



SNOWY EGRET

© Rich Brown

The Valley Habitat

January/February 2025

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

Walking the Green Path

Review: *What If We Get It Right?*

By: Ayana Elizabeth Johnson

The author is a person of color who grew up in New York City. At a young age she became smitten with marine life. This led to her getting a PhD in marine biology. She is as passionate about environmental matters as anyone. Much of the book consists of her interviewing people of various disciplines.

This produces a deep well of information, experience, and expertise. There is an emphasis on carbon emissions which is fine. The role of oceans in climate change and our planet's restoration are presented as well as facts about coastal residents of the world. One of those interviewed is the president of Earthjustice which entails discussion of environmental law, the courts, and the legal battles therein.

Cont. on page 6

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
Office of Valley Improvement Projects, 1224 K Street, Modesto

Sierra Club Monthly Programs Venue Change

Starting November 15 we will have a new location for our program presentations. This will be at the Valley Improvement Projects (V.I.P.) facility. It's on the corner of K and 13th Street, across from the Law Library. We look forward to this as V.I.P. has long been involved in environmental and social justice matters. We hope to see you there!

YOKUTS ANNUAL MEMBERS' SLIDESHOW

Speakers: Various Members
Friday, January 17, 2025

The annual Yokuts members' slideshow will be on Friday, January 14, 2025. Get those slides of your adventures into the great outdoors ready for a ten-minute show.

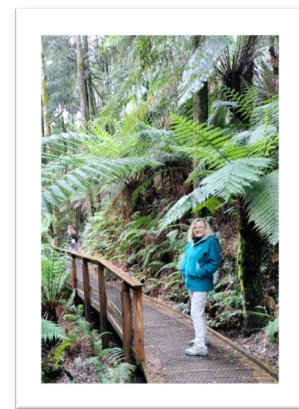
Please put them on a memory stick, and Power Point presentations are welcome.



TASMANIA ADVENTURE: TREE FERNS, SAND, MOUNTAINS, 'JOEYS,' AND MORE!

Speakers: Sandy Wilson & Jerry Jackman
Friday, February 21, 2025

Tasmania is known for the cleanest air in the world, the best scenery, unique wildlife and rich history. For 6 days,



SANDY WILSON

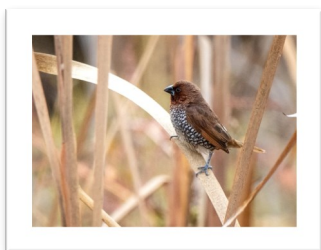
Jerry Jackman and Sandy Wilson toured the island beaches, mountains, parks and small towns learning about the island with a local guide. Share their stories and adventures on February 21, 2025 at the Yokuts Program meeting.

RECENT SIGHTINGS OF **RARE** OR UNCOMMON BIRDS

*Review Species

STANISLAUS COUNTY

The ROSEATE SPOONBILL* that had first been found by Jodi Smith at the San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge back on April 27 was re-found on October 25 by Ann Kohlhass as it flew over the refuge. The spoonbill was re-found by participants of the Central Valley Birding Symposium on November 22 at White Lake, a restricted area of that refuge. It was subsequently re-found on a Stanislaus Audubon field trip to White Lake led by Eric Hopson on November 24. Susan Teefy saw two adult SCALY-BREADED MUNIA at the San Joaquin River N.W.R.

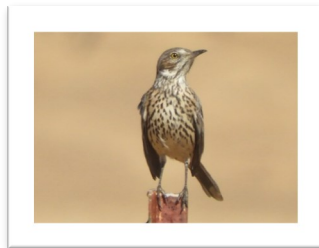
SCALY-BREADED
MUNIA

© Susan Teefy

This exotic species has increased in sightings over the years in this county, although no evidence of breeding has been found yet. On November 27, Russ Pettit saw a BROWN PELICAN* flying with American White Pelicans over the San Joaquin River N.W.R.

MERCED COUNTY

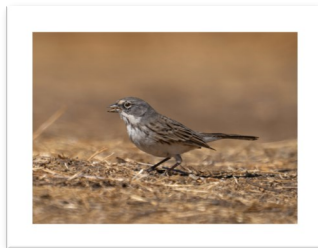
Dale Swanberg had a SAGE THRASHER on White Rock Road on October 14.



SAGE THRASHER

© Dale Swanberg

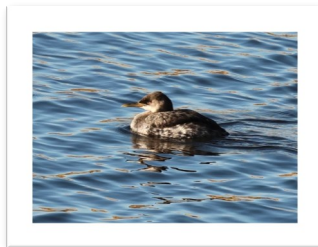
Moses Lopez had three SAGEBRUSH SPARROWS on October 21 at the UC Merced Vernal Pools and Grasslands Preserve.



SAGEBRUSH SPARROW

© Moses Lopez

Pete Dunten had a RED-NECKED GREBE on November 17 at the San Luis Reservoir S.R.A.



RED-NECKED GREBE

© Pete Dunten

Moses Lopez had one SEMI-PALMATED PLOVER and one LAPLAND LONGSPUR at the UC Merced Vernal Pools and Grasslands Preserve.

What Would Randy Do?

By Elaine Gorman

"Trail Closed"
Storm damage
Passing vehicle's stern warn-
ing
Locked gate.
We conjure fearless
adventurous friend.
HHHmmmm.....
Five seconds tick by.
Let's go!

Public land,
access road.
Big Basin Redwoods State
Park
Skyline to the Sea Trail
Waddell Creek.
We enter enchanted forest,
"elf-guided trail"
seemingly untouched.
Tall coast redwoods
ring mother stump.
Big leaf maple canopy
bay laurel arch above.
Crushed California nutmeg
seeds
exude spicy perfume.

