



# 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

May / June 2015

## May Activities

### General Meeting

Tuesday, May 12 @ 7:00 pm  
Ponds for our Parched Native Neighbors

Did you know that ponds use less water than lawns while providing many other benefits? **Kathy Biggs**, wildlife ponderer for over 20 years, will teach us how a wildlife pond differs from a pond built for exotic Koi and water lilies. She will show us how a wildlife pond can be used, in this time of drought, to help our native neighbors. Kathy has attempted to document the critters that visit and even breed in her two wildlife ponds (one in Sonoma County and the other in Siskiyou County) for a combined 26+ years. While sharing her pond's visitors with us, she will introduce us to our native pond flora and fauna. She has recorded 13 species of mammals (including a bear that swims in their McCloud pond), over 60 species of birds, 6 species of reptiles and amphibians, 28 species of dragonflies (her specialty), 27 different kinds of butterflies and many many other insects and other critters.

### Field Trips

Discover Birding at Turtle Bay – Saturday, May 2 @ 9:00 am

Our youth/beginner bird walks are conducted on the first Saturday throughout the year. Bring your family and friends to the Turtle Bay Monolith. Wintu Audubon can provide binoculars and field guides. Call **Dan Greaney, 276-9693**, with questions or for more information.



Second Saturday Bird Walk – Saturday, May 9 @ 8:00 am

The campus and farmlands of Shasta College offer a wide variety of habitats to explore for migrating and summer resident passerines. These habitats include oak studded lawns, a wastewater treatment pond, riparian woodlands along Stillwater Creek, and agricultural fields. Meet in Shasta College's north parking lot for this ½ day trip that is open to the public. **Pablo Herrera** and **Alicia Young** will lead.

Local Weekday Bird Walk – Lower Clear Creek on the Gold Dredge Trail, Thursday, May 21 @ 8:00 am

Much of the riparian zone along lower Clear Creek, destroyed by placer mining, has been re-contoured and re-vegetated. Now after a decade or more birds are returning. **Frank and Darless Sanderson** will lead us along the Gold Dredge Trail to Honeybee (and back) about 4.25 miles r/t.. Franks says pit toilets are at the parking area only, no water available. Bug spray and sturdy walking shoes are recommended. The walking surfaces include improved trails, some creek cobble and elevation changes of about 150-200 ft. Franks rates the walk "easy to moderate". Meet at the Gold Dredge Trail Parking Area, on Clear Creek Road, 3.5 miles from State Route 273. Watch for the BLM sign on the left just beyond Sunrise Landscaping Supplies.

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

May 12: Kathy Biggs: *Ponds for Our Parched Native Neighbors*

June 9: Annual Picnic



**Lake  
McCumber/Manzanita Lake -  
Saturday, May 23  
@ 8:00 am**

Lake McCumber formed by a dam on North Battle Creek offers a variety of habitats.

Besides open water for ducks and geese, the north side borders on dense mixed-conifer forest where Pileated Woodpeckers are often seen. The west side supports willow thickets—good warbler habitat—and an open field for Western Bluebirds, among others. Wear sturdy shoes to access all these habitats via a rough unpaved trail. The road to Lake McCumber is 8 miles beyond Shingletown off Hwy. 44. We will probably have time to visit Manzanita Lake in Lassen Volcanic National Park in the afternoon. The willow thickets are always productive for migrating warblers and the stands of large trees are attractive to woodpeckers and other cavity nesters. Bring a lunch, water and layered clothing and meet at the parking lot on the south side of the Redding Civic Auditorium at 8:00 am to meet your leader, **Chad Scott**.

## June Activities

### General Meeting

#### Annual Picnic—Tuesday, June 9 @ 6:00 pm

As has been our custom, the last general meeting before our summer meeting hiatus will be a bring-your-own picnic at the Camden House (Tower House) at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. We will enjoy good birding and good fellowship in this lovely setting. A major attraction of birding is the unexpected, for example in recent years we have spotted an Indigo Bunting and a Laurence's Goldfinch. The parking lot for the Camden House is on the left side of Hwy. 299W just before the turnoff to French Gulch. Some members may wish to carpool or ride with others who have a seasonal or permanent pass for Whiskeytown by assembling in the parking lot of Tops Market on Eureka Way in Redding at 6:00 pm.

