

Napa-Solano Audubon's Rare Bird Alert #4
Williamson's and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers Olema, Marin County - 1-22-2021

Greetings Napa Solano Audubon Members, Family & Friends:

Periodically, we will send out Rare Birding Alerts of uncommon or rare species that have been seen in our area. Recently, we have been treated to 2 woodpecker species that are extremely uncommon in our area: the Williamson's Sapsucker and the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. The Williamson's is the 4th or 5th Marin County Record while the Yellow-bellied is seen more regularly. Accompanying these birds in the Olema Campground is the Winter Wren described in Rare Bird Alert #3.

Location: These 2 birds appear to be overwintering in the Olema Campground, located just South of Point Reyes Station along Highway 1. The Williamson's Sapsucker was found by Will Anderson on January 7th who was birding with Nathan Pieplow. It has been seen ever since by many birders including Lucas and myself. We were first alerted to this bird when Will sent us a text. Lucas has birded with Will for several years in The Redwood Regional Ornithological Society as part of their Young Birders in the group they call YAMS (Young Ancient Murrelets or YAMS for the first rare bird found by this group). The Williamson's is frequently located in several pines and cypress trees near the entrance to the Campground. The Yellow-bellied, an Eastern Sapsucker was found by Ron Mallory who was birding with David Tomb while looking for the Williamson's. It seems to prefer the cypress trees adjacent to the storage huts near the entrance to the south of the pines. Both birds have been venturing around in this area for 2 weeks now. Please note that there is an \$8 Day-use Fee and the Campground has asked visitors not to arrive before 8:00 a.m. This may be due to the fact that Lucas and I arrived in the dark the next morning at 7:00 a.m. (although we were very quiet!).

Identification: The Williamson's Sapsucker is a female which looks very different from the bold male. Rather than having the striking white and jet black coloration as well as the bright red throat of the male, it has a rather dull brown face and head and softly laddered black back and flanks with yellow hues on the breast. The Yellow-bellied is a bright male with a bright red crown and throat bordered by black with the characteristic white blaze on the upper wing and the bold white stripe from above the bill to the belly that is characteristic of all male sapsuckers. As it's name suggests, it has yellow hues on it's breast. Benicia is well known for it's overwintering Sapsuckers. A few years back there was a beautiful Red-naped that eventually was proclaimed a hybrid (as the red throat bled over onto the breast) overwintering near the Benicia Community Park that was seen by many. A distinguishing feature of the Yellow-bellied is that the red on the crown does not appear on the nape below it's crown's black border. For more photos and information find our eBird report located at: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S78877744> .

