



SNOWY EGRET

© Rich Brown

The Valley Habitat

March/April 2024

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

Walking the Green Path

Hi folks. Recently I looked on-line for “eco scouring pads”. I found some made from coconuts. The surface of them is just like the outside of a coconut. I haven’t tried them yet as I have not used up my current ones. More on this in the future. Some time ago I unwittingly purchased a plastic soap dispenser. Upon emptying it I filled it with castile soap and water. Mixing the two is long-lasting. An eventual switch to bar soap with biodegradable packaging seems the best green option. Recent news sources have brought a focus on possible nano-plastics in bottled water. As is known, the presence of plastics everywhere has created pathways for plastics to get into our food. The news also mentions further research to gauge the harm of plastics entering our cells.

Cont. on page 4

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

IMPRESSIONS OF LAKE AITITLAN, GUATAMALA, BY A FIRST-TIME VISITOR Speaker: Laura Stokes March 15, 2024

Yokuts Program Chair Laura Stokes is a retired architectural engineer who settled in Modesto in 2014. She is an abstract painter and online gallerist. Her imagery of the Lake Atitlan region of Guatemala reflects her background in these areas. Though new to birdwatching, Laura found much to document in her visit. Her presentation includes images of birds, flowers, villages, and weaving cooperatives, and she will discuss the deeply-held Mayan belief that the beauty of nature is an inextricable part of their daily lives.

HIKING THROUGH HISTORY Speaker: Kathi Joye April 19, 2024

Tuolumne County, like other California counties, is steeped in geologic and cultural history. Many of the day hikes along the highway 108 corridor reflect this rich past. Quite a number of hiking trails are in areas where evidence of distinct geologic events that

formed and shaped the Sierra Nevada Mountains are on full display. A few trails pass by remnants of ancient Me-Wuk communities that resided in the area to hunt, fish and gather. After gold was discovered in California, Tuolumne County was transformed in many ways as people from many nationalities poured into the area to try their hand at mining all of which is evident along a number of hiking trails particularly at the low to mid-elevations. The Hiking Through History will present a few examples of hikes in Tuolumne County that reflect its multi-faceted past.

Kathi Joye, a former science teacher and researcher, wrote the hiking books for the highway 108 corridor to serve as a resource for the community and visitors to the area so that they could access the beauty of Tuolumne County via hiking trails. She currently lives in Twain Harte and regularly hikes and runs the local trails with her dogs and also gets up into the high country to backpack each summer.

Kathi's postcards and books “Day Hikes Along the Highway 108 Corridor” and “More Day Hikes Along the Highway 108 Corridor” will be for sale.

Postcards — \$1.50 (cash/check), \$1.70 (credit card)

Books — \$21 (cash/check), \$22 (credit card)

UNSEASONABLE BIRDS

By Salvatore Salerno

San Joaquin Valley birders take a special interest in those rare birds that we call unseasonable. There are two types of these "lingering" birds. The first type is migrating songbirds. Once they have bred in spring and summer in northern California, the valley or the Sierra, they will travel south during the fall to reach their wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America. A few individual birds, however, will undertake a partial migration south, and then stop and "overwinter" in the valley. It is unclear exactly what makes them stop short of their customary destinations. We know that their migratory instincts are triggered hormonally by the hours of daylight available, so perhaps the cause is some hormonal anomaly. Severe weather may also be at play. It is also unknown what percentage of these species make these incomplete journeys. Even if the number were one per cent, that would be a sizable number, since billions of songbirds make the great fall migration down the

four major North American flyways.

The second type of "lingerers" is comprised of the waterfowl that stays during the relatively temperate winter of the San Joaquin Valley. As spring comes and the days lengthen, these birds will begin flying north to breed in Canada and Alaska. A few individuals, however, will remain in the valley all summer, thereby losing the opportunity to breed in the tundra. Some of these birds may be stalled due to injury or illness. Others, for unknown reasons, appear to have lost their migratory instinct to follow the flocks.

I have taken some sightings from the "Recent Sightings..." feature to illustrate examples of overwintering passerines.

