

Napa Solano Audubon Society Birding Notes #29

Hello NSAS friends and members –

Last week I was in Phoenix – not my first choice of where to be but there I was. The good part was having a chance to see multiple Vermillion Flycatchers, both male and female birds, beautiful birds. Plus, there were Cardinals, Gila Woodpeckers, Verdin, Curve-billed Thrashers and more species that we just don't get to see here in the bay area. Having a chance to see new birds in new places is truly one of the benefits of hitting the road! Speaking of hitting the road, I'm off again in September so it will most likely be early October before I will be able to work on the next issue of Birding Notes.

Note #1 – NSAS announcements

1. ***Our monthly speaker series is scheduled to resume at 7 PM on Thursday, September 8th in a new Hybrid form!*** For people who are able to attend the meeting in-person we will be meeting the speakers at the Napa Valley Lutheran Church located at 1796 Elm St. in Napa. For those of us who are unable to make it to Napa for this event, we can still enjoy the presentation via Zoom. The presenters will be Denise and David Hamilton of Napa who will be sharing photos and stories from their adventures in Ecuador. Details for the meeting have been posted on our website at <http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/>.
2. Our October and November member meetings have been scheduled by Barbara Navolanic. In October ***Nita Winter and Rob Badger*** will share with us *the story behind their book "Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change."* Nita and Rob are recipients of Sierra Club's 2020 Ansel Adams Award for Conservation Photography and their talk promises to share beautiful pictures of CA wildflowers as well as some of the birds that depend on these plants for their survival.

In November Luis Eduardo Paz Villanueva of Panama City, Panama will share his knowledge of the local birds of Panama. Luis has 21 years of experience in tourism with PIB, Tropical Birding, Ancón Expeditions,

Advantage Tours, Elder Hostel birding trips, Explore (UK) and Freecare birding. His area of specialization is birdwatching and lately he has focused on wildlife photography.

3. Information about our September ***field trip to Sonoma / Bodega Bay on Sunday, September 11 at 8 AM*** was recently emailed to everyone on our Field Trips mailing list. *Hopefully you received the message* (if not let me know and I'll add you to this email blast list). The trip leaders are Mark Stephenson and his son Lucas. If you are signed up for the "northbaybirds group" mailing list, you will have received a message from Lucas describing the variety of birds they have recently seen in this area. Note that participation will be limited to 12 members. Details about the trip are posted on our website at <http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/>. If you are interested in this trip, please RSVP with Bruce Thomsen at brucecthomsen@yahoo.com.
4. Our weekly Saturday birding walks led by ornithologist Andrew Ford will start up again on ***Saturday, September 3rd at American Canyon Wetlands beginning at 8:00 a.m.*** Unfortunately, Andrew will be out of town for work that weekend so I will be the leader for this trip. There will be a weak high tide that peaks at ~ 8 AM so we should get a good view of a variety of shorebirds. Also, the Green-winged Teal have started to return so we should see some of the early arrivals for these ducks. And, on Monday we spotted a Virginia Rail so we might be lucky enough to see it again.

Note #2 – What about the Birds?

1. I was reading the magazine "The Week" and came across a short note about crows that were working for the city of Sodertalje, Sweden. The town has recruited wild crows to pick up discarded cigarette butts from the city streets. ***Corvid Cleaning***, the company behind this program has trained the birds to deposit the butts in a machine that will reward them with food for each butt deposited. The estimate is that Swedish smokers leave more than a billion butts on the streets every year and the hope is that the crows will help the city and possibly the country cut their annual costs of street cleaning.

2. There are always the photos from Mia McPherson. Two I enjoyed from her most recent mailings are these Cedar Waxwing and Yellow Warbler pictures. It is a sinister looking Waxwing.



Adult Cedar Waxwing on a chokecherry bush by Mia McPherson



Adult male Yellow Warbler in a serviceberry bush by Mia McPherson

3. NSAS is a participant in the ***California Bluebird Recovery Program (CBRP)*** and NSAS members monitor ~ 150 nesting boxes in our two counties. As I was working to add the results from this year's observations to the CBRP website I came across a short 4-minute video that shares the history of the CBRP group and more importantly shares some lovely images of nesting Bluebirds. If you have 5 minutes to spare, I think you might enjoy this video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJbWNBMCBns>

4. Many of us in the NSAS participate in either our Christmas Bird Counts (CBC) at Benicia and Angwin or our Climate Watch project or maybe like Mark Stephenson you participate in both programs. If you've wondered what happens with the observation data you generate there is an Audubon article titled "Inside the Data Factory" that provides a brief glimpse at the work Audubon scientists do with the data you collect during a CBC or a Climate Watch outing. You can find the article at https://www.audubon.org/news/inside-data-factory?ms=science_citizen-eng-

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5. “Seabird Secrets” is a series of short 3 to 4-minute YouTube episodes where each episode explores information about a specific seabird species and potential threats the species is facing. To learn about **Black Guillemots, Common Terns, and Razorbills** you can watch Episodes 1, 2, and 3 of this Seabird Secrets series at https://www.audubon.org/news/this-world-oceans-day-explore-secrets-seabirds?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-newsletter-engagement_20220813_eng-kids-newsletter_seabirds-puffin&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20220813_eng-kids-newsletter&utm_content=seabirds-puffin.



