



SNOWY EGRET

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The Valley Habitat

November/December 2023

A joint publication of the Stanislaus Audubon Society
and the Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club

Walking the Green Path

Book Review:
The Story of Stuff, by Annie Leonard .

This is one of the most informative and enjoyable environmental books I have read. I found myself looking forward to resuming reading no matter what section I was in. Environmental books often offer us disheartening news at least some of the time. To be certain this book is no exception. The toxic/carcinogenic characteristics of our habits are clearly presented. The author presents a thoroughly *informative* picture that compels us to look into the mirror and clearly see our consumerism and its impact. I found this enlightening. The extraction, production, distribution, consumption, and disposal of our "stuff" is displayed in an eye-opening manner.

Cont. on page 5

The name "Yokuts Group" honors the Native Peoples who inhabited the area now known as Stanislaus County.

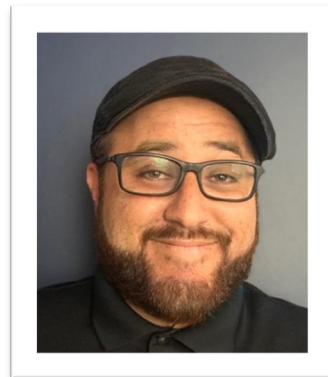
Sierra Club Monthly Programs

Socializing and Snacks: 6:45 PM | Presentation: 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM
College Ave. United Church of Christ, 1341 College Ave., Modesto

TUOLUMNE RIVER TRUST: PROGRAMS AND COLLABORATIONS

Speaker: Edgar Garibay
November 17, 2023

Edgar Garibay is the Central Valley Program Director for the Tuolumne River Trust (TRT). He holds Bachelor's Degrees in Biological Sciences and Psychology from California State University, Stanislaus.



EDGAR GARIBAY

TRT from the San Joaquin Valley nonprofit sector, with experience in civic engagement and advocacy, coalition building, youth programs and volunteer recruitment. Edgar oversees TRT's Programs (Education and Advocacy) in the Central Valley (Modesto).

Edgar Garibay from the Tuolumne River Trust will be the guest speaker for the month of November. He will provide an overview of the programs at the Trust, including those in the Central Valley. He will also discuss how TRT works collaboratively with residents and community partners to address Environmental Justice concerns in the riverside communities of Modesto.

YOKUTS ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SLIDESHOW January 19, 2024

Please have your images ready to present for this meeting on a memory stick.

CAVITY NESTERS DILEMMA

European Starling

Western Screech
Owl

Tree Swallow

White-headed
Woodpecker

House Wren

Western Bluebird

Oak Titmouse

Generally, there are more cavity nesting birds than available cavities in our diminishing North American avian habitat. The White-headed Woodpecker in the artificial tree (Habitat Loss:-) to your left is a Primary Cavity Nester. Primary Cavity Nesters have the skills and means to create their own homes to match the requirements of their families. About eighty avian species in North America meet this criteria.

The Oak Titmouse, Western Bluebird, House Wren, Tree Swallow, Western Screech Owl and European Starling represented in our artificial tree are considered Secondary Cavity Nesters. Secondary Cavity Nesters lack the skills and means to create their own homes and must search for a vacant cavity or find other natural shelter.

The Titmouse next door found natural shelter behind a section of loose tree bark.

The scenario in the tree to the left demonstrates how alert the six species with cavity nests must be to avoid being forcefully evicted. The Tree Swallow, House Wren and Western Bluebird are in the most peril from the opportunistic European Starling. The cavity opening of these three nests is large enough to allow the starling to enter:- (All it will take is a momentary lapse of both parents away from the nest at the same time. I doubt that the Starling would take on the Western Screech Owl. The White-headed Woodpecker and the Oak Titmouse small nest holes won't allow starling entry.

The environmental triggers that fuel this shortage are complicated. The preferred habitat for Primary Cavity

Nesters is deteriorating trees often labeled as snags.

