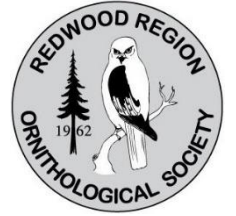
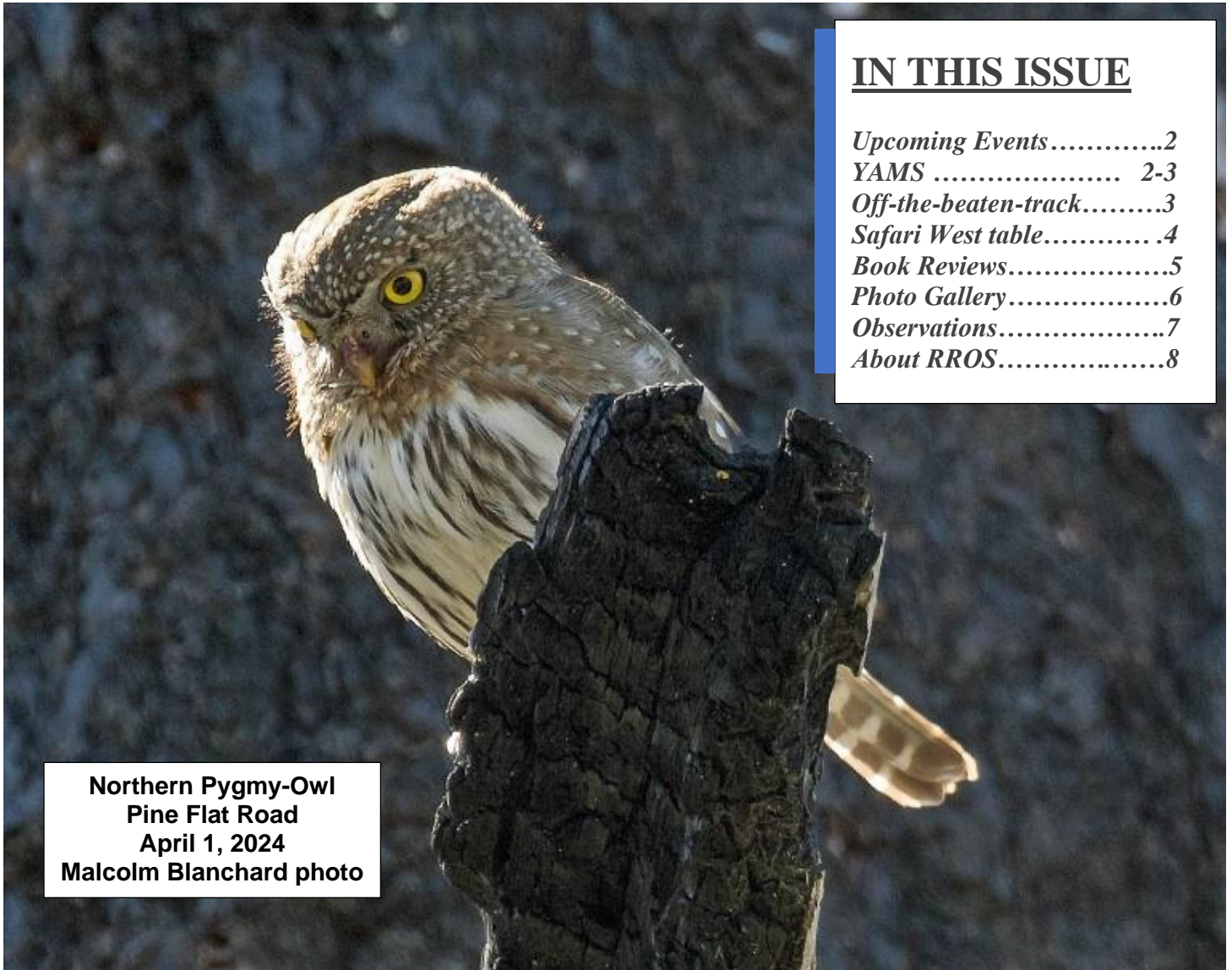


