



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 2023



Have you ever had trouble identifying a duck flying overhead at your favorite lake or river? Can you ID flocks of birds as you scan an open waterway at Turtle Bay or the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge? If you'd like to learn more about identification of our local waterfowl you won't want to miss this presentation.

Welcome Mike Carion, a retired Chief of Law Enforcement for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and a former Wintu Audubon board member. He got his degree in wildlife management from Humboldt State and spent thirty-two years as a game warden of various ranks, training all of the wardens in many areas including waterfowl enforcement. He retired in 2014 then assisted Hawaii Department of Wildlife in the development of a training academy for wardens and began working for Ducks Unlimited until July of 2020 when he officially retired again and moved to Hawaii with his wife Nicole and started an Audubon group there. Mike's presentation will cover how to identify the species of ducks and geese most likely to be found in Shasta County and surrounding areas. He will discuss helpful identifying characteristics of these waterfowl to narrow down the possibilities we encounter in the field.

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

Topic: Waterfowl Identification

Time: Jan 11, 2023 07:00 PM Pacific Time

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88149164589>

Meeting ID: 881 4916 4589

One tap mobile

+12532158782,,88149164589# US (Tacoma)

+12532050468,,88149164589# US

JANUARY 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.

Hog Lake - January 7th @ 6:45 am



On Saturday, January 7, we will kick off the new year with a visit to Hog Lake in Tehama County to check on waterfowl and upland wintering birds. Caravan leaves the [Kutras parking lot](#) at 6:45 am or meet at the [parking lot at Hog Lake](#) at 7:30 am (Approximate Sunrise). Hog Lake is located off of State Route 36 about 9.5 miles east of Red Bluff. Look for the BLM sign on the left side of the

highway. Bring layered clothes and sturdy boots as the hiking is very rocky at points. There is no fee for use of this BLM property. Rain cancels the trip.

Clover Creek Preserve - January 12th @ 9:00 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? The theme for this month's adventure in our city parks is "Redding's Raptors." This will be the fourth in a series of eight walks, one per month from

October through May. Join Wintu Audubon Society at the preserve on Thursday, January 12th, at 9:00 am to find out which birds of prey are common in our 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 two hours walking less than 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.

Rio Alto Wastewater Treatment Plant - January 14th @ 7:30 am



Rio Alto Wastewater Treatment Plant is located at Lake California in Cottonwood. With help from Bill Oliver and the plant's general manager, Martha Slack, we have permission to visit this unique location. The treatment plant encompasses 78 acres with four ponds and two miles of flat, easy walking trails. Meet at [Kutras Park](#) at 7:30 am to carpool or at the park & ride at Bowman Road

and Lake California Drive at 7:20. Rain cancels the trip.

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge - January 21st @ 6:00 am



On Saturday January 21st we will tour the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Caravan leaves the [parking lot at Kutras](#) at 6:00 am or meet at the parking lot at the refuge at 7:30 am. We will have walkie talkies to hand out to each vehicle. Portable restrooms are located at the "closed for remodeling visitors center" and at the half-way point in the auto tour at the viewing platform. Bring

snacks to eat during the tour and at our pause at the platform. There is an entrance fee, dependent on your age and situation, see the link below for information. <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/sacramento/sacramento-nwr-complex-passes-and-permits>

Martin Luther King Day

Wintu Audubon Society will have a booth at the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, located at 1815 Sheridan Street in Redding, on Monday, January 16**. Please join us at the celebration of King's birthday from 9:30 am to noon. We will be featuring our bluebird nest box program and offering general information. Children's activities include making a bluebird picture using handprint cutouts and coloring pages. We will have a bluebird nest box on display as well. If you would like to volunteer to help at this event, please email Education Chair Tricia Ford at triciathebirdnerd@gmail.com.

