



SNOWY EGRET

© Rich Brown

The Valley Habitat

September/October 2024

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

Walking the Green Path

Hi everyone. Here I am as I sweat, sip water, and journey to cooler temperatures. In the 6/9/24 Modesto Bee, there is a good article about recycling bins in Modesto. The blue bin is for recycling glass, cans, and some plastics. I was pleased to find out that metals are acceptable. This is handy for recycling jar lids, metal cans, bottle caps etc. Recently I put in a quantity of staples harvested from the endless catalogues received in the mail. Styrofoam is not acceptable for recycling. Much information about the other bins, waste, recycling etc. is available at the city's web site.

Cont. on page 3

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

STARGAZING TOUR AND TELESCOPE TALK Speakers: Fred Yerzy & Jim Brugger

Friday, September 20, 2024

Come explore the wonders of the night sky with Astronomy Teacher, Fred Yerzy and Telescope Operator Jim Brugger. Participants will learn how to use a star chart and identify constellations and asterisms. Fred will share a Native American night sky legend and discuss some of the prominent features of the fall sky. Weather permitting, we will head outside following the presentation for a telescope observing session to apply what we learned.

Stargazer and Telescope Operator, Fred Yerzy, is a retired junior high science teacher of 35 years. For the past six years, he has been a traveling astronomy teacher for Stanislaus County from the Great Valley Museum at Modesto Junior College.

Jim Brugger is a Mechanical Engineer with a deep interest in astronomy and a passion for outreach. As a Telescope Operator, he has a knack for reading star charts and finding objects in the night sky. Jim also offers a "popup" Solar Observatory experience using specialized solar telescopes.

VALLEY VENTURES: HIKING TRAILS NEAR MODESTO & THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY

Speaker: Elaine Gorman
Friday, October 18, 2024

Join Elaine on hikes in the Red Hills, on Peoria Mountain, at Dagoon Gulch, and more. Discover some lesser known local-ish public lands that offer cultural and natural history, great exercise, and interesting landscapes.

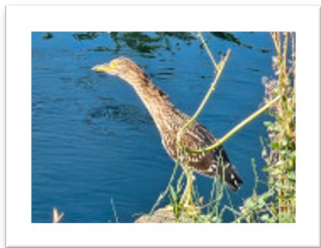
See page 3 for an article in this issue for more information about the book *Valley Ventures*.



Unsupervised Birder

By Annhenrie Campbell

As the Merlin app alerts users, don't assume you've identified a bird just because you and Merlin heard it. I've learned that I can't assume I've identified a bird just because I saw it and it matched a picture. Beginning birders like me can use a lot of guidance.



JUVENILE BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

Turlock is a land-locked place to bird since it has no rivers or creeks. However, it has a couple of oases with artificial lakes, including Donnelly Park and the Stan State campus. The campus has mowed lawns and athletic fields, trees and lakes, but few brushy or muddy areas, except along the Trans-California Pathway in the southeast corner. Still, it attracts many different bird species throughout the year, and it is a good place for a beginner birder to practice.

Early summer is a tricky time for a beginner because there are so many young birds not yet fully feathered out or showing mature coloration. It's pretty easy to recognize the young Canada Geese who resemble small dinosaurs and the young mallards who are all brown, like their mothers.

One day, I saw something new and exciting. Two birds were flying over the larger lake near the gym and landed several times in the lower branches of trees right above the lake. They had little to say, so the Merlin audio app was not helpful, but one posed for a picture and both looked a lot like images of bitterns - brown and streaky.

However, when I reported to my friend, a skilled birder, she said they were probably juvenile Black-crowned Night-Herons. There are at least three adults who are often spotted on campus, including this one standing in a fountain feature last spring.



ADULT BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON

My birder friend patiently explained to me that the juvenile looks very different from the greyish adult that has a black cap and red eye. The streaked brown juvenile has a yellow eye and often hangs out in overhanging branches during the day, just as the two I saw.

The Merlin app is a huge help for the beginner, but there's no replacing the help of seasoned and experienced birders.

