



# CHIRP-N-CHATTER

The Newsletter of the Wintu Audubon Society

Chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Shasta  
and eastern portions of Trinity County, California

January / February 2014

## January Activities

### General Meeting

Tuesday, January 14 @ 7:00 pm

**The Ordinary, Extraordinary Junco** We are all familiar with our winter feathered friend, the Dark-eyed Junco – but did you know that it is the “rock star” of avian research? *The Ordinary, Extraordinary Junco* is a DVD about the Junco Project. It traces the history of the Dark-eyed Junco as a study subject from the first discovery that day length regulates migration, physiology, breeding and other behaviors in birds to how DNA is used to determine the origin and interrelatedness of Junco races in North America. It also shows research scientists in realistic action, including little rivalries in finding nests. **Linda Aldrich** will provide a brief introduction to this DVD provided by a lab in Bloomington, Indiana.

### Field Trips

**Our Youth/Beginner Bird Walks** will continue through the winter. Bring your family and friends to the Turtle Bay Monolith on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, 9-11 am. Audubon can provide binoculars and field guides. Call **Dan Greaney, 276-9693** with questions or for more information.

### Regular 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Bird Walk---January 11 @ 8:00 am

Our regular visits to Turtle Bay and Kutrass Lake always showcase a great cross-section of raptors, waterfowl, gulls, and winter resident passerines. They can be seen close up with usually a surprise or two on this ½-day walk. We will assemble in the parking area behind the monolith at Turtle Bay. This walk with **George Horn** is open to the public and all birding skill levels are welcome.

### Local Weekday Bird Walk---Clear Creek Wastewater Treatment Ponds, Thursday, January 16 @ 8:00 am

We announced in the November/December issue of the Chirp-N-Chatter that the treatment ponds are now open to the public. We have been anxiously awaiting their opening as they provide shorebird habitat---a scarce resource here in the Redding area. Over the years we have tallied more than 160 species mostly in the winter. This ½-day walk will be our first organized visit to the ponds. The walk around the ponds is on a gaveled roadway but is a couple of miles in length, so wear sturdy shoes. Assemble in the parking lot on the south side of the Redding Civic Auditorium to carpool and meet your leader **Bill Oliver**.

WINTU A.S. CHAPTER MEETINGS ARE ON THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM at the United Way, 2280 Benton Drive, Redding.

BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 PM also at the United Way meeting room. All members are urged to attend to contribute information and new ideas.

#### UPCOMING MEETINGS

January 14: *The Ordinary, Extraordinary Junco*---a video

February 11: Harry G. Fuller: *Freeway Birding*

## February Activities

### General Meeting

Tuesday, February 11 @ 7:00 pm

**Harry G. Fuller** on his book, *Freeway Birding, San Francisco to Seattle*, Harry Fuller shows you how and where to squeeze more precious birding into your life. He describes hundreds of birding sites beside or a short distance from I-5. His presentation to us will concentrate on the areas easily reachable from Redding.

Harry Fuller had a long career in TV news and recently retired to Ashland in Oregon's Rogue Valley. He has led field trips in Northern California, Oregon and Washington State for two decades. Currently, he guides private clients and leads trips for Partnership for International Birding.

## Field Trips

### Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area---Saturday, February 1@ 7:30 a.m.

Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area is west of Gridley about 100 miles south of Redding so this will be an all day trip. We should see Snow Geese, Ross's Geese, possible Sandhill Cranes, Eurasian Wigeon among many other species of waterfowl---all this with a backdrop of the beautiful Sutter Buttes. Bring your camera! There is a \$4.32 per person entrance fee. If you have a California hunting or fishing license there is no charge. We will meet at the Redding Convention Center to carpool so bring a few dollars for gas also. Your trip leader will be **George Horn**. Phone number 530-524-7484.

### Regular 2nd Saturday Bird Walk ---February 8 @ 8:00 am

Our regular visits to Turtle Bay and Kutas Lake always showcase a great cross-section of raptors, waterfowl, gulls, and winter resident passerines. They can be seen close up with usually a surprise or two on this ½-day walk. We will assemble in the parking area behind the monolith at Turtle Bay. This walk with **Connie Word** and **Bea Currie** is open to the public and all birding skill levels are welcome.

