



CHIRP-N-CHATTER

The Newsletter of the Shasta Birding Society

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

January 2024



Tyler Compton, Interpretive Park Ranger, will provide us with a program on Shasta County's own extraordinary unit of the National Park System. Since Whiskeytown National Recreation Area is a frequent destination for birdwatchers and much of the lake is included in the annual Redding Christmas Bird Count circle, our members have requested an update on what is going on in the park. Tyler will answer our questions about the plans for rebuilding Whiskeytown Environmental School, the park's ongoing recovery from the Carr Fire, the projects taking place around the Camden House and in the surrounding Tower House Historic District, the discussion of a renovation of the visitor center, and the new construction in the campground area. As an education specialist for Whiskeytown, Tyler will explain what kinds of programs and events may be offered to the public in the coming year.

Shasta Birding Society is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: What's Up At Whiskeytown?

TIME: JAN 10, 2024 07:00 PM PACIFIC TIME (US AND CANADA)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82552684245>

Meeting ID: 825 5268 4245---

One tap mobile

Meeting ID: 849 3595 9479

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82552684245>

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: Beth Brockman, John Livingston, Jamie Wallace, Andrea Herr, Heather Sherman, David Ledger, Catherine Camp, Shelly Cerasaro, Bruce Web, Melinda Kashuba, Muffy Berryhill, Kay Johnson, Candace Foley, Mary Rickert, Dan Greaney, Paula Crumpton, Martin Vanorsou, and Terry and Jay Thesken - Thank You!

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

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.

Kum Bay Xerel Trail - Sunday, January 7th @ 8:00 am



You are invited to come out to Kum Bay Xerel for a day of birding along the Sacramento River in South Redding. To get there take the Knighton Road Exit (#673) from I-5, turn west on Knighton Road and make an immediate left on Riverland Drive. Continue for about ½ mile and park at the giant blue geodesic

sphere. The first ¾ mile is paved and wheelchair accessible. There is an additional mile of dirt trails on adjacent BLM land. Expect wintering waterfowl on the water and many songbird species along the lush wooded riparian corridor, as well as raptors, including eagles, soaring overhead. New bathrooms are available in the parking lot. [Map to location](#).

Birding Basics at Turtle Bay Bird Sanctuary - January 11th @ 8:00 am



Join us for a new series of second Thursday bird walks with Tricia Ford of the Shasta Birding Society. Every walk will feature a discussion of a birding skill and/or a hot topic in the world of birding. Beginning birdwatchers are

especially encouraged to join us in learning to identify the large variety of avian life in the area. The January 11 walk will discuss the controversy surrounding how birds were named and the current effort to change many of the old names. This walk will meet each month at the kiosk near the entrance of the Sundial Bridge across from the Branch House Bistro at 8:30 am for a leisurely two-hour stroll along the Sacramento River Trail in the area designated as a bird sanctuary. The paved trail is accessible, and bathrooms can be found outside Turtle Bay Exploration Park. Binoculars are available to borrow, and instructions will be provided for their use. Rain will cancel. Contact Tricia Ford at triciathebirdnerd@gmail.com for more information.

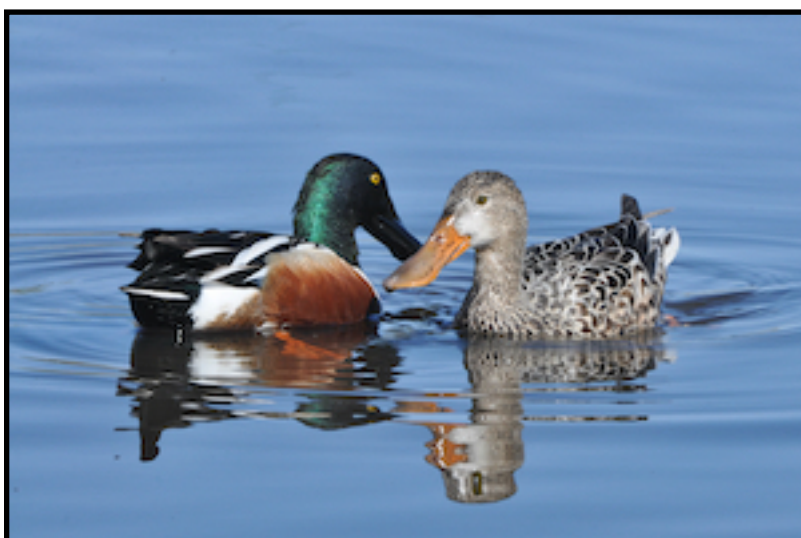
Clear Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant - January 13th @ 7:30 am



