

# 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 2016

## MAY ACTIVITIES

### General Meeting

Tuesday, May 10 @ 7:00 pm

**The Loons on Golden Pond** Common

Loons are occasional winter visitors to Northern California and have been spotted on the Sacramento River, Lake McCumber and other large local waterways. In the spring, they migrate north, shed their drab winter feathers and don beautiful breeding plumage. This award-winning video follows a mated pair of loons through courtship and their daily activities of diving and hunting fish. We see them carefully tend their 2 eggs, then call the recently hatched chicks into the water for a first swim. We watch the babies ride on their parents' backs, grow and take flight for the first time. Join introducer Linda Aldrich for exquisite images and glorious sounds.

### May Field Trips

**Discover Birding at Turtle Bay**

**May 7 @ 9:00 am** Our youth/beginner bird walks are conducted on the first Saturday throughout the year. Wintu Audubon can provide binoculars and field guides. Call **Dan Greaney, 276-9693**, with questions or for more information. *Please remember that we now assemble at the Venture Properties parking lot. Take the first left before the Redding Civic Auditorium.*

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Bird Walk

**Biodiversity Festival – May 14 @ 8:00 am**

Wintu Audubon Society is participating in the Biodiversity Festival, part of the **Whiskeytown BioBlitz**, inviting the public to “Celebrate Birds, Bees, Bats, Butterflies & all Pollinators!” at the Whiskeytown Environmental School (NEEDS camp).

Wintu Audubon will be on hand Saturday to lead bird walks, share expertise and provide information to the public about our feathered friends

and their part in the local ecosystem. Come join us. We will be joined by resource experts on animals, traditional people, and the local environment. Enjoy hands-on science, nature, food and music while learning about the extraordinary biodiversity of Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. Share your birding knowledge and participate in this family event.

**Wintu Audubon Society Chapter meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM** at the United Way, 2280 Benton Drive, Redding. *No chapter meetings in July and August.*

**Board Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the Month at 6:30 PM** also at the United Way meeting room. All members are urged to attend to contribute information and new ideas. *No meeting in July.*

#### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**May 10:** Linda Aldrich  
*The Loons on Golden Pond.*

**June 14:** Annual Picnic at  
Camden House

### **Local Weekday Bird Walk**

**Arboretum Loop – Thursday, May 19 @ 8:00 am** This portion of Turtle Bay Exploration Park lies across the Sundial Bridge and loops around a natural area. Habitat is varied beginning with riparian along the Sacramento River, through a dense stand of valley and blue oaks, open grasslands and ends in blue oak woodlands. A wide variety of local birds should be encountered on this ½-day jaunt. We will assemble in the parking lot for the Sundial Bridge.

### **All Day Field Trip**

#### **Ash Creek State Wildlife Area**

**Saturday, May 21 @ 7:30 am** We will return after an absence of several years to bird the always-rewarding Ash Creek that offers an excellent opportunity to observe Great Basin birds on a day trip. Sandhill Cranes will be raising young and there is a chance of seeing Sage Grouse. Other good finds may include Loggerhead Shrike, Golden Eagle, and Barn and Great-horned Owls. Located just east of Beiber on Hwy. 299E it may be cool so bring warm clothes, lunch, and water. We will return in late afternoon. We will car pool from the parking lot on the south side of the Redding Civic Auditorium.

## **JUNE ACTIVITIES**

### **General Meeting**

#### **Annual Picnic – Tuesday, June 14 @ 6 pm**

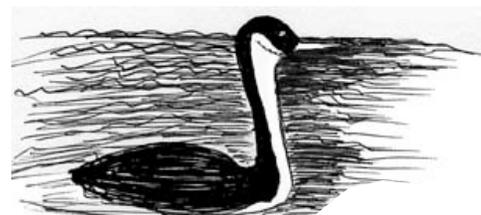
As has been our custom, the last general meeting before our summer meeting hiatus will be a bring-your-own picnic at the Camden House (Tower House) at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. We will enjoy good birding and fellowship in this lovely setting. On previous outings we have seen Laurence's Goldfinch and Indigo Bunting. 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 – Sunday, June 24–26**

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 #5 has been reserved for the nights of Friday, June 24 and Saturday, June 25. This year the park road should be free of snow by late June and it should be 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. Potable water is available. Contact **Bill Oliver** (Ph. 941-7741 or email [wwoliver9@gmail.com](mailto:wwoliver9@gmail.com)) for other particulars.



*Western Grebe... Sally NeSmith*



## Trip Reports

### Gray Lodge Day Trip

**February 27** We thought our February 27<sup>th</sup> trip to Gray Lodge might be a little slow with some of the larger numbers of geese and ducks moving on. We ended up having a great birding day with 79 species seen by 10 participants. Highlights were Blue-winged Teal, Phainopepla and Sandhill Cranes.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Bird Walk

#### John Reginato River Access Trail

**March 12** A few brave souls had a very short bird walk through driving rain and wind. We were rewarded with views of Ring-necked Ducks, Buffleheads and Common Mergansers close together for comparisons. The weather allowed only a few more sightings; American Robins, Belted Kingfisher and American Crows.

### Local Weekday Bird Walk

**Oregon Gulch, March 17** We had a beautiful sunny day for our early spring mid-week bird trip to Oregon Gulch in South Redding. Six participants hiked about 4 miles and saw 26 species. The highlight was flocks of Band-tailed Pigeons, unusual at this elevation.