- Tomas McKay Allende found two Wilson's Warblers at the San Joaquin River N.W.R. on December 9.
- John Harris had a Nashville Warbler on December at his home

near Oakdale on December 25.

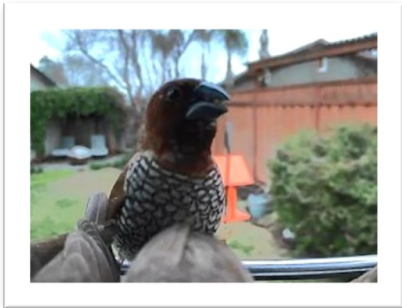
- John Fulton had a Cassin's Vireo on January 2 at O'Neil Forebay.
- Dale Swanberg had a Western Flycatcher at the San Joaquin River N.W.R. on January 12.
- Bruce Mast and other observers had a Yellow Warbler at the Merced N.W.R. on January 14.

Another population of birds that interests local birders at any season are called true vagrants. These are individual birds that have seemingly lost their way, since the typical breeding grounds of their species are east of the Continental Divide, or even as distant as the East Coast. The Swamp Sparrow and Tropical Kingbird are two such examples. How do birds end up as vagrants? Well, that's a different story.

RECENT SIGHTINGS OF **RARE** OR UNCOMMON BIRDS
*Review Species

STANISLAUS COUNTY

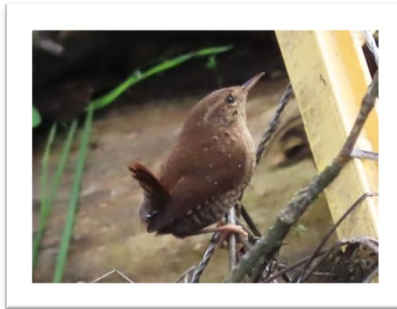
Siera Nystrom found a **SWAMP SPARROW** during the C.B.C. at the San Joaquin River N.W.R. on December 31. Jim Gain had a **GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL** at the Modesto Wastewater Treatment Facilities on December 31.



SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA

© Jody Hallstrom

Jody Hallstrom had six **SCALY-BREASTED MUNIA**, adults and juveniles, at her feeder in Oakdale on January 20. Xavier Sandoval had a **SHORT-EARED OWL** at the San Joaquin River N.W.R. on January 19. Daniel Gilman had a **WINTER WREN*** on January 26 at the same location in Dry Creek Park as last year's Winter Wren.



WINTER WREN

© Daniel Gilman



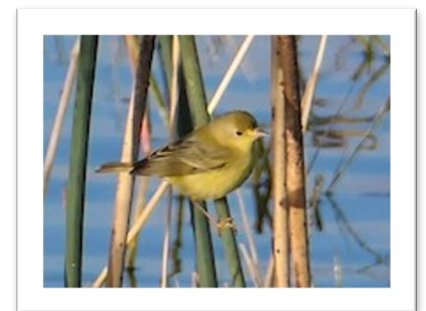
NASHVILLE WARBLER

© John Harris

MERCED COUNTY

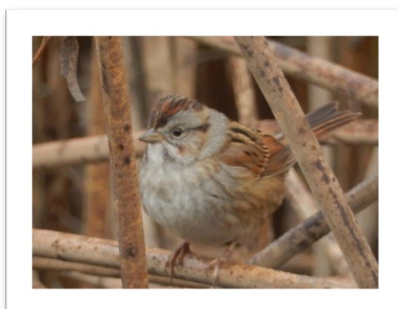
Cindy Krasniewicz had three **SWAMP SPARROWS** at San Luis Reservoir S.R.A. on December 23. Dale Swanberg had a **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** at Lake Yosemite County Park on January 1. John Fulton had a **SWAMP SPARROW** at the Merced N.W.R. on January 15. Pete Dunten had a **SWAMP SPARROW** on January 17 at the San Luis S.R.A.

Sam Eberhard had a **RED-BREASTED MERGANSER** at San Luis Reservoir S.R.A. on January 23. John Fulton found a **WHITE-THROATED SPARROW** with a birding group on a Merced N.W.R field trip on January 28.



YELLOW WARBLER

© Bruce Mast



SWAMP SPARROW

© Xavier Sandoval

Walking the Green Path cont.