We are scheduling our first 2024 Saturday visit to the ponds targeting waterfowl, shorebirds and wintering passerines. Assemble at the treatment plant's administration building at the end of Metz Road at 7:30 am sharp to meet your leader Tim Kashuba. This is a 1/2 day trip that may end in the early afternoon if the birding is good. Directions to the Clear Creek Plant: Take Hwy 273 south, after crossing Clear Creek and past the Win River Casino, take the second left turn at River Ranch Road and cross over the railroad tracks. Turn left on Eastside Road. Entrance is at

2200 Metz Road on the right. Rain Cancels.

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge - January 20th @ 6:00 am



On Saturday January 20th we will tour the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Caravan leaves the [parking lot at Kutas](#) 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>

Payne's Creek Wetlands - January 27th @ 7:30 am



This is a no fee area and a very active hotspot this time of the year, especially with all the recent weather events we have had in 2023 so far. We are planning to meet at the Bass Pond Parking Lot at, 22459 Bend Ferry Rd, Red Bluff, CA 96080, at the main entrances to the Wetlands.

Link: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/qQ89aRHfRg7gbHhDA> This half-day event should yield many varieties of waterbirds, raptors,

woodpeckers, and many songbirds in this unique and open wetlands area. From the parking lot we will start with a walk on a two-mile loop through several ponds to the south side of the road. If time permits, we will take a short drive to Payne's Creek Crossing to round out our journey. Please contact Dan Bye, by text/cell 530 228 9373 or email danbye56@gmail.com for more information..

THE CONSERVATION CORNER from Bruce Webb, Conservation Chair

Fountain Wind Update

Some government decision makers often seem to choose the end of the year Holiday season to circulate notices of impending decisions that affect the environment, whether due simply to the waning annual calendar or, as some may believe, chosen because most of the public is celebrating and too busy to pay close attention. Fortunately that wasn't the case this year in our jurisdiction. The possible timing exception is the CA Energy Commission's processing of the Fountain Wind Energy project near Round Mt. Your chapter filed a comment letter at the start of the review process in early December, 2023. (Please click on [this link](#) to review the comment letter filed by your chapter.) The CEC is continuing to take public comments as it begins preparation of the Environmental Impact Report, scheduled for release in May, 2024. President Rebeca Ladrón de Guevara and yours truly recently met with the project team from ConnectGen by video conference to discuss recent additions to their bird studies and mitigation commitments. Your Chapter continues to review and comment on this project, on its potential for impacts to birds and wildlife generally, and on appropriate measures to prevent or reduce impacts. We, however, do not intend to take a formal position in favor or opposed. Please also see our report on Fountain Wind in your December, 2023 newsletter for more info.

Riverfront Specific Plan

The Community Coalition formed to help kick off the visioning process for the plan has for now completed its series of public meetings held in October and November. Shasta Birding Society President Rebeca Ladrón de Guevara was appointed to the group as the sole representative from environmental organizations. City of Redding staff plans to go to the City Council in January to present the emerging vision for the riverfront, which is the result of the Community Coalition discussions. Our contact with Redding Staff has revealed that a Biological Resources "existing conditions" report has been prepared in advance of the Environmental Impact Report, as recommended by our previous

comment letters. The report has not been released yet to the public but we have been assured we will receive it soon.

Jenny Creek Trail

Education Chair Tricia Ford reported in last month's newsletter that the City plans to build a paved trail paralleling Jenny Creek in the Sunset Terrace area of Redding. Residents of the area and your Chapter are concerned about the impacts on the local birds and other wildlife. An environmental Initial Study was to be released by the City but as yet is still not yet available. We will be reviewing the report and commenting as appropriate."

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TRIP REPORTS

Battle Creek Wildlife Area and Coleman Fish Hatchery on December 9th

A clear, cool and frosty early December morning greeted four birders for the hike from Battle Creek to the Coleman Fish Hatchery via the Oak and Hatchery Trails. The beautiful damp trails were lined with leaves and the usual winter sparrows: White-crowned, Golden-crowned and Song. Lots of skittish waterfowl were on the ponds near the Hatchery, with the often-heard and seldom-seen Rails and Soras. A pair of adult Bald Eagles were perched near the large nest

just south of the ponds. We dipped on an American Dipper in the Creek however. A total of 56 species were tallied with American Robins, European Starlings and Turkey Vultures the highest in number.

