



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**

November 2023



Tricolored Blackbird - photo courtesy of David Bogener

this month Dan Airola will provide recent status information on the Tricolored Blackbird and Yellow-billed Magpie, two Central Valley species that have declined substantially in recent years. Blackbird population loss has resulted from habitat loss, nest destruction during agricultural harvest, and loss of insect prey due to insecticide use. The successful proposal to list the species under the state Endangered Species Act sparked research and conservation programs. Dan recounts this recent history and the successful efforts that have resulted in modest but important population increase. The population of the

state-endemic Yellow-billed Magpie declined by over 80% in California since the arrival of West Nile virus in the early 2000's, and did not develop resistance, unlike some other species. Dan's recent studies reveal key habitat relationships and an apparent incipient recovery in the sizable urban Sacramento population.

Dan Airola is a Wildlife Biologist and Ornithologist who has worked for over 40 years in research and conservation of at-risk species birds in Northern California. In addition to long-term research on the tricolor and magpie, Dan maintains a 30-year study of Sacramento's Purple Martins and has also studied Swainson's Hawks, Turkey Vultures, Osprey, fire-adapted forest species, migrant songbirds, and diving ducks. Dan also serves the Central Valley Bird Club as a Director, Conservation Chair, and editor of the journal Central Valley Birds.

Wintu Audubon Society is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Status of the Tricolored Blackbird and Yellow-billed Magpie

Time: Nov 8, 2023 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84935959479>

Meeting ID: 849 3595 9479

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

- +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)
- +1 253 205 0468 US
- +1 669 444 9171 US
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
- +1 719 359 4580 US
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 360 209 5623 US
- +1 386 347 5053 US
- +1 507 473 4847 US
- +1 564 217 2000 US
- +1 646 931 3860 US
- +1 689 278 1000 US
- +1 929 205 6099 US (New York)
- +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)
- +1 305 224 1968 US
- +1 309 205 3325 US

Meeting ID: 849 3595 9479

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/u/kdLugm8lor>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS!

To show how much we appreciate our donors we want to recognize you in our monthly newsletter! These are our recent generous donors: Catherine Camp, Dan Greaney, Deanna Madigan, Rebeca Ladrón de Guevara, Teresa Hunt, and Robert Shull - Thank You!

Donations can be made either through our [PayPal link](#) or by check at Wintu Audubon, PO Box 994533, Redding, CA 96099-4533

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

Note: All participants, ages 5 and older, must provide proof that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or provide evidence of a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours and sign a waiver prior to all field trips.

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area - November 4th @ 6:30 am



Gray Lodge's diversity and location along the Pacific Flyway make it a haven for wildlife. Surrounded by miles of rich agricultural lands, the approximately 9,100-acre area is managed for the wildlife that call Gray Lodge home for all or part of the year. Reflective ponds, grassy fields and wooded riparian areas

provide food, water and shelter for more than 300 species of resident and migrant birds and mammals. Meet at the Kutrass Park parking lot at **6:30am sharp** to carpool or at parking area 14 at the refuge at 8:30am. Bring a lunch and water as this is an all day event. It is not unusual to see over 50 species of birds at this location and is the only place I know to commonly find all three "Teals". We will traverse the two mile Flyway Loop Trail around the ponds, to the viewing platform and back to the parking lot. Following lunch we will drive the auto tour loop. Contact Larry Jordan for more information webmaster@wintuadubon.org - [Gray Lodge Public Access Map](#)

A [CDFW LANDS PASS](#) MUST BE IN POSSESSION BY EACH VISITOR WHO IS 16 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER, HOWEVER, VISITORS WHO ARE IN POSSESSION OF A VALID CALIFORNIA HUNTING OR FISHING LICENSE IN THEIR NAME ARE EXEMPT FROM THIS REQUIREMENT. LANDS PASSES MAY BE [PURCHASED ON-LINE](#), BY PHONE AT (800) 565-1458, OR IN-PERSON AT LOCATIONS [WHEREVER HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSES](#)

[ARE SOLD](#). THEY ARE ALSO AVAILABLE IN THE PARKING AREA AT GRAY LODGE FOR \$4.50. HERE IS A LINK TO THE BIRD LIST: [HTTPS://NRM.DFG.CA.GOV/FILEHANDLER.ASHX?DOCUMENTID=88006&INLINE](https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/filehandler.ashx?documentid=88006&inline)