Staying informed and cutting our use of plastic seem the only options. In reluctantly keeping up with the pace of technology, I purchased a new computer. Some of the packaging was re-usable. There were some soft foam pieces rather than the brittle polystyrene. I was able to cut the foam into 1 1/2-2 inch cubes. My local mail center was happy to re-use them. Some of you attended the recent event at the State Theatre to view a film "Burning Injustice" and hear a panel discussion. I got a free copy of "Hoodwinked in the Hothouse". It is about resisting false solutions to climate change. I'll offer some comments in the next column. If you would like a copy visit climatefalsesolutions.org. Questions and contributions of information are welcome.

Steve Tomlinson

Yokuts Group Sierra Club 2024 Scholarship

The Yokuts Group Sierra Club **\$1000 Scholarship for 2024** is now open for applications to students who will be attending **any accredited community/junior college or university in the fall of 2024**. These students must currently be enrolled in either a Stanislaus County High School or a Stanislaus County Community/Junior College or University.

The application letter shall include a short essay on the applicant's classwork and activities related to environmental stewardship.

Please see the Yokuts Group Sierra Club Instagram, Facebook, and website pages for additional information about this scholarship.

For more information, contact Laura Stokes:

LauraHerdingCatsLLC@gmail.com or call (206) 371-4853 Seattle Area Code.

Audubon Zoom Programs

BIRDS OF THE MOJAVE DESERT
Alex Harper
Friday, March 8, 2024

Most of us think of southern Arizona and the Sonoran Desert when we think of desert birding. The Mojave Desert is also diverse. In this presentation, you'll learn about what makes the Mojave distinct from other deserts, why the Mojave has many plant communities, and how birds fit into these plant communities. You'll become acquainted with the patterns that drive bird movement and meet iconic birds like the Pinyon Jay, Phainopepla, and Cactus Wren.



ALEX HARPER

Alex Harper is a biologist and interpretive naturalist based in southern Nevada. He has extensive experience conducting point counts and raptor counts across the western United States. He has worked as a biologist in the renewable energy industry, and he is currently the Education and Outreach Coordinator for the local Audubon chapter, Red Rock Audubon. Alex is also a professional bird and natural history guide - he guides in Alaska and Baja yearly with Lindblad Expeditions. Alex is especially drawn to communicating science through storytelling and connecting direct experiences. He loves the desert and wants you to appreciate this intriguing landscape even more than you already do.

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/register/tZcquCppljG9Tr4g_FmWHrl9XfoTykVQaU

NOTE: After registering for a Zoom Program, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

modesto RECFEST
MARCH 23, 2024 9AM-2PM

CHECK-IN AT GATEWAY PARK
 Between 10th St. & S Morton Blvd.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!
 Bring your bikes, kites, fishing poles, paddle craft, and binoculars - or use ours - and join us for this recreation celebration! IT'S FREE!

FOR MORE INFORMATION
 CALL (209) 236-0330.

FOR A DETAILED EVENT
 MAP, SCAN THE QR CODE

DISC GOLF
Discos Voladores

GUIDED BICYCLE RIDE
Paseo en Bicicleta

NATURE WALK
Caminar por la Naturaleza

PADDLING
Remo

ORIENTEERING
Orientación

YOUTH FISHING
Pesca Juvenil

GUIDED BIRD WATCHING
Observación de Aves

Ghost Gear

There is no shortage of heartbreaking stories about human interaction with animal life. The issue of ghost gear came into my awareness after watching a PBS News Hour story on the subject. Abandoned or lost fishing gear, commonly known as ghost gear, contributes significantly to the problem of plastic pollution in our oceans. These gillnets, traps, and other types of fishing gear are harmful because they can continue to catch targeted and non-targeted species indiscriminately for years. Because of this, ghost gear has been called the most deadly form of marine plastic debris, damaging vital ocean habitats and aquatic life, including marine mammals, seabirds, sea turtles, and other species.