Fall River Christmas Bird Count on December 16th



This male Northern Harrier was one of the many raptors spotted during the 2023 Fall River Christmas Bird Count. If you love raptors, the Fall River Christmas Bird Count is for you! There were 28 Northern Harriers found on count day, as well as 4 Golden Eagles, 2 Sharp-shinned Hawks, 2 Cooper's Hawks, 15 Bald Eagles, 4 Red-shouldered Hawks, 87 Red-tailed Hawks, 9 Rough-legged Hawks, and 9 Ferruginous Hawks. Totals were: 128 species totaling 24,949 individuals.

Shingletown Christmas Bird Count on December 17th



For our first Shingletown CBC, we documented 95 species plus 2 additional species for the count week. Those were Lesser scaup and Peregrine Falcon. Our total number of individual birds was 6,397. The top ten species with the highest count were (from more to less): American Robin, European Starling, Red-winged Blackbird, Brewer's Blackbird, Dark-eyed Junco, Western Bluebird, Acorn Woodpecker, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, and Common Raven. We had 11 people participate this year. Thank you very much to Emily, Julie, Brian, Trisha, Tim, Larry, Michele, Bob, Carol, and Elaine for making this first count a great success!

NOTES:

Temperature = 29-62F

Clouds = Partly cloudy in AM, Overcast in PM

Wind = Calm to light

Rain = None, but rain starting at sunset.

Water = Partially frozen in AM

Snow = None

Owling = 0428-0700

Feeders = 0800-0900

Daytime Counting = 0700-1658

Anderson Christmas Bird Count on December 23rd



The term 'CAAD' is the code that is registered with National Audubon Society®, for what is known as Anderson CBC Circle. The first Anderson CBC count was held on December 22, 2007, and records show there were seven participants. Anderson Count Circle has traditionally been constructed with seven sections, and this year we gathered twelve volunteer birders with the tenacity to show up and count for this year's restart of CAAD CBC. To mix it up on our count return, we accepted a proposal of a father and son team who volunteered to kayak the last 2/3 of the Sacramento River within our count circle from Anderson River Park to Jelly's Ferry Bridge. The weather conditions seemed favorable as

the river flow was decreasing after recent storms and no storms were predicted until days after the count. These same kayakers, 10 years before, traveled the Sacramento River for the Red Bluff CBC. After consulting with others, it seemed like a great opportunity and we went forward with the idea. So, for this year's count we made the adjustment with eight sections and fourteen volunteers. With a team made up of Anderson CBC veterans and recruits to the count area, everyone did a fantastic job. A couple of folks had never been a section leader on a CBC before and they came through it doing well. How did we do? Well, we are still compiling our final numbers, but we have confirmed 107 species so far. If you are an eBirder and you are interested in seeing our detailed results, you can look up our shared eBird® account 'Anderson CBC' to find out more.

Redding Christmas Bird Count on December 26th



It was a chilly morning at 7:30 am when we began finding as many birds as we could. The sun soon warmed us as we enjoyed a partly cloudy sky. We tallied 118 species, the American Robin winning the highest count at 5000. Some of the more rare birds on this count were the Black-crowned Night-Heron, Greater Scaup, Red-breasted Merganser, Pileated Woodpecker, and Townsend's Warbler. My favorite bird of the day was a "Taiga" Merlin spotted across

from the Lema Ranch headquarters at Leah's Pond, sitting atop the tallest tree.

Red Bluff Christmas Bird Count on December 30th



The Red Bluff CBC was conducted on December 30, which started with light rain. We had 16 participants counting and within the first hour of daylight, the rain stopped. By noon we had partly cloudy skies and beautiful birding weather. The bird of the day, was a 2nd county record, Harris's Sparrow, found by Mike and Asya, at Cone Grove Park. Even with the rarity of this bird, it was not the first time for the count.

The 1st county record was at my yard in 2014 into 2015, showing up on December 31, just before that year's count. We missed a few of the normal species, but it is always nice to pick up some of the others, that aren't always found. The total for the count was 105, which is a little lower than usual, but added a few birds for "count week", Northern-Pygmy Owl, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager and Barn Owl. I want to thank everyone who keeps coming out to count, whatever the weather might be.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER CHICK FORAGING AT HAT LAKE IN LASSEN NATIONAL PARK