### Local Weekday Bird Walk---Anderson River Park--Saturday, February 20 @ 8:00 am

This gem of riparian habitat has many groomed trails and will be led by **Ken Bachman** who lives nearby and has a wealth of experience in the Park. We will assemble at the amphitheater in he Park for this ½-day outing.

## Trip Reports

### Regular 2nd Saturday Bird Walk at Turtle Bay and Kutas Lake---November 9

**Connie Word** reports that 14 birders enjoyed a windless, sunshiny day returning to Turtle Bay and Kutas Lake to view wintering waterbirds, raptors and passerines. Fifty-one species were identified. Most unusual species were Varied Thrush and Brown Creeper.

### Local Weekday Bird Walk---Clover Creek Preserve---Thursday, November 21

Four intrepid birders led by **Linda Aldrich** ventured forth in 30 mph winds and temperatures in the low 40s. Despite the weather conditions, 30 species of birds were seen. By

far the most exciting was a White-tailed Kite hovering above the parking lot despite the gusts. The same bird was seen again twice later in the trip. The "theme for the day" seemed to be sparrows as we saw six species including a Fox Sparrow. Several open-space species were seen and/or heard including American Pipit, Western Bluebird and Western Meadowlark. The final treat of the morning was a pair of Common Ravens in a tree right next to the parking lot as we prepared to leave.

### Battle Creek State Wildlife Area and Coleman National Fish Hatchery---November 23

Eleven birders enjoyed a wonderful day of fall birding. After assembling at the Battle Creek Wildlife Area **Frank and Darliss Sanderson** reported an abundance of Wilson's Snipes. The ponds just west of the parking area are once again filled with water and this morning with snipe. Although they saw very few shorebirds or ducks the group managed to tally 63 species.

### Regular 2nd Saturday Bird Walk at Turtle Bay and Kutas Lake---December 14

It was unusually cold for nine birders on this clear, windless morning. Because it was so cold, Connie Word and her group decided to walk the trail around Turtle Bay before they birded along the Hwy 44 bridge. They began the walk at the Sundial Bridge and were rewarded with a variety of birds along the river next to the museum including a pair of Common Goldeneye and a pair of Barrow's Goldeneye swimming together. It was a perfect opportunity for comparing the identifying markings of both species. Other good finds included a Lesser Scaup, a Greater Yellowlegs, and a Spotted Sandpiper. About half way around the trail, they also saw the white squirrel that George Horn had seen on a prior walk. Lastly, from the pedestrian bridge, in addition to the number of waterfowl and other birds normally seen, they were rewarded with a great view of the Eurasian Wigeon which has been previously spotted and reported by George Horn. It was in the company of American Wigeons which enabled a comparison of the two species. Other good sightings included 8-10 Wilson's Snipes, two Green-winged Teals, Hooded Mergansers, and a Wood Duck. In total, we saw 54 species.

**Please Note:** Wintu Audubon Society assumes no responsibility for injuries, personal or otherwise, incurred while attending society- sponsored activities and will not be held liable for accidents. You attend at your own risk. A responsible adult must accompany minors on all outings. Rain cancels all activities except Christmas Bird Counts.

## A Mini Christmas Bird Count by the Youth/Beginners at Turtle Bay, December 14

A group of six youths and thirteen adults split into three teams that scoured Turtle Bay from the Highway 44 bridge to above the Sundial Bridge. They were looking for birds! It was Wintu Audubon's Mini Christmas Bird Count for Youth and Beginners, and December sunshine after the cold snap made for a warm show of feathered flutterings.

The three teams each took an area and tried to identify and tally every bird they found in ninety minutes of searching. They totaled 791 birds from 57 different species, from stately herons and egrets, to squabbles of ducks down from the arctic, to "now-you-see-me-now-you-don't" brushbirds who, being hungry in the leafless trees, made themselves delightfully more visible than they often do.



### A few highlights

- An unstately heron gulping a fish that really shouldn't have fit.
- An immature bald eagle in silhouette on a snag, being harassed by a handful of half-hearted crows.
- A resplendent Eurasian Wigeon gleaming in the sun



- A brown creeper finding its insect breakfast in the fissures of oak bark.
- A flock of cedar waxwings enjoying wild berries along the river.