Clover Creek Preserve - November 11th @ 7:30 am



What birds of prey will surprise us at Clover Creek Preserve? Merlin or American Kestrel? Red-tailed or Red-shouldered Hawk? Northern Harrier or White-tailed Kite? Sharp-shinned or Cooper's Hawk? Join us at the preserve on Saturday, November 11, at 7:30 am to find out which birds of prey will appear in the area. Clover Creek Preserve is a 128-acre open space in east Redding that features grasslands, blue oaks, and a 6.7 acre lake. Meet at the preserve, 3705 Shasta View

Drive, at the main parking lot. We will spend about three hours walking about two miles on a paved trail. There is a port-a-potty located in the parking lot and a full restroom at the nearby Shasta Trinity Fly Fishers Club. Contact trip leader Tricia Ford at triciathebirdnerd@gmail.com for more information.

Grace and Nora Lakes - November 18th @ 8:00 am



Join trip leader David Garza for a half day trip to two under-visited locations located a short 1.5-mile drive south of Shingletown. Grace and Nora Lakes are owned and managed by PG&E and access is allowed for recreational use. The water levels are low lately, but we anticipate some waterfowl, forest passerines and woodpeckers around the lakes in the immediate vicinity. The terrain is flat and the

hiking is easy. Meet at the gravel parking lot on the west side of Park Maina Drive/Kutras Lake at 8:00 am to carpool/caravan or meet at Grace Lake at 9:00am. You can reach Grace Lake by taking Wilson Hill Road south from Shingletown for approximately 0.9 miles, then turning east on Manton-Ponderosa Way (gravel surfaced) for 2/3 of a mile to Grace Lake. We will hike to Nora Lake and environs from there. The terrain is flat and the hike is easy.

Map: <https://rb.gy/cm9dl>



Turtle Bay - November 25th @ 7:30 am



Join Trip Leaders Sabrina Ott and Tim Kashuba to take a post-Thanksgiving hometown-stroll around Turtle Bay. Meet at the parking lot south of the Monolith at 7:30 am. We'll explore the ponds along Highway 44, the River and forest areas in the Bird Sanctuary and given time we can explore the upland area north of the River and search for any rare waterfowl and gulls upstream of

the Sundial Bridge.

Northstate Giving Tuesday

Wintu Audubon Society will once again participate in Northstate Giving Tuesday. What is North State Giving Tuesday? North State Giving Tuesday is an online networking and giving event that provides nonprofit organizations the opportunity to gain exposure and start relationships with new donors, and for the people in Shasta, Siskiyou, and Tehama counties to come together to raise as much money as possible for participating organizations within a 14 -hour period. The effort is organized and implemented by the Community Foundation of the North State with presenting sponsorship provided by Columbia Bank. The online event takes place annually on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving from 6:00 AM PST to 8:00 PM PST. We are proud to be a non-profit organization serving birders in Shasta County!

TRIP REPORTS

Red Bluff Recreation Area on September 30th



This started out as an adventure of Fire and Rain. The day before our count, 300 acres of the RBRA was selected for a project burn which was successful of removing high fuels hazard. Concerning though, on how that would affect our count activities. The rain forecast was predicting very light

showers. Fingers crossed this would not impact our access. Morning of; crews showed up for mopping up the burn, the rain did come as very light showers at times, and our access was good to go for a quick start. Nine eager Birders showed up ready to explore. Our total species count finished with a solid 60 species. A total I did not expect. Listing the number selected groups of species: five of waterfowl, three shorebirds, six raptors including Great-horned Owl and

Bald Eagle, five woodpeckers, three swallows, seven sparrows, two wrens, and six warbler species. Some of the highlights for me was the large number of 48 Tree and 40 Violet-green Swallows concentrated over the river on the south side of the dam, and the high species count of woodpeckers and warblers. List of Picidae: Red-breasted Sapsucker, Acorn, Downy, Nuttall's Woodpeckers, and Red-shafted Flicker. List of Parulidae: Orange-crowned Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Yellow Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and Black-throated Gray Warbler.