Abandoned trail camp
overgrown campsites.
Rattlesnake grass
seed heads
quiver in the breeze
mere echo of the serpent.
Quiet easy conversations
accompanied by
singing stream's
melody of rock and tree.
I sing along
harmony with Randy.

STANISLAUS AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS

SAN LUIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

7376 Wolfsen Road, Los Banos
 Leader: Sal Salerno
 SATURDAY, January 18, 2025
 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

This field trip will involve hiking on one trail and driving along the wetlands auto route of the refuge. Meet at the Visitor Center, where participants may carpool along the route. We should encounter a variety of wintering waterfowl, as well as tule elk. The special attraction will be the flocks of Tundra Swans that overwinter from their breeding grounds in Alaska and northwestern Canada. Bring water and lunch. RSVP is not required, but encouraged (bees2@sbcglobal.net). Note that dense fog of little visibility or rain will cancel.

MERCED NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

7430 West Sandy Mush Road
 Leaders: Jody Hallstrom and Ann Kohlhaas
 SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2025
 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Merced National Wildlife Refuge is teeming with waterfowl and other birds in winter. Most of the birds are easily viewed, making for enjoyable and easy birding. We will meet at the kiosk and viewing platform located at the end of the entry road on the main portion of the Merced NWR. Note that this is an approximately 75 minute drive from Modesto. We will start our birding in the kiosk area and then go on the 5 mile long auto tour loop, stopping frequently to look at birds. We will also take a short walk (optional) at the Bittern Marsh trail. Participants of all skill levels are welcome and should bring their own binoculars, water, snacks, and insect repellent. Be sure to dress for cold weather. Heavy rain will cancel the trip.

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Pelican Nature Trail
 Leader: John Harris
 SATURDAY, February 15, 2025
 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 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 email John Harris at jhh.birder@gmail.com

Post Election Blues—A Path Forward

There is no way to sugarcoat it. This past election is a significant blow to the environmental movement. President elect Trump's early cabinet picks suggest he is preparing to take action on some of his most extreme promises to remake American environmental policy.

Mr. Trump has tapped Doug Burgum of North Dakota, who has deep ties to the oil industry, to run the Interior Department. Lee Zeldin, a former congressman and loyal supporter, has been nominated to lead a far-reaching overhaul of the Environmental Protection Agency. Mr. Zeldin's voting record as a congressman received a meager 14% approval rating from the League of Conservation Voters. He voted to end Clean Air Act standards and opposed the Inflation Reduction

Act, the landmark climate investment law.

Mr. Trump disavowed Project 2025 during the campaign for political reasons. Not anymore. Now, as he plans his agenda for his return to the White House, Trump has recruited at least a half dozen architects and supporters of the plan to oversee many key issues. The project recommends to "eradicate climate change references" which, as one official described, "have infiltrated every part of the federal government." There is also a recommendation to defund the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. OAR is a large network of research laboratories and research centers that provide much of the data related to global climate change. These proposals are disheartening.

We know the next four years will be rough. The day after the election, the Sierra Club national board conducted an on line debriefing including a discussion of the path forward. There is a need to hear the working people who voted for Mr. Trump due to economic concerns and meet them where they are at. The Sierra Club will push President Biden to protect as much land as possible in the interim period. Leaders also recommend spending time out in nature, feel the disappointment and despair, and then get back to work. They remind us that we have been there before and that the Sierra Club was made for moments like this.

Kent Mitchell
 Yokuts Political Chair

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.

Walking the Green Path cont.

You will find viewpoints of big perspectives and those at the local level. Ms. Johnson offers moving wisdom via quotes from Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King, and Maya Angelou. During one of her interviews she asks a question that mentions Taylor Swift. More notable is her discussion of hope and how to deal with disappointment and defeat. The book was covered on PBS.

I caught scarcely more than the title. I am very glad I purchased and read it. I also bought a workbook which summarizes learning points. I feel that my knowledge and environmental toolbox are much larger. My motivation to do the work is steady and growing. I hope you read the book and have a similar experience. As always, questions and contributions of information are welcome.

Steve Tomlinson
stomlinson015@gmail.com

YOKUTS GROUP SIERRA CLUB 2025 SCHOLARSHIP

The Yokuts Group Sierra Club \$1000 Scholarship for 2025 is now open for applications to students attending any accredited community/junior college or university in the fall of 2025. These students must currently be enrolled in a Stanislaus County High School or an accredited Community/Junior College or University. The applicant's overall college and university GPA shall be a minimum of 2.5. If the applicant is a high school senior, the high school GPA must be a minimum of 2.5. The applicant shall attend an accredited Community/Junior College or University in the Fall of 2025.

The application letter shall include a short essay (250-300 word) on the applicant's classwork and activities related to environmental stewardship.

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

A Yokuts Group Committee will review the applications and assess the strength of the applicants' classwork, related activities, and career pursuits related to the Sierra Club Mission Statement.

The one winner of the \$1000 scholarship will be notified by May 31, 2025.

This picnic gathering is subject to any then-current COVID restrictions. For more information, contact: Laura Stokes

LauraHerding-CatsLLC@gmail.com
 (206)371-4853
 (Seattle Area Code)

Yokuts Group of the Sierra Club

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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cklaschus@gmail.com

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kaugustine@csustan.edu

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Jason Tyree (Webmaster)

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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 ___

Cardholder Name: _____

Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Enclose payment information and mail to:

Sierra Club

P.O. Box 421041

Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

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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.