As our cities grow, farming operations expand and forest management priorities change, who wants unsightly or dangerous snags around? Note that the healthy tree we portray in this article is not a snag:- (

Human mitigation attempts are helpful, such as nest boxes tailored to individual species. The First North American attempts were initiated before the Europeans arrived by native indigenous people who hung dry gourds for use by Purple Martins. John James Audubon was known to stay at establishments that featured Purple Martin nest boxes.

Today there are organizations that promote Bluebird and American Kestrel nest box use. The Stanislaus Audubon Society works with the San Joaquin National Wildlife Refuge to place and monitor Bluebird nest boxes.

Here is one last interesting adaptation of many cavity nesters. Did you notice that the Oak Titmouse and Western Bluebird are carrying little white packages away from the nest? I saw these in many of my cavity nester images and discovered it is called a Fecal Sac. This gelatinous pouch delivered by the nestlings allows the parents to safely remove baby poop a reasonable distance from the nest to not attract predators.

It also occurred to me if the manufacturers of Pampers were aware of the cavity nester's long-standing patent pending for a Fecal Sac?:-)

Richard Brown and Jodon Barlow

In the Parks

Recently I read an article by Nicholas Kristof in the New York Times in which he declares that the the best parenting he ever did was on the trails. He went on to describe how he and his daughter, starting when she was 14, backpacked the entire Pacific Crest Trail in stages over the course of six years.

Although my wife and I never had children, we both had careers working with kids. Over the course of my career working as a school psychologist in Oakdale, it frequently surprised me to learn that a student I was working with had not been to Yosemite or even the mountains of the Sierra Nevada.

When I was a child, my parents scraped up enough money to buy a used 17-foot trailer that we took across most of the western U.S., vacationing in many of our national parks.

RECENT AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS



SAN JOAQUIN RIVER N.W.R.
July 15, 2023



KNIGHTS FERRY RECREATION AREA
Patterson Teen Outdoors Education
September 30, 2023



SAN JOAQUIN RIVER N.W.R.
August 23, 2023



PT. REYES NATIONAL SEASHORE
September 30, 2023
© John Harris

Some of my most exquisite memories were the anticipation and sense of adventure I felt on those Friday evenings when my dad would get off work and we would head out through the California desert at night, often with a Dodger game and Vin Scully's dulcet tones keeping us company.

Those trips were some of the best things our family ever did together. And I know they instilled in me a love of nature and wilderness.

Today, many children experience what writer Richard Louv terms "nature deficit disorder." This refers to the alienation from the natural world that arises when kids no longer

"tramp though the mud chasing tadpoles and garter snakes". Societally, we have become a bit too overprotective, sedentary, addicted to screens.

Children have an inherent love of nature, our planet, and a desire to spend time outdoors. We are fortunate living in this area to have easy access to nature and wilderness within a day's drive. These experiences can instill in your children, or grandchildren, a love of the natural world that will want to be passed on. So, as Nicholas Kristof aptly states, "Go take a hike, and bring the kids."

Kent Mitchell

STANISLAUS AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

EASTERN STANISLAUS COUNTY Dawson Lake, Cooperstown and Williams Road

**Leader: Daniel Gilman SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 4**

Eastern Stanislaus County is a great area to see raptors and grassland birds in winter. We'll visit Dawson Lake and drive Cooperstown and Williams roads looking for raptors and wintering grassland birds. If we are lucky we may see Burrowing Owls, Lewis's Woodpeckers, Mountain Bluebirds, Vesper Sparrows, and other birds of the grasslands. Meet at the Fruityard Restaurant on Highway 132 (address 7948 Yosemite Blvd, Modesto, CA 95357) at 8:00 a.m. Questions? Email Daniel Gilman at spiderdan1974@att.net

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD SYMPOSIUM Stockton, CA NOVEMBER 16-19, 2023

The Central Valley Bird Symposium is traditionally held the weekend before Thanksgiving. With four days of field trips, presentations, workshops, and vendors, this is an event that shouldn't be missed! Field trips visit many of the best birding sites in the Central Valley from Colusa National Wildlife Refuge in the Sacramento Valley to Merced National Wildlife Refuge in the San Joaquin Valley. For more information about the program and venue, see the Central Valley Bird Club's page for this event at: <https://cvbirds-symposium.netlify.app/>

AUDUBON CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

The National Audubon Society holds the annual Christmas Bird Count over a two week period each year. The Christmas Bird Counts, held for over a century, attempt to record every individual bird encountered within a defined 15-mile diameter — about 177 square miles — during one calendar day.