Lake McCumber on October 7th



An unseasonable warm Saturday drew out 10 birders to this relatively cooler mountain lake, and together we found 35 species. Though woodpeckers were unusually and conspicuously absent, we were treated with a cheery entourage of late-season warblers, including Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Nashville, Yellow, and Wilson's Warblers. Pine Siskins took flight above the willows. Golden-crowned Kinglets crept through the pines as Mountain Chickadees

and Red-breasted Nuthatches made their presence known. A Belted Kingfisher and Bald Eagle patrolled the shoreline while Pied-billed Grebes, Ring-necked Ducks and Canada Geese were the most numerous birds on the water. The promise of a Water Ouzel, also known as the American Dipper, was fulfilled when we spotted it in its usual habitat, foraging among the rocks in North Fork Battle Creek.

Newville Ponds – Burris Creek at BBLRA on October 14th



Five of us met with the goal to see as many waterbird species as possible. We also experienced a solar eclipse which occurred during a very cloudy morning which we could see noticeable changes in bird behaviors. Mixed together it was a very cool bonus to our adventure! Newville Lower Ponds did not disappoint. Our total species count was 55, and of those we counted 18 waterbirds species (which included waterfowl, wading birds,

shorebirds, gull, and rail species). Raptors were represented with Red-tailed Hawk, Great Horned Owl, and Peregrine Falcon. High numbers of individual species occurred with American White Pelican (40) and Black-crown Night Heron

(10). We were able to see one of three Sora we counted, and photos were taken which was a treat. Burriss Creek was a little less active on the waterbirds. Our total species count for Burriss Creek was 28, and one high count of individual species Lewis's Woodpeckers (40). The days combined total was 61 species and waterbird total count at 20 which turned out to be a great day in all.

Return of the Salmon Festival on October 21st



The low numbers of returning salmon this fall probably was a factor in the lower numbers of public participation in the festival compared to previous years. According to Coleman National Fish Hatchery, only 5,000 Chinook salmon returned to Battle Creek this year, a sharp drop from last year's 10,000. The drought continues to affect the fish released three years ago. There weren't any salmon in the fish ladders or in the processing plant this year, but hundreds of families still came out to enjoy the beautiful fall day and the exhibitor's booths. Wintu

Audubon Society had three tables displaying bird nests, a bluebird nest box, birding information and a popular table full of children's activities. Rebeca, Larry, Tricia, and Stephanie enjoyed telling visitors about downloading Merlin on the cell phones and making handprint bluebirds with the kids.

Manzanita Lake on October 28th



A windswept and chilly morning greeted nine birders in two groups birding Manzanita and Reflection Lakes on Saturday October 28. Bundled up and braving the winds the groups tallied 25 species with good birds such as an American Pipit and Varied Thrush. Also observed were the ever present Bald Eagle and American Dippers and there were large numbers of Mountain Chickadees working the deadfalls behind Reflection Lake.



Announcing Our New Name

After much thoughtful conversation and consideration over this past year, the Board of Directors has concurred with the Chapter Name Committee to change the name of our conservation group from Wintu Audubon Society to Shasta Birding Society.

The new name, Shasta Birding Society, reflects where we are located and what we do, probably for most people better than the old name did. We will retain our long-standing associations by using the tagline "A Wintu Country Chapter of the National Audubon Society," which connects us to our original name and umbrella organization, as well as to this land and its indigenous peoples.