The species most counted, at ninety-nine, was Buffleheads, black and white diving ducks who typically nest in northern plains pothole country but come to our area for the unfrozen water in winter. The different counting

## 2013-2014 OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS & DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

### OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT**—Esther Cox 474-4379

**VICE-PRESIDENT**—*Vacant*

**TREASURER**—Connie Word 245-0846

**RECORDING SECRETARY**—Shelley Cerasaro 242-8888

**CORRESPONDING SECRETARY**—Beatrice Currie 243-3955

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**PROGRAMS**--Linda Aldrich 223-5341

**EDUCATION**—Dan Greaney 276-9693 and Don Goodykoontz 474-1655

**CONSERVATION**--Claudia Lyons Yerion 241-7156 and Janet Wall 547-1189

**NEWSLETTER**--Bill Oliver 941-7741

**WEBMASTER**--Larry Jordan 472-3131

**MEMBERSHIP**—George Horn 244-0581

### DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Ken Bachman, Jeanette and Harvey Carroll

teams might argue about which was the rarest bird to find in Redding in winter—perhaps the Osprey, or the Brown Creeper or Hutton's Vireo, perhaps the Eurasian Wigeon.

The Mini Count was part of Wintu Audubon's Youth/Beginner Walks, which meet the second Saturday of every month at 9:00 a.m. at the Turtle Bay Monolith. Binoculars are provided. The public is invited.

## The Great Backyard Bird Count February 17-20

The Great Backyard Bird Count is an annual four-day event that engages bird watchers of all ages in counting birds to create a real-time snapshot of where the birds are across the world. Anyone can participate---from beginning bird watchers to experts. It's free, fun and easy---and it helps the birds. Here's how:

1. Plan to count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count period. You can count longer than that if you wish. Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like---one day, two days, or all four days. Submit a separate checklist for each new day. You can submit more than one checklist per day, if you count in other locations on that day.
2. Count the greatest number of individuals of each species that you see together at the same time.
3. When you are finished, enter your results through the website: [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). You'll see a button marked "Enter Your Checklist" on the website home page beginning on the first day of the count. It will remain active until the deadline for data submission on March 1. If you do not have internet access, you can phone (530-941-7741) Bill Oliver for more directions and your results.



**WINTU AUDUBON SOCIETY  
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REDDING, CA 96099-4533**



**Return Service Requested**

***CHIRP—N—CHATTER***

**January/February 2014**

**Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway  
January 22-26, 2014, Chico, California**

Millions of waterfowl migrating along the Pacific Flyway call the Northern Sacramento Valley their home during the winter months, creating ample viewing opportunities for bird and nature enthusiasts of all ages. Join one of the premier birding events in California for an action-packed five days celebrating this annual phenomenon.

There are more than 65 field trips and workshops that cover six counties, reaching out into the rice fields, wildlife refuges and river walks where mild winter weather, abundant food and lots of water (let's hope) draw our avian visitors. In addition to numerous birdwatching field trips, you might choose to try birding by ear, enjoy wine and olive oil tasting. Admission is free to Festival Headquarters, the exhibit hall and various events on Saturday and Sunday, January 25-26, located at the Masonic Family Center 1110 W. East St. in Chico. Chico Creek Nature Center, 1968 E. 8<sup>th</sup> St., will serve as the Welcome Center. Register at [www.snowgoosefestival.org](http://www.snowgoosefestival.org) or phone 530-891-2671.

**Winter Wings Festival, Klamath Falls,  
Oregon, February 13-16, 2014**

The Klamath Basin Audubon Society welcomes you to the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Wings Festival. Experience the beauty of the Klamath Basin, where hundreds of eagles and other raptors and thousands of ducks, geese, and swans take up residence in the winter. The festival offers a huge assortment of birding and nature-related activities for all ages and skill levels, from novice birder to life-long birding enthusiast.

The festival is once again loaded with birding and nature photography talent. They've lined up three keynote participants for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

Brian Sullivan, Thursday night keynoter, is project leader for eBird and co-author on the new *Crossley ID Guide to Raptors*.

Rick Sammon, Friday night keynoter, a Canon Explorer of Light, has photographed in almost 100 destinations around the world.

Bill Thompson III, Saturday night keynoter, is editor of Bird watcher's Digest

Register online at [www.WinterWingsFest.org/register](http://www.WinterWingsFest.org/register)