**Black Butte Lake & Western Tehama County, March 26** Six birders explored the back roads of Western Tehama County,

## 2016 – 2017 OFFICERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS & DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

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**Vice-President:** Linda Aldrich 223-5341  
**Treasurer:** Beth Brockman 227-4228  
**Recording Secretary:** Jeannette Carroll 246-3634  
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### DIRECTORS-AT-LARGE

Harvey Carroll, Ester Cox, Janice Hunter,  
Michael Carion, John Winchell, Roberta Winchell

through vanished (Henleyville, Newville and Chrome) and vanishing communities (Flounoy and Paskenta) to Black Butte Reservoir. Nothing of note was found on the reservoir even the resident Rock Wren was missing. The highlights were the lush rolling hills dotted by magnificent valley oaks and the beginning of a spectacular wildflower display near Newville.

### Discover Birding at Turtle Bay

**April 2** Despite spring break and its tendencies toward bird-walk truancy, three birders formed the Youth/Beginner Walk this month. Turtle Bay was in between migration time. Most of the ducks were gone, but a handful of Gadwalls and a solitary Goldeneye lingered with the Mallards, Buffleheads,

and Common Mergansers that may nest locally. Incoming migrants were absent except for Swallows – plenty of Cliff and Tree, and at least one Violet-green – and Yellow-rumped Warblers were common throughout the canopy. Ground-level birds were few – a single Spotted Towhee and three Song Sparrows. Two Bewick’s Wrens and a House Wren caroused through the bramble. Resident Oak Titmice were in full song, with White-breasted Nuthatches, European Starlings, and Downy Woodpeckers doing backup. A brilliant Western Bluebird capped the morning with an oak-top perch, like a cherry on a sundae.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday Walk – Shasta College**  
**April 9** Nine participants marveled the sharp eyes, ears and bird knowledge of their leaders Pablo and Alicia Herrera who aided the group in tallying 58 species. Surprises included a Rock Wren and a Yellow-headed Blackbird. First-of-Spring arrivals were two Bullock’s Orioles and eight Western Kingbirds.

**The Whole Earth & Watershed Festival**  
**Redding, April 23** Wintu Audubon Society members were on hand in the beautiful Sculpture Garden at the Redding Civic Center to celebrate Earth Day.

## The Whole Earth & Watershed Festival



Photos by Bill Oliver

## NEWS WORTHY NOTES

### Trap-Neuter-Release (TNR):

The Humane Society estimates there are 50-70 million feral cats in the US, joining with pet cats to kill 2.4 billion birds a year! Songbirds are generally in steep decline around the country. On average, an outdoor cat is estimated to kill 20–150 birds per year, with a substantial focus on fledglings.

**TNR** is a feral/stray cat management practice promoted by veterinarians and animal shelters, and adopted by many cities. As promoted, TNR involves using volunteers to trap feral cats, spay/neuter and vaccinate them, and return them to the outdoors, where the volunteers feed them.

As practiced, TNR does not reach nearly enough of the feral cat population to dent it, but it may have localized effects. It is sometimes argued that the fed cats form colonies that substantially prevent new cats from settling in an area. Research does not bear this out.

The science and the experience of feral cat feeders is that restricting the amount of food available is the primary factor that limits the number of cats taking up residence in an area. Cat fertility and new dumping of cats outstrips the capacity of shelters to trap, neuter and release them.

### ***TNR advocates favor vigorous public education to minimize cat dumping***

The logic of TNR is that it limits propagation and therefore should gradually reduce the cat population. The failure is that uncaught cats and new dumps reproduce faster than the catch rate.

Results in terms of lowering cat populations are hard to find. However, a local effort reports substantial reduction in feral cats.

Turtle Bay has participated in TNR and feral cat population appears to be down.

Wintu Audubon members have been working with the local community leaders and Turtle Bay to help mitigate the problem of feral cats and their threat to the bird populations. Cat pavilions were suggested where TNR animals would be kept and fed in large enclosures, such as those for the animals at Turtle Bay.

Public input is encouraged as this practice is an ongoing issue. Contact Dan Greaney at 276-9693 for more information or to become active in this effort.

Cat owners: Keep your cats indoors, vaccinate them, and do not release them to the wild!



### **The Mountain Bird Festival**

The award winning Mountain Bird Festival celebrates the natural wonders of southern Oregon and northern California. The 2016 Mountain Bird Festival will be held in Ashland, Oregon from May 20, 21, and 22. Registration for the Festival will be available on the Klamath Bird Observatory website at [www.klamathbird.org](http://www.klamathbird.org).

The Mountain Bird Festival offers guided bird walks, a keynote presentation, fine art galleries, local wine, microbrew and food vendors, and a feel-good community atmosphere.

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P.O. Box 994533  
REDDING, California 96099-4533

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**May / June 2016**



## **Youth Scholarship Opportunity**

*Western Field Ornithologists* is pleased to announce the availability of a youth scholarship for the **WFO 2016 Conference** to be held in Humboldt County, California from September 28 – October 2. The scholarship is open to young people between the ages of 12 and 22, with six scholarships for youth in Grades 6 through 12, and two scholarships for collegiate youth working towards a Bachelor's degree.

The annual WFO conference is a four day event that includes scientific presentations, workshops, field trips, experts' sounds and visual identification panels, and social activities. The conference offers the opportunity for motivated young people to meet those who earn their living and/or volunteer in field ornithology, bird conservation, biology and other distinguished fields.

For further details and conference registration (opening June 12<sup>th</sup>) Visit [www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php). For further details about the scholarship, please visit [www.westernfieldornithologists.org/scholarship.php](http://www.westernfieldornithologists.org/scholarship.php).

The application deadline is May 15, 2016, so don't delay, send in your application today!