# KITE TALES



A monthly newsletter from the Redwood Region Ornithological Society

4



## IN THIS ISSUE

- Upcoming Events* .....2
- YAMS* ..... 2-3
- Off-the-beaten-track*.....3
- Safari West table*..... .4
- Book Reviews*.....5
- Photo Gallery*.....6
- Observations*.....7
- About RROS*.....8

**Northern Pygmy-Owl**  
**Pine Flat Road**  
**April 1, 2024**  
**Malcolm Blanchard photo**

### **What's New on the RROS Website?**

The most current info on meetings, field trips, presentations, and more can be found at [www.RROS.org](http://www.RROS.org).  
 If you missed a previous program, video recordings are available on our website at  
[www.RROS.org/virtualmeeting](http://www.RROS.org/virtualmeeting).

## SAVE THE DATE !!

May Membership Meeting: Wednesday, May 8th, 5:30 pm  
Annual Spring Outdoor Meeting Sugarloaf Ridge State Park  
This is our last Membership Meeting for 2023-24.

**Meet at Sugarloaf** at the picnic tables, just past the entrance kiosk, on the right and across from the first (main) parking lot. Come early for late afternoon birding and/or stay after dinner for a late evening bird walk out towards the observatory.

Outdoor dining at the picnic tables starting around 5:30-6. **POTLUCK -- BYO** - everything. Share safely! If desired, bring your own camp chair and/or blanket. Where: Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.

Directions: From Hwy 12 East, about 6 miles beyond Calistoga Road, take a left onto Adobe Rd. Follow Adobe Rd to its end in the park. Main parking lot is on the left, past the entrance kiosk. What to Know: State Park entrance fee is \$10 per car / \$8 for senior or student. Covered with California State Parks pass.

## RROS FIELD TRIPS, UPCOMING

### **May 4 2024, 8:00AM-1:00PM, Pine Flat Road, Scott Carey (rescheduled due to rain)**

Scott Carey will lead us on a trip along Pine Flat Road. Possible birds are Mountain Quail, Purple Martin, Bell's Sparrow, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and California Thrasher. Meet at 8:00AM at the bottom of Pine Flat Road, near the intersection with Red Winery Road (38.6759087, -122.8076800). Bring lunch, fluids, layered clothing. Please note there are no bathrooms. This is a narrow winding road, watch for bicyclists. You are encouraged to carpool since the fewer cars on this road the better. To RSVP contact Garrett Pierce – [garrettallenpierce@gmail.com](mailto:garrettallenpierce@gmail.com) or (415) 260-7406.

### **May 18, 2024, 8:30AM-11:30PM Sugarloaf Ridge State ParkL “Birding By Ear.”**

RROS is partnering with our friends at the Sonoma County Feminist Bird Club for a co-led walk at Sugarloaf Ridge State Park with the focus on Birding By Ear. Whether you have advanced skills with bird songs & calls, or you're a beginner to the auditory side of birding, this trip should be a fun learning experience for all. If you're not familiar with the FBC, please visit their website ([feministbirdclub.org](http://feministbirdclub.org)) to get acquainted with their inclusive and affirming bird-related activities, or follow them on Instagram - @fbc.sonoma. As always, this event is free, but we may send an RSVP link because spots are limited. There is an entrance fee of \$10 (\$8 for seniors). CA State Park or Sugarloaf/Jack London Passes are accepted for free entrance. Contact Garrett Pierce with any questions – [garrettallenpierce@gmail.com](mailto:garrettallenpierce@gmail.com)

## UPCOMING PELAGIC TRIPS OUT OF BODEGA HARBOR ABOARD THE NEW SEA ANGLER

August 18 and September 29 (RROS, contact Gene Hunn, [enhunn323@comcast.net](mailto:enhunn323@comcast.net))

September 8 and October 13 (Alvaro's Adventures, [www.alvarosadventures.com](http://www.alvarosadventures.com))

## YAMS Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas block surveys:

### Sunday, May 5 - Outer Point of Point Reyes National Seashore 7:30am to 1:00pm

Meet at the Lakeville Park and Ride at the west side of Rte. 101 at Rte. 116 at 7:30am. We will travel together to our Breeding Bird Atlas Block and collect real data for the project! Don't forget your data sheets! Bring binoculars, field guide and/or app, lunch, water, snacks and of course layered clothing.

