to make our surroundings cleaner for our birds and wildlife. Betty also leads our Earth Day Napa River Clean-up Day.

Be on the lookout for location details for the 2024 Spring Napa Earth Day Clean-up, tentatively scheduled for Sunday, April 21st at 9:00 a.m.

Last year our team collected many pounds of garbage found along Napa Creek in downtown Napa! ♦



**Birds Need You.
Become a Member today.
NSAS Annual Membership:
only \$25 for individuals
and \$35 for families.
Click on the "Join Button"
on our website homepage.**



Spread the Word: Birds Are Awesome!



The NSAS Cosumnes River Preserve & Sandhill Crane Fly-n Field Trip

By Mark Stephenson

On Saturday, October 28th, 23 Napa Solano Audubon birders gathered at the Cosumnes River Preserve. The weather was mild but windy, so many of the birds were laying low in the reeds. However, we were still treated to many sandhill cranes, greater white-fronted geese and northern pintail.

Several shorebirds also gave nice views including least sandpiper, dunlin, and greater yellowlegs. Efforts to locate a pectoral sandpiper that had been recently spotted, were to no avail. Next we headed to Desmond Road and there again we were treated to sandhill cranes, greater white-fronts and pintail. We also viewed, a large raft of ruddy ducks along with canvasbacks and ring-necked ducks. The winds continued! Our final destination was the Woodbridge Ecological Reserve where we met Steve and Linda, docents from the Lodi Sandhill Crane Association/California Department of Fish and Wildlife, who escorted us into the sanctuary. They gave us a nice history of the sandhill cranes and delta and we patiently waited for the cranes arrival. At dusk, as if on cue, the cranes started to fly in,



SANDHILL CRANE / MARK STEPHENSON

in groups of 2 to 25. They landed in shallow water about 700 feet way from us. (According to the DFW biologist the cranes have been overnighing in an area a little farther from the viewing area as they may be disturbed by noise from the viewers.) However, with binoculars they were well within in sight. An additional treat was the rising full moon, silhouetting the incoming cranes. By the time we departed, several hundred cranes had arrived from their feeding areas to spend the night in the shallow waters of these flooded fields where they feel better protected from possible predators. ♦