The 2023-24 season, the 124th year of the Christmas Bird Count, will extend from December 14, 2023 to January 5, 2024.

Save the dates and check the Stanislaus Audubon website for more details.

The dates for local counts within our area are:

LaGrange-Waterford Christmas Bird Count: December 16, 2023

Pre-count meeting is 6:30 am at the Fruit Yard Restaurant, intersection of Hwy 132 and Geer Rd. east of Modesto. Contact Jim Gain at jimgain@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Los Banos Christmas Bird Count: December 28, 2023

Contact John Fulton at Merced_birding@hotmail.com

Caswell-Westley Christmas Bird Count: December 31, 2023

River Walk Update

Our coalition against Riverbank's proposed River Walk development has a new website:

<https://www.stoptheriverwalk.com/>
In it, people can review background information on the proposal and our reasons for opposing it. There will also be an Update section where new information will be posted. This will include actions the city of Riverbank have recently taken in regards to River Walk, what our coalition is currently achieving, and what concerned citizens can do such as canvassing voters and attending public meetings. Lastly, we would like to acknowledge Riverbank resident Shane Cotta for developing this website.

Kent Mitchell

Political Chair

Walking the Green Path cont.

The author brings clarity to what we have done and what we need to change. Responsible and irresponsible business practices are well-covered. Lots of other environmentally related books are cited as well as numerous and valuable websites. It's as if a clear, inviting, and vast field of options are offered that impel our trust. The author grew up in Washington, went to college in the eastern U.S. and has traveled the world while witnessing consequences of consumerism. For a time, she worked for Greenpeace. Ms. Leonard shares bits of her own lifestyle and neighborhood practices. She acknowledges our basic needs but puts an emphasis on thrift. "The lust for comfort murders the passion of the soul, and then walks grinning in the funeral." (Khalil Gibran, The Prophet). As always, questions and contributions of info. are welcome.

Steve Tomlinson

stomlinson015@gmail.com

STANISLAUS AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2023-24

President: Salvatore Salerno **Vice President, Field Trips:** John Harris
bees2@sbcglobal.net jhh.birder@gmail.com

Treasurer: David Froba **Secretary:** Daniel Gilman **Conservation:** Jody Hallstrom

Christmas Bird Counts: Harold Reeve **Online Newsletter:** Jodi Smith **Social Media:** CeCe Hurst

Events, Education, Scholarship: Chris Magaña, Kathy Rasmussen, Tom Myers, Rich Brown, Xavier Sandoval, Ann Kohlhaas, Eric Hopson, Madeline Yancey, Siera Nystrom

Visit our website at stanislausbirds.org. Like us on Stanislaus Audubon Facebook and Instagram.

Those who wish to receive Valley Habitat online, please contact John Harris.

New members: Use renewal form from National Audubon Society, <http://www.audubon.org/renew>.

Use Chapter Code C36. Renewing members, use the same link. Renewal date is on newsletter label.

New and renewal memberships are \$20 yearly.

Holiday Party!

Friday, December 8, 2023
5424 Nanette Drive, Salida
7:00 p.m. - ???

Come and join your fellow Yokuts and Audubon members for our Holiday Party.

It is a fun evening and great way to visit with your fellow members. The party is casual with everyone contributing with a special snack or dessert to share. There will be coffee, tea, cider and you can bring a bottle of wine or what you would like to drink. We have a raffle or member created special baskets, so get creative and bring a basket to raffle if you like...the more the merrier!