### Sunday June 2 - Outer Point of Point Reyes National Seashore 7:30am to 1:00pm

Meet at the Lakeville Park and Ride at the west side of Rte. 101 at Rte. 116 at 7:30am. We will travel together to our Breeding Bird Atlas Block and collect real data for the project! Don't forget your data sheets! Bring binoculars, field guide and/or app, lunch, water, snacks and of course layered clothing.

## YAMs MCBBA2 Trip to Point Reyes

YAMs went birding on Sunday, April 14 to outer Point Reyes. We were there for the second Marin Breeding Bird Atlas. The YAMs members, with the guidance of Liz and Lisa, are surveying for breeding bird behaviors in Block 3-6. We carpoled to Bull Point trailhead. Bea, Nolan, Aubrey, Elliot, and Townes set out along the trail.

We heard Golden and White-crowned Sparrows singing in the bushes and Western Meadowlarks warbled sporadically. A stunning, pale colored Northern Harrier soared over the marshy ground in an undulating display flight, which we listed as C (courtship and display). Later, we noticed a bushy tree that seemed perfect to harbor a harrier nest. Over by the pond, a late Western Grebe swam around. After observing 23 species around the trail, we drove over to the Point Reyes North Beach, which was also in our territory. Although we looked for Snowy Plovers, we did not see any. However, there were fantastic views of a Surf Scoter in the waves nearby. On the sand, were thousands of by-the-wind Sailors, dried up and blowing gently in the breeze.



It was near noon when we walked up and sat among the ice plants to eat lunch. We wrote down the breeding behaviors we had observed, and had many possible breeding birds. What started as picking the numerous ice plant flowers turned into a tourist prank when we put together a giant flower made from the individual blooms and placed it on a stem near the path. YAMs had an amusing time watching tourists stop to take pictures of the incredible "flower." All in all, we had a great time together and learned much about how to document avian behaviors. This was our first survey of many to come.

Aubrey Phipps-Parnay YAMs Field Columnist

### A New *Kite Tales* feature: Off the Beaten Path, obscure birding sites.

#### Sonoma Mountain Road off Adobe (Gene Hunn)

Living as I do in East Petaluma, Sonoma Mountain looms large toward the sunrise. However, public access from the west side where I live is quite limited, dominated by private ranches. However, one may drive up nearly to the summit on tortuous, steep, and rutted Sonoma Mountain Road off Adobe Road. This 5.6 mile road winds its way up through pasture and oak woodland to a locked gate. Near the top the valley from Petaluma to Santa Rosa is spread out below like a carpet with the ocean almost visible beyond the coastal hills. Near the top was a veritable lover's-lane until local property owners contrived to fence off the best pullouts.



This is my go-to road for Western Screech-Owls close to home. Great Horned and Barn Owls are also commonly heard and/or seen at dusk or dawn. Diurnal raptors are common, with Golden Eagles regularly spotted soaring over the power lines that climb up and over the ridge. Ferruginous Hawks and Prairie Falcons are possible in winter. Rufous-crowned and Lark Sparrows are also reliable target species at certain points along the road. Rock Wrens may occasionally turn up on rock strewn slopes. Six woodpecker species are regular, Acorn, Downy, Nuttall's, Hairy, Pileated, and flicker. The route passes two nice ponds which may attract in season uncommon ducks (e.g., Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser) and shorebirds (e.g., Pectoral Sandpipers). Be sure to check the seasonal pond just east of Adobe Rd. one mile west of Sonoma Mountain Rd. (parking is a challenge here). Aleutian Cackling Geese are regular here in migration. Scott Morrill photographed a Golden Eagle feasting on one last January. There is a record of a Solitary Sandpiper here also.