TRIP REPORTS

Caldwell Park and Lake Redding Park on December 8th



On a bitterly cold and damp morning, eleven frozen birders braved the Sacramento River Trail in Caldwell Park to observe “Winter Water Birds of Redding.” The goldeneyes put on the best show for us, with 50 Common Goldeneyes and 1 male Barrow’s Goldeneye hiding in plain sight in the flock. We had a handful of the usual suspects, Canada Goose, Mallards, Buffleheads and Common

Mergansers, plus assorted other local birds, for a grand total of 34 species. Birders started dropping like flies as the cold froze their faces, fingers, and toes, and they ran for the heat of their vehicles.

Fall River Christmas Bird Count on December 17th



The Fall River Christmas Bird Count began with a chilly 2° foggy morning and ended at a sunny 32°! Birds were not numerous but species numbers nearly reached our count average of 115 species. Last year we had 119 species. This year we had 114 species. Not bad given the winter conditions. Best birds were Eurasian Wigeon, Dunlin, Pileated Woodpecker, Say’s Phoebe, Red Crossbill,

Northern Saw-whet Owl and a bird found only once before in the county, a Snow Bunting!

Redding Christmas Bird Count on December 26th



On a foggy day the Redding Christmas Bird Count tallied 121 species which included a Red-Naped Sapsucker, a Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, a Swamp Sparrow and a Prairie Falcon! We also had new highs for Acorn Woodpeckers and Great Horned Owls!

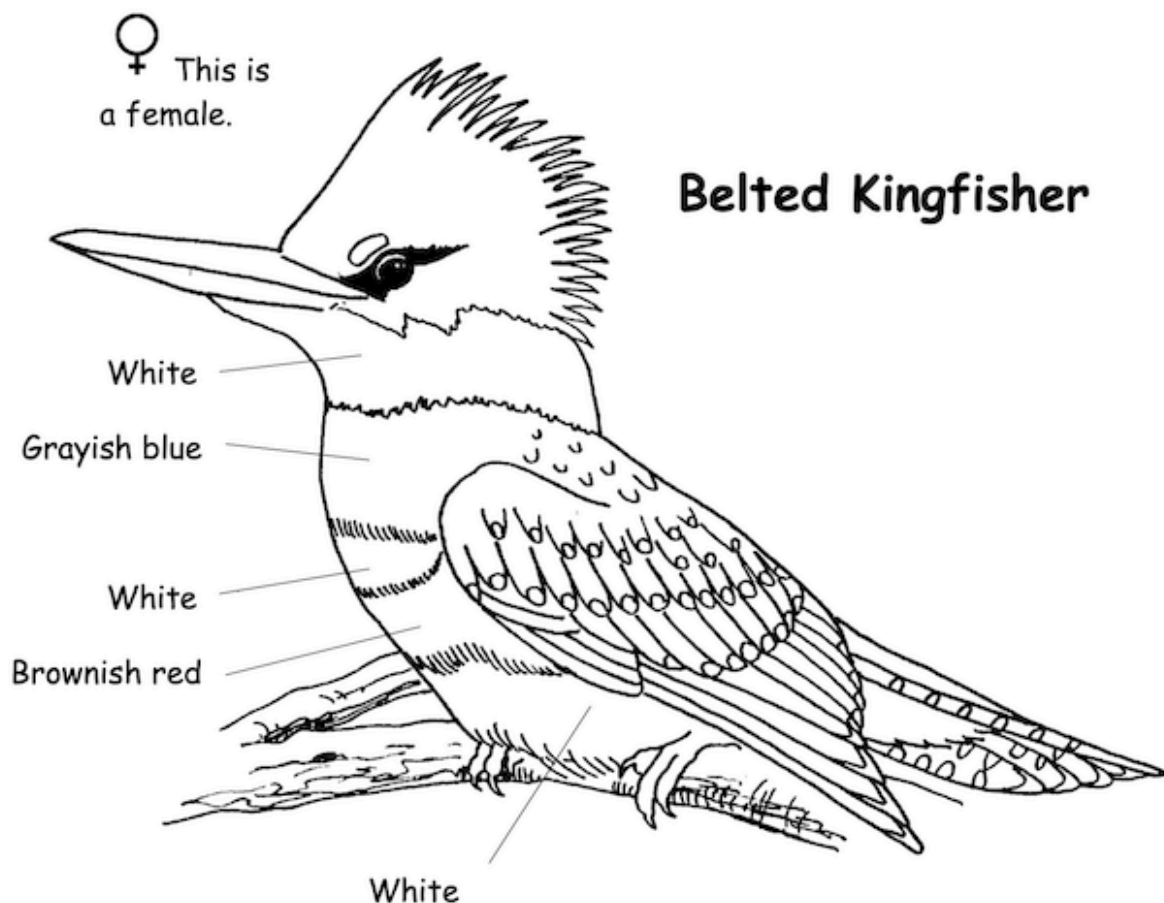
Red Bluff Christmas Bird Count on January 1st