STANISLAUS AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

**SAN JOAQUIN RIVER
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
Pelican Nature Trail
Leader: Sal Salerno,
Co-leader: TBD
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.**

During this family-friendly "walk with binoculars," we will be listening to and looking for resident songbirds and waterbirds, as well as early fall migrating birds. Meet at the San Joaquin River NWR's Pelican Nature Trail Parking Lot (2714 Dairy Road, Vernalis). Participants of all skill levels are welcome. They should bring their own binoculars, water, snacks, and insect repellent. Public restrooms are available at the meeting area parking lot. For more information, please contact Sal at bees2@sbcglobal.net.

**OAKDALE
RECREATION AREA
Leader: John Harris
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20
8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.**

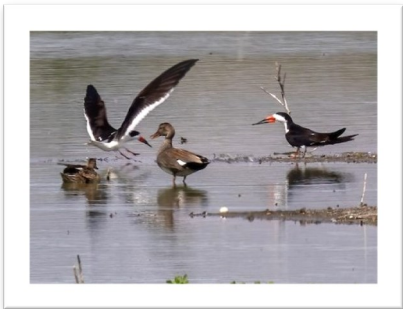
Oakdale Recreation Area is a great birding spot at any time of year, with its combination of ponds and riparian forest. We hope to find year round resident birds and late migrants at this park on the Stanislaus River. Oakdale Recreation Area is located on Liberini Road off of River Road, north of Highway 120 at the west end of Oakdale. A public restroom is available, and participants should bring water and snacks. For more information contact John Harris at jhh.birder@gmail.com

RECENT SIGHTINGS OF RARE OR UNCOMMON BIRDS

*Review Species

STANISLAUS COUNTY

Jim Gain had two **BLACK SKIMMERS*** at the Modesto Wastewater Treatment Facilities on June 8. That species was a first county record for Stanislaus County. Eric Hopson and Sal Salerno saw an unseasonable **WILLET** on July 4 at the San Joaquin River N.W.R.

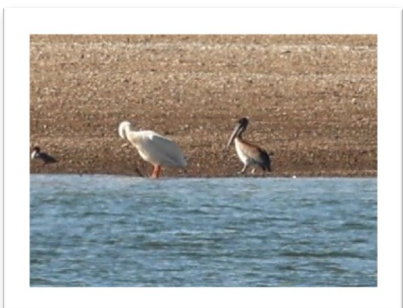


BLACK SKIMMERS
© Jim Gain

Xavier Sandoval had three **YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRDS** at the San Joaquin River N.W.R. on July 12.

MERCED COUNTY

Pete Dunten had a **MARBLED GODWIT** and a **BROWN PELICAN** at San Luis Reservoir on July 17.

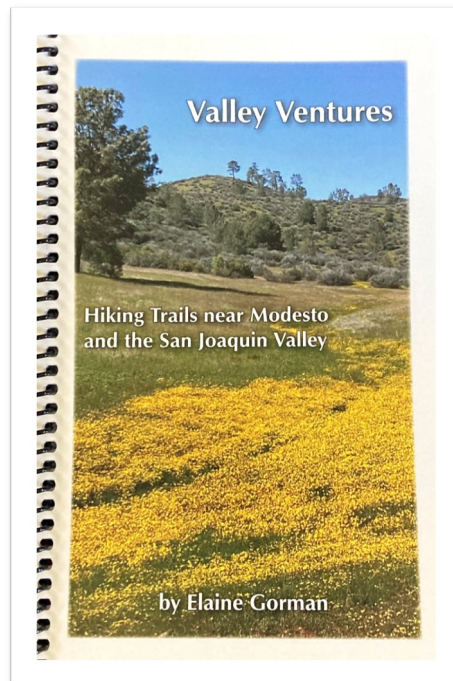


BROWN PELICAN
© Pete Dunten

Valley Ventures: Hiking Trails Near Modesto and the San Joaquin Valley

By Elaine Gorman

VALLEY VENTURES offers 20 hikes that are easily accessible from Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties in the San Joaquin Valley of California. The narrative hike descriptions include natural and cultural history, mileage, special attractions, directions/drive time, and hiking tips.



All hikes are within a two-hour driving range, and include hikes in the San Joaquin Valley, the foothills, and eastern Bay Area. Elaine taught science at Mark Twain Jr. High School and Roosevelt Jr. High School in Modesto, retiring in 2009. She has been a Yokuts Group Sierra Club outings leader for over 30 years, and is a certified California Naturalist.