### Earth Day, April 20, 2024, at Safari West Wildlife Foundation (Craig Roth)

RROS was invited to participate at Safari West Earth Day event and Annette and Craig Roth intrepidly volunteered. It was envisioned as a way to promote our bird watching organization. RROS along with 39 other conservation and nature-based organizations were supplied with a 6' x 30" table and 2 chairs. Many hours of fiddling, fumbling, borrowing and begging outside resources, we came up with what turned out to be an inviting and enviable display. We hit the road and were first to set up at 8:00 AM and then took a gander at what Safari West and other participants had to offer. We created a bird list for the day, seen within a 400' diameter space from our table, 24 species were observed including Yellow Warbler and Hooded Oriole.

Staff, other participants, and guests (in that order of abundance) enthusiastically engaged with us throughout the day to share and promote our RROS mission. Guests were able to interact at the RROS table with Barn Owl pellet dissection, identifying bones, and a "Can you guess which nest is mine?" poster board. This sparked lively conversations about birds in their home communities as most visitors were not local.

We gleaned two new memberships, good will, and a \$250 donation to RROS from Safari West.

Special thank you to Len Nelson (RROS) Barn Owl pellet bones, the Garcia's ("nest" poster board from Altacal Bird Alliance, Chico CA), Suzy Stalder-Mansur (Annette's childhood friend) creating fabulous bookmark graphic design & photography. Annette's TP "binocs" were a hit with the little ones.



## A New Feature: Book Reviews

Gene Hunn (but feel free to submit your own for future issues of *Kite Tales*)

*Bird Song*, a CD of acoustic Americana by local roots music legend, Laurie Lewis.  
All about birds.

Laurie put together this CD as a way to support Audubon Canyon Ranch, one of her favorite places growing up near the bay. This CD offers a medley of Laurie's originals, including "The Wood Thrushes Song" and my favorite, the heart stabbing "Haven of Mercy." These are complemented by covers of harmonic poetry from various sources, including "traditional" classics: "Singing Bird" (Irish) and "The Blackest Crow" (Civil War lyrics) and compositions by Carol McComb ("Bird in the Wood," "Little Birds"), Mary Gibbons ("Tell Me True"), Mark Simos ("When the Night Bird Sings," "Let the Bird Go Free"), Gillian Welch and David Rawlings ("Acony Bell," "Bird in the Wood"), and Terry & Phoebe Gilkison ("Solitary Singer"). Laurie sings, plays fiddle, bass, and guitar, and is joined by a talented team of vocal and instrumental partners. Check it out at [www.laurielewis.com](http://www.laurielewis.com). Produced in 2002.

*Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*  
Douglas W. Tallamy  
Timber Press, Portland, Oregon, 2019

Nancy Hunn called my attention to this book, which might offer a more positive perspective on our current ecological cliffhanger. Mr. Tallamy's take away message is that urban spaces may provide significant habitat for a diversity of wildlife, notably local birds. Basically, you can greatly enhance the productivity of your yard by plantings that support the greatest diversity of insects and other critters that are rich food offering for birds and their young. Caterpillars are of particular benefit for birds. The author – a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware – counted 857 species of caterpillars in his yard, managed as a "Homegrown National Park." He notes that a single chickadee pair must feed its brood several thousand caterpillars in the course of a single season. Consult this book for many detailed suggestions for how to create your own "Homegrown National Park."