### Field Trips

#### Camp-out at Lassen Volcanic National Park— Friday, Saturday & Sunday, June 26-28.

We have enjoyed the birding and camping at the Lost Creek Group Campground over the years, so we are scheduling this event again this year. Group Camp Site #4 has been reserved for the nights of Friday, June 27 and Saturday, June 28. This year I can almost guarantee the park road will be free of snow—freak storms notwithstanding. This time of year is ideal for observing nesting birds. We are again inviting the Redwood Region Audubon Society and Altacal Audubon Society to join us.

Folks can either camp at Lost Creek or drive up for either



or both Saturday and Sunday. Campers can arrive at the campsite at a time of their choosing on Friday afternoon.

Saturday daytrippers should meet at the Redding Civic Auditorium (Convention

Center) at 8:00 am Saturday morning to car pool. We will bird Manzanita Lake and vicinity on Saturday morning. The rest of the itinerary is open and will depend on the interests of the participants. Daytrippers for Sunday, June 28, will meet at the campsite at 9:00 am. Lost Creek has primitive facilities---pit toilets and no electricity, but potable water is available. Contact **Bill Oliver** (Ph. 941-7741 or email [wwoliver9@gmail.com](mailto:wwoliver9@gmail.com)) for other particulars.

**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.

## Trip Reports

**Discover Birding at Turtle Bay, March 7** - Six seventh graders and thirteen adults enjoyed a beautiful spring morning at Turtle Bay. The birds were not uncooperative. The ducks, perhaps in the very paucity of their numbers, allowed intelligible viewing of their characteristics by species and gender. Cavity nesters—Oak Titmouse, European Starling, and Tree Swallows—displayed mildly contentious nest-hole competition. The swallows provided additional opportunity to note their varied nesting styles, Cliff Swallows having joined the Tree Swallows at the Bay; group leaders also noted a couple Violet-green Swallows and an early Northern Rough-winged Swallow over the river. A rare (unique?) treat was a Ross's Goose who, missing its normal gregarious throng, made company with a few Canada Geese in the river. House Finches, Oak Titmice, and a Bewick's Wren provided previews of the music to come.

**April 4--**Three lucky birders found plenty of spring at Turtle Bay. Cliff Swallows chortled round the monolith where nesting is in full swing; one of their mud homes had been appropriated by a pair of happy House Sparrows, too. Tree Swallows swarmed over the cottonwoods, and both Myrtle's and Audubon's Warblers smattered through the understory. A Bullock's Oriole posed for photographs, and the effervescent song of a Bewick's

## 2014-2015 OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS & DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

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

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**EDUCATION** - Dan Greaney 276-9693

**CONSERVATION** - Janet Wall 547-1189 Bruce Webb 515-5324

**NEWSLETTER** - Bill Oliver 941-7741

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**PUBLICITY** - Larry Jordan 472-3131

**EVENT COORDINATOR** - Chad Scott 619-852-4555

**DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE** Harvey Carroll, Catherine Camp, John Winchell, Roberta Winchell, Beth Brockman

Wren provided an audio track. One of the next-generation Bald Eagles poked its fuzzy gray head above the rim of its nest, and out over the river, Rough-winged and Violet-green Swallows joined their aerial cousins. Even the ducks lingering on from winter—six species of them—were mostly paired. In all, forty-five species were identified on a fine spring day. Thanks to **Geoffrey Helmbold** for submitting the list to ebird.