Please call for directions: (209) 601-8660

Hope to see you all at the party!!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Kathy Weise

View the Valley Habitat Online

Stanislaus Audubon is now sending out the Valley Habitat online to everyone for whom we have an email address. We encourage Audubon chapter members to opt in for electronic delivery, not only to reduce the expense and labor of printing, labeling, and postage, but also to reduce the amount of paper needed. To get your newsletter online, send your name and email address, with "Online Subscription" in the subject line, to John Harris at jhh.birder@gmail.com.

Yokuts Outings

Check out the current outings posts at our Meetup page:

<http://www.meetup.com/S-M-S-SierraClub>

All adults are welcome, including those who are not members of Sierra Club. We generally meet at a designated local parking area and then carpool to the event site (though Sierra Club does not officially organize carpools) which can be located nearby or several hours away. We also have fun off the trail with social events such as dinners, movie nights, Christmas Parties, and potlucks.

Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair: Anita Young
youngbooks@gmail.com
 Vice Chair: Elaine Gorman
 Political Chair: Kent Mitchell
 Secretary: Sara Averett
 Treasurer: Doug Maner
 Conservation and Sustainability Chair:
 Milt Trieweler

SPECIAL / STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance

Doug Maner
 Steve Tomlinson (Yard Sale)
 Candy Klaschus (Yard Sale)
 Doug Hardie (Calendar Sales)

Outings

Chair: Jeff Olson
rayjeff40@gmail.com
 Randall Brown
 Elaine Gorman

Communications

Kathy Weise (Mailings)
 CeCe Hurst (Publicity)
 Kevin Augustine (Valley Habitat)
kaugustine@csustan.edu
 Anita Young (Membership)
 Vacant (Hospitality)
 Laura Stokes (Programs)
 Jason Tyree (Webmaster)
 Kathy Weise (Elections/Nominating)

Recycling

Sandy Wilson

*Executive Committee officers are elected by the general membership and are appointed by the Executive Committee for two-year terms.

Yokuts website:

Sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yokuts



[@YokutsSierraClub](https://www.instagram.com/YokutsSierraClub)



[Yokuts Group Sierra Club](https://www.facebook.com/YokutsGroupSierraClub)



Sierra Club membership enrollment form

Name: _____

Opt-in email: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Individual Membership Joint Membership

___ Special Offer	\$15	
___ Regular	\$39	\$49
___ Supporting	\$75	\$100
___ Contributing	\$150	\$175
___ Life	\$1000	\$1250
___ Student	\$25	\$35
___ Senior	\$25	\$35
___ Limited Income	\$25	\$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax-deductible. Your dues include \$7.50 for the subscription to Sierra magazine and \$1.00 for your chapter newsletter.

Payment Method: Check ___ Mastercard ___ VISA ___

Cardholder Name: _____

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Enclose payment information and mail to:

Sierra Club

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Yokuts Group

Yokuts Group
Mother Lode Chapter
Sierra Club
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Modesto, CA 95353

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CURRENT RESIDENT OR

2023 Yokuts Election

Make your voice heard in the Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club by voting in our annual Executive Committee election. **Your ballot will be counted only if it is received by the Elections Committee before 5:00pm on December 31, 2023.**

(You may bring your ballot to the Holiday Party on the 8th.)

Yokuts Group Excomm---this year there are 3 positions on our ex-comm committee open. You may vote for 3 positions.

Thanks to our members who are volunteering to serve for this term. Please think about joining them on our ex-comm to help your Yokuts Group.



**SIERRA
CLUB**
FOUNDED 1892

Please vote for four positions

Co-Chair – Candy Klaschus: _____

Co-Chair – Steve Tomlinson: _____

Vice Chair -- Elaine Gorman: _____

Political Chair– Kent Mitchell: _____

Please make your selections and mail your ballot by Dec. 31, 2023 to:

**Yokuts Elections c/o Kathy Weise
5424 Nanette Dr.
Salida, Calif. 95368**