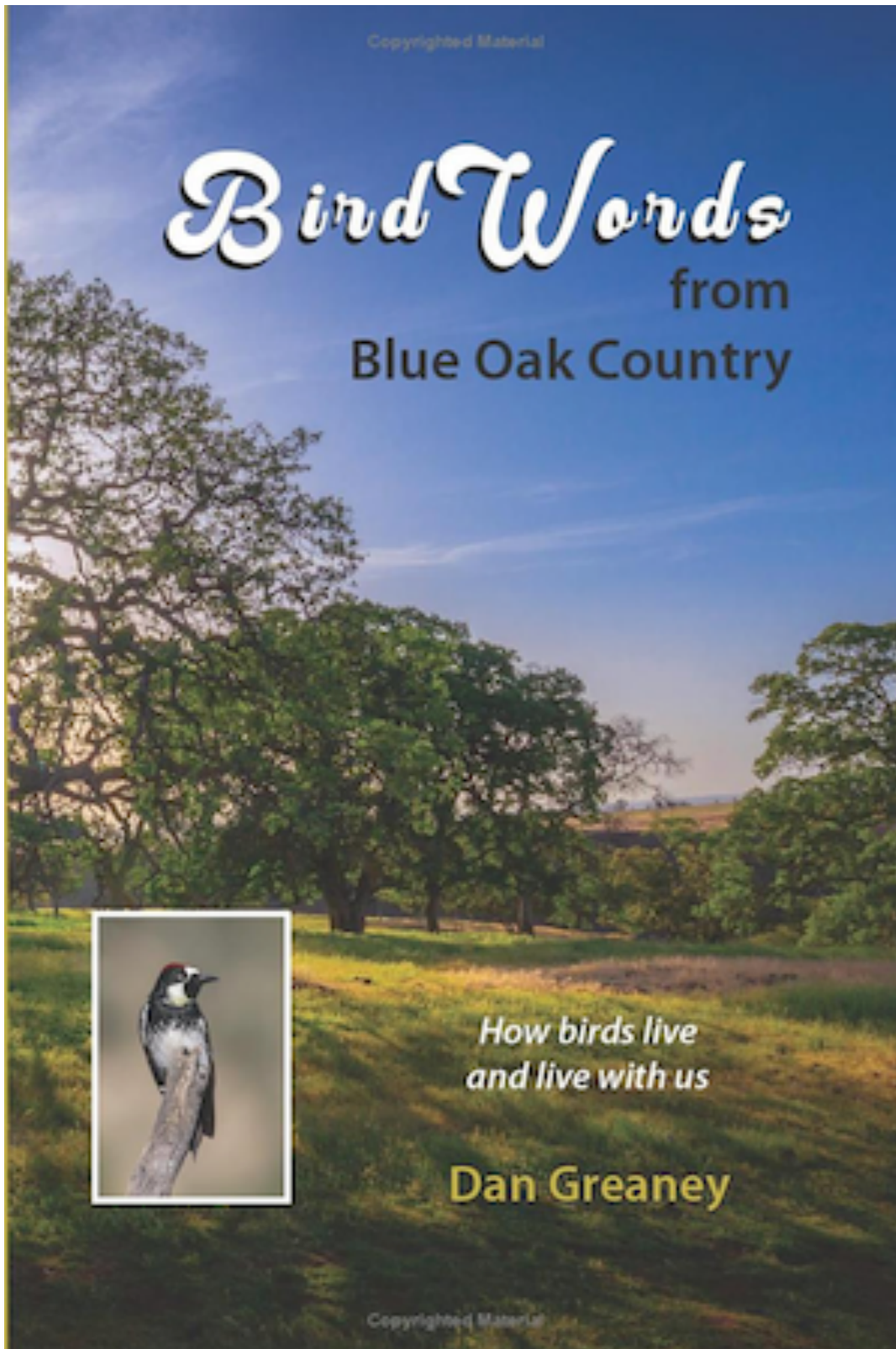
During this time of reexamination of the inequities still prevalent in much of American society, use of the name Audubon has generated much controversy in the birding world. John James Audubon may have been the first well-known bird artist of our country, but he was also an enslaver, racist, and defiler of indigenous gravesites.

The National Audubon Society recently debated changing its name but ultimately decided against it, feeling that the term "Audubon" was tightly entwined with bird conservation, and changing the name would cause confusion. Many local chapters felt differently and have decided to drop the name Audubon from their titles but maintain their connections with the umbrella organization. This was the conclusion reached by our local chapter.

Beginning in January 2024, the new name will be deployed on our website, newsletter, and publications. The graphics of our logo, featuring a female Belted Kingfisher, will remain the same. We welcome comments on the decision to change the name, and they may be emailed to: webmaster@wintuadubon.org.



BirdWords



Remember when our past president, Dan Greaney, was penning all of those monthly "BirdWords" articles? I don't know about you, but I loved reading those every month. I miss those articles. Well, Dan put them in a book! *How birds live, and live with us* is the realm of exploration in this collection of 80 engaging essays on the ways and wiles of birds, and their fortunes in today's world. Accompanied by beautiful photographs, the essays consider birds in terms of natural history and conservation patterns that repeat around the world. The essays are arranged seasonally for the birds' time in Northern California. The birds investigated include both widespread species and oak woodland specialists. The stories are informed by the author's roots in youth outdoor education, the National Park Service, the Audubon Society, and by current events, personal observations, and a wide network of professional resources. The essays were originally published in the Redding Record-Searchlight in the years 2014-2023.

The book is available on Amazon for \$19.95 here: <https://shorturl.at/corsE>