While humans have known the threat of ghost gear for decades, we have only begun to understand the full extent of its impact in recent years. It is estimated that ghost gear makes up at least 10% of marine litter. This equates to between 500,000 and 1 million tons of fishing gear abandoned in the ocean each year. Many animals that get caught or entangled in gear can die a slow, painful death through exhaustion or suffocation. Ghost gear damages marine habitats such as coral reefs, can pose a danger for mariner navigation, and spoils the natural beauty of an area.

The Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI), an alliance of more than 100 entities including the US government, was formed in 2015 to tackle the problem. To prevent fishing gear loss, the initiative calls for building awareness among fishing gear designers of best practices, educating fishers of issues such as proper gear disposal, and instituting regulatory measures.

Kent Mitchell
Political Chair

STANISLAUS AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

**SAN JOAQUIN RIVER NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE**
Pelican Nature Trail
Leader: Eric Hopson
Saturday, March 16
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

During this family-friendly “walk with binoculars” we’ll be looking and listening for resident songbirds and waterbirds. Meet at the San Joaquin River NWR’s **Pelican Nature Trail Parking Lot** (2714 Dairy Road, Vernalis). Participants of all skill levels are welcome. Participants should bring their own binoculars, water, snacks and insect repellent. Public restrooms are available at the meeting area parking lot. For more information, please call Eric Hopson at 209-587-5532.

**SAN JOAQUIN RIVER NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE**
**Beckwith Road Wildlife
Viewing Area**
Leader: Eric Hopson
Saturday, April 6
8:00 – 10:00 a.m.

During this family-friendly “walk with binoculars” we’ll be looking and listening for winter resident songbirds and waterbirds. Meet at the San Joaquin River NWR’s Beckwith Road Wildlife Viewing Platform (10990 Beckwith Road). Participants of all skill levels are welcome. They should bring their own binoculars, water, snacks and insect repellent. Be aware that NO public restrooms are available during this tour. For more information, please call Eric Hopson at 209-587-5532.



**4th Annual
Pollinator Festival**

Free Family Event!
La Loma Native Garden

Saturday, April 13th, 2024
10 am - 2 pm
2000 Encina Ave. Modesto

The Children’s Pollinator Costume Parade starts at 10:15

Learn about pollinators and how you can support them!

Face painting, music, food and so much more!

Contact cnps.nsj@gmail.com for more information!

CALIFORNIA NATIVE
North
San Joaquin
Valley
PLANT SOCIETY

La Loma
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

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.

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.

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY in the PARK!
Saturday, April 20, 2024
Graceada Park
401 Needlham Ave., Modesto
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Our Sierra Club Yokut's Group will be tabling at the Earth Day in the Park Festival in Modesto. This event will be held at Graceada Park on Saturday April 20, 2024. This event helps our Yokut's Group inform the public about the Sierra Club and its efforts to promote conservation, sustainability and recycling in a fun way. Our Planet is being ripped of its resources at an unsustainable rate. We have a Spin Wheel for children and adults to spin to learn about conservation, sustainability and recycling, everyone receives prizes for their participation.

Please bring your friends and family!

We need people to help staff the Sierra Club table. To sign up for a shift, call Milt at 209-535-1274. You don't have to volunteer for the entire day, just for an hour or two at a time, and then you can be off to enjoy the festival!

Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair: Candy Klaschus

cklaschus@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Steve Tomlinson

Political Chair: Kent Mitchell

Secretary: Elaine Gorman

Treasurer: Doug Maner

Conservation and Sustainability Chair:

Milt Trieweiler

SPECIAL / STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance

Doug Maner

Steve Tomlinson (Yard Sale)

Candy Klaschus (Yard Sale)

Doug Hardie (Calendar Sales)

Outings

Chair: Jeff Olson

Randall Brown

Elaine Gorman

Communications

Kathy Weise (Mailings)

CeCe Hurst (Publicity)

Kevin Augustine (Valley Habitat)

kaugustine@csustan.edu

Anita Young (Membership)

Jeanne Homesy (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

P.O. Box 421041

Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

F94QW09051

Yokuts Group

Yokuts Group
Mother Lode Chapter
Sierra Club
P.O. Box 855
Modesto, CA 95353

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
Permit Number 139
Modesto, CA

CURRENT RESIDENT OR



SIERRA
CLUB

FOUNDED 1892