**Second Saturday Bird Walk, March 14** – Spring arrived early this year and our Second Saturday outing in March attracted a nice group of 10 who explored the loop from Hwy 44 to Turtle Bay Museum. Tree swallows and Cliff Swallows have arrived, not yet in the numbers we'll see soon, but still, hundreds were busy preparing nests while our resident Bald Eagles guarded their newly laid eggs (update: they had three hatchlings this year). I don't know why I get so excited to see some of our somewhat ordinary birds, but I was happy to count Hermit Thrushes, House Wrens, and a Bewick's Wren among the numerous birds common to the scrubs and brush along the river. Other highlights included Fox and Lincoln Sparrows, Peregrine Falcon, Osprey, river otters, and one white (albino?) tree squirrel bouncing around in the woods. 49 species counted.

**Dubose Ranch Bird Survey, March 28**—The Parkville ranch was recently placed in a Conservation Easement administered by the Shasta Land Trust. **Sandy Dubose** owner of the ranch invited Wintu Audubon to survey the property with the hope of making the survey an annual event. We were delighted to oblige. Eleven birders spent a beautiful morning at the Ranch and the Parkville Cemetery on Parkville Road. It was a little breezy and not real birdy but we did see 41 species and had a great time.

**Fall River Valley, March 28** – **Bob Yutzy** reported that 23 participants enjoyed a spectacular day tallying 93 species despite being a bit early for several species. First and foremost we have to thank the local pros, **Ken Able** and **Don Marsh**, for their more than able assistance on the trip. There was a good number of very keen birders amongst our group, so we think little escaped our notice.

We started off the morning with scope views of a Golden Eagle on a nest, then a cruising Peregrine Falcon flew by, next a couple Rock Wrens were calling and hopping around on the cliffs behind us, then Violet-green Swallows were seen flying in at their cliff nest sites, and there was a brief view of an early White-throated Swift. Breeding plumaged Common Loon, and Eared and Horned Grebes were a special treat at Fall River Lake. Two pair of Greater Scaup were seen in our scopes. A Belted Kingfisher was observed working on its cliff nest. We had an adult Bald Eagle chasing an immature Golden Eagle at Fall River Lake.

During the afternoon at one time a large part of the western sky was filled with many thousands or more of Snow and Ross's Geese above, with almost as many White-fronted Geese layered below them. Five pairs of Sandhill Cranes were in the fields along our route. Over 100 Greater Yellowlegs were in the rice fields around Glenburn. One of the rarest sightings of the day was of a pair of Pheasants on Island Road, as they are very hard to

find in recent years since they now seem to mow down the hedgerows.



Our long day ended with 3 late Rough-legged Hawks and then 43 Long-billed Curlews, and some of them were calling and displaying on McArthur Swamp

Road. We were serenaded by the screeching and gurgling of Tri-colored Blackbirds there also. One of our last sightings for the few that still remained was 2 Western Grebes dancing on the river. Outstanding!

A Prairie Falcon only put in an appearance as the leaders were leaving the area. A Single Bank Swallow was seen the day before the field trip.

**Local Weekday Bird Walk – Reading Island, April 16** – Six birders toured this BLM property created by the changing course of the meandering Sacramento River. Strangely no spring migrants were observed. We tallied 39 of the usual winter residents.



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**WINTU AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 994533  
REDDING, CA 96099-4533**

**May / June 2015**

**NPS 5th Garden Tour - May 2, 2015 - 10:00 am to 4:00 pm**

Once again, Wintu Audubon will have a table at one of the gardens as a special feature to help identify birds, distribute literature and point out native plants that are attractive to birds. The tour will feature 5 gardens that use native plants and other drought-tolerant species in their landscaping. The self-guided tour is a very interesting way to spend a Saturday - and for only \$5.00! Tickets with garden locations are available at Wintour Gardens, Creekside Gardens and Gold Leaf Nursery. If you go on the tour, be sure and stop by Garden number 4 where the Audubon table will be. If you would like to assist at the table, call Linda Aldrich at 223-5341.

Yellow-headed Blackbird seen occasionally in the North Valley. Larry Jordan spotted one recently at Shasta College.