She is an avid hiker and backpacker, and spends as much time as possible in the Sierra Nevada, Sierra foothills, Bay Area, and the San Joaquin Valley, exploring the wilderness and nature with her hiking pals.

Price = \$12 from Elaine, \$14 at Bookish in Modesto (Roseburg Square), \$14 via snail mail. The books may also be available at Yokuts meetings. Cash or check.

You may contact Elaine at vevado@yahoo.com.

Walking the Green Path cont.

Simply go on-line and enter "Modesto Recycling". In another community? Simply enter your community or "Stanislaus County recycling". You can print things out and there is some info. in Spanish. You can also email or call with questions. There is also a good article about plastics recycling in the 6/15/24 Modesto Bee entitled "Do you trust

plastic recycling?" Occasionally I find a clean and unused plastic produce bag in a shopping cart. I simply store it with other reusable shopping items for re-use. Questions or contributions of information are welcome.

Steve Tomlinson
stomlinson015@gmail.com

STANISLAUS AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2024-25

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

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Advisory Committee Members: Eric Hopson, Richard Brown **Website Manager:** Jim Gain

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

Use Chapter Code C36. *Renewal date of membership is on the newsletter label.*
 Memberships are \$20 yearly.

Our Planet is on the Ballot: Harris for President

President Biden's decision not to seek the Democratic Party nomination for President this coming election has energized the party behind Vice President Kamala Harris. The Sierra Club recently endorsed Vice President Harris for the Presidency given that she helped lead the strongest climate and environmental administration in history. The Biden-Harris administration took more than 300 actions to combat climate change and protect the environment. Vice President Harris cast the tie-breaking vote to pass unprecedented investments in clean energy and jobs through the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act.

As a presidential candidate in 2020, Vice President Harris pledged to reject campaign contributions from fossil fuel lobbyists and laid out a bold climate platform to ensure corporate polluters were held accountable for the damage they cause our communities and the climate. Republicans have prepared a sweeping strategy called Project 2025 should Trump win back the White House.

Lisa Friedman in a 2023 New York Times article wrote, "the plan calls for shredding regulations to curb greenhouse gas pollution from cars, oil and gas wells and power plants, dismantling almost every clean energy program in the federal government and boosting the production of fossil fuels"

In a May 2024 New York Times article, "At a Dinner, Trump assailed Climate Rules and Asked for \$1 Billion From Big Oil", Trump told a group of oil executives and lobbyists at his Mar-a-Lago resort that they should donate \$1 billion to his presidential campaign because, if elected, he would roll back environmental rules that he said hampered their industry, according to two people who were there.

The contrast between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump in terms of an environmental agenda could not be more clear. Join the Sierra Club in supporting Kamala Harris for President in an election that could be the most important of our lifetimes.

Kent Mitchell
Yokuts Political Chair

Yokuts Yard Sale Saturday, October 5 201 Virginia Street, Modesto 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

The Yard Sale is on!! The sale will be held in Modesto at Steve Tomlinson's home. This is one of our major fundraisers and helps the Yokuts continue in our community and conservation work.

Start gathering those special items. Steve will be accepting donations at his home 09/28-10/03. Please have your items to Steve by 10/03 so we have time to sort and price....remember those special items you have tucked away could be perfect treasure for someone else. Regretfully, no clothing or electronics. We can always use help with the pre-sale, sorting, pricing and the day of the sale, 10-05-24. It's always a good time connecting with fellow members and also helping our group!!

You can contact me, Kathy at 209-601-8660 or Steve at 209-222-7289 with any questions. Start searching for those treasures! Looking forward to seeing you for the sale, 10-05-24...you may even find a treasure or two!

Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club

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cklaschus@gmail.com

Vice Chair: Steve Tomlinson

Political Chair: Kent Mitchell

Secretary: Elaine Gorman

Treasurer: Doug Maner

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kaugustine@csustan.edu

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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 ___

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Enclose payment information and mail to:

Sierra Club

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Yokuts Group

Yokuts Group
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Sierra Club
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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.