The Red Bluff Christmas Bird Counters found a cool clear sunny day to discover 113 species. Seventeen determined birders found some great birds including Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks and a Loggerhead Shrike. The best birds of the day were a Townsend's Warbler (second time on the count) and a Black-throated Gray Warbler (sixth time on the count).

THE EDUCATION CORNER from Tricia Ford

TO DOWNLOAD ANY OF OUR COLORING PAGES GO TO THIS LINK
[HTTPS://WWW.WINTUAUDUBON.ORG/EDUCATION/](https://www.wintuauudubon.org/education/)



Coloring instructions:

Black - the bill and the wing tips

Grayish blue - the head, back, wings, rump, and the tail (except for the white spots)

Brownish orange - the feet

White - the patch near the eye and the patch on the shoulder

Length: 12”

Habitat: Resident along streams and ponds

Field marks: Large, dark crested head and long, heavy black bill

The Belted Kingfisher is a treat to watch. It has a large bill and crest that give it an unusual look. Its loud, rattling call is easy to hear. When you hear it, you know to look up to see a bird flying over the water. This is a bird that is common in riparian areas. That means you will find it along the river and near large creeks. The kingfisher feeds on small fish. It catches the fish by diving headfirst into the water. You might see it drop from a high branch over the water. You might see it hovering like a helicopter high above the water just before it folds its wings back and dives like a fighter jet into the water. The kingfisher must drop into the water very fast so that it can go under deep enough to spear the fish with its bill. It does not have webbed feet to push itself forward once it is underwater, like ducks and geese do. In fact, kingfishers have very short legs. Another unusual thing about Belted Kingfishers is the way they nest. They dig tunnels straight into the sandy banks of the creek. The tunnels are up to six feet long! Both the male and the female work on the tunnel. They use their front claws—with two forward-pointing toes fused together for added strength—and their strong bills to dig the hole. At the end of the tunnel, the female lays the eggs. The kingfishers have short legs so that they can go back and forth down the tunnel. You will almost always see kingfishers alone. They don't like company very much. There will be two together only during the breeding season when they must act like a family. But they don't do it for long.

Belted Kingfisher Challenges Put a check mark in the box when you have completed the challenge.

Identify a female Belted Kingfisher. She has a reddish band on her belly.

Identify a male. He does not have the reddish band.

Hear the loud, rattling call.

See a kingfisher flying down a creek.

See a kingfisher dive.

Find a kingfisher nest tunnel. Look below the top of a steep riverbank which has no plants growing on it. Usually there is a dead tree limb nearby where the adults can perch and see the hole.

Find a kingfisher pellet which is full of fish bones. The pellet is popped out of their throats when they are done digesting the meat.

Reminder: last year the chapter moved from subscription to donation-based membership. At the beginning of each new operating year in September we encourage members to donate - suggested amount \$20-\$30 - either through our [PayPal link](#) or by check at Wintu Audubon, PO Box 994533, Redding, CA 96099-4533. If you haven't yet donated this year, please check our membership page to see what your donation supports. Thank you so much!