Black Guillemots - Photo by Walker Golder

Note #3 – Birding History – (We’ve come a long way baby!)

1. Audubon’s Summer 2022 email blast had a series of leads to good articles to read. One of the articles was “*On the 25th anniversary of his book “Kingbird Highway,” Kenn Kaufman reflects on the many ways the hobby*

has transformed since he first hitchhiked across the country chasing birds in the 1970s.” You can read the article at https://www.audubon.org/news/heres-how-drastically-birding-has-changed-over-past-50-years?ms=science_citizen-eng-email-ea-newsletter-engagement_20220821_american-birds_&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20220821_american-birds&utm_content=. In this article Kenn describes many of the changes and advancements in birding he has seen since he first traveled the country 50 years ago.

2. The August 2022 Audubon Newsletter provided a link to an article titled “*A Brief History of How Scientists Have Learned About Bird Migration.*” In this article the author, Rebecca Heisman, provides excerpts from her soon to be released book “*Flight Paths.*” The article shares a series of “**milestones that trace our unfolding understanding of migration.**” It’s fascinating to understand how technology has changed and how rapidly it is continuing to change which has led to a much greater understanding of where birds go when they leave your local. For example, in 1680 **English minister and educator Charles Morton theorized that birds migrate to the moon for the winter.** Then it was 1941 when David Lack and George Varley, biologists working for the British government, **use a telescope to visually confirm that a mysterious military radar signal is being generated by a flock of gannets.** It was the first concrete proof that radar could detect flying birds. In 2000, “**Selective availability,**” a U.S. government practice which intentionally limits the accuracy of GPS technology available for non-military use, **is switched off.** An outcome of this change was that ornithologists quickly begin creating GPS devices for tracking the movements of birds. To learn the full history check out the article at https://www.audubon.org/magazine/spring-2022/a-brief-history-how-scientists-have-learned-about?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-newsletter-engagement_20220817_wingspan_&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20220817_wingspan&utm_content=.

Note # 4 – Conservation / Environment Issues

1. Sue Johnson sent me a note about “Flower Turbines.” These innovative “tulip design” wind turbines offer a unique combination of beauty & power

for capturing wind energy to provide a renewable energy solution to reduce greenhouse gases. The company's claim is that these turbines are bird friendly. It is an interesting concept and might be a better solution than personal solar panels for people situated in windy locations like Benicia or Fairfield. You can learn more about this innovative energy alternative at <https://flowerturbines.com/>

2. Caltrans is preparing a solution to improve Hwy 37 from Vallejo to Novato. They have been working on a Planning and Environmental Linkages Study – or PEL Study – since the end of 2020 that will address critical flooding, sea level rise, congestion, ecosystem connectivity, public access, and equity issues along Hwy 37. At this time, they are scheduling a virtual public meeting on September 14, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. to provide all interested parties with an update about the PEL Study. You can find a link to the meeting invitation at this website <https://dot.ca.gov/caltrans-near-me/district-4/d4-projects/d4-37-corridor-projects/37-planning-environmental-linkages/>. If you have an interest in how the state is going to redo Hwy 37 then you should make time to participate in this meeting.
3. Elise Shtayyeh of the Solano County Water Agency asked if I could share their **messaging for the drought which is focused on native wildlife**. Elise has chosen a few birds to feature in the messaging and the latest release features the Western bluebird.

SAVE WATER SAVE SOLANO



Western Bluebirds rely on clean drinking and bathing water to survive. They often build their nest in the nooks of trees along Solano County's natural creeks and streams for the reliable access.

- If you have ideas for what can be done to make the NSAS a better birding resource for our community or have Birding Notes and/or Pictures to share with the rest of the NSAS community, please send them to Tom Slyker at SolanoBirder@gmail.com.
- Be sure to check the calendar at the NSAS website (<http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/>) for meeting announcements and Field Trip updates.
- This is issue number 29 of Birding Notes. Past copies of Birding Notes are posted on the NSAS website at <http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/>
- If you would like to unsubscribe from receiving all email communications for NSAS, including these Birding Notes, please send your unsubscribe request to SolanoBirder@gmail.com.