*The Aztec Fascination with Birds: Deciphering 16<sup>th</sup>-Century Sources in Nahuatl*  
Eugene S. Hunn  
Contributions in Ethnobiology, Society of Ethnobiology 2023

A bit of self-promotion: This book was an accident. I never intended to investigate Aztec ethno-ornithology, but while browsing my bookshelves I spotted a forgotten tome I had purchased years back in Mexico: the *Florentine Codex: Earthly Things*, volume 11 of a colonial ethnographic encyclopedia of all things Aztec, compiled by the Franciscan friar, Bernardino de Sahagún. He devoted his life to this project in central Mexico following the conquest of the Aztec empire by Spanish invaders led by Hernán Cortés. Sahagún was torn between his efforts to convert the children of the Aztec nobility and his passionate fascination with Aztec culture. He mastered the Aztec language, Náhuatl, taught his Aztec students to write their own language phonetically, then enlisted them as scribes to record all manner of information from living elders for this multi-decadal documentary project. The volume on "Earthly Things" includes various chapters, but of special interest to me was Chapter 2, "... which telleth of all the different kinds of birds, of whatever sort," 133 in all. I attempted to improve upon an earlier effort at translating these bird names into scientific Latin based on my personal acquaintance with Mexican birds and by consulting Howell & Webb's comprehensive bird guide. Save money; get it on-line.



### PHOTO GALLERY: SOME RECENT HIGHLIGHTS



*Common Black Hawk x Red-shouldered Hawk, Santa Rosa Creek trail, April 2, 2024, Betsy Crouthamel photo*



*Long-tailed Duck, female, Bodega Harbor, April 1, 2024, Keith Schroder photo*



*Grasshopper Sparrow, March 18, 2024, Crane Creek Regional Park, Scott Morrical photo*



*Rufous-crowned Sparrow, April 16, 2024, Pine Flat Road, Scott Morrical photo*



*Lark Sparrows, Pine Flat Road, April 16, 2024, Scott Morrical photo*

**Observations March 21, 2024 to April 20, 2024, compiled by DAVID A. HOFMANN**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Date/s</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Cty</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>Observer/s</b>
Snow Goose	04/20/24	Petaluma—Pond along Center Road	SON	1	AIW photo
Ross's Goose	03/26-04/02/24	Ellis Creek WTF---Shollenberger Park	SON	1	ReL, DaT, LiH, PaS photo
Greater White-fronted Goose	04/03/24	Santa Rosa---Howarth Park	SON	1	JeG photos
Long-tailed Duck	04/03-14/24	Bodega harbor--Spud Pt marina	SON	1	ArJ, GwH, DuL BrO, mob photos
Costa's Hummingbird	03/31/24	Ellis Creek WTF	SON	1m	ToS
Black-legged Kittiwake	04/04/24	Bodega Head State Park	SON	1	MaK photos
Glaucous Gull	03/29/24	Cronkite Beach—Gull Rock	SON	1	WiL, JiW
Yellow-billed Loon	03/21-04/20/24	Bodega Bay—Tides Wharf	SON	1	ReO, KeW, LiH, JaA, ChO, PRH, mob photos
Common Black x Red-shouldered Hawk hybrid	03/21-04/19/24	Santa Rosa Creek Trail Delta Pond (west of Willowside Rd)	SON	1f	EIC, CoW, CoH, mob photos
Bank Swallow	04/01/24	Santa Rosa---862 Greenway	SON	1	GIW
Mountain Bluebird	04/01/24	Helen Putnam Regional Park	SON	1m	EIS
Sage Thrasher	04/10/24	Gualala Point Regional Park	SON	1	JoH photos
Phainopepla	03/21/24	Foothill Regional Park	SON	1m	AuG, NiG, JeG photos
Scaly-breasted Munia	04/11/24	Ellis Creek WTF	SON	3	EIC photos
Lawrence's Goldfinch	04/14/24	Santa Rosa Creek Trail Delta Pond (west of Willowside Rd)	SON	1	ScS
Swamp Sparrow	04/04/24	Sebastopol Community Center	SON	1	JoS photos
American Redstart	03/28/24	Spring Lake Regional Park	SON	1	GaP

Observer/s: James Armstrong, Elizabeth Crouthamel, Jeffer Giang, Audrey Glazier, Nicole Graham, Connie Haile, Pamela Rose Hawken, Gwen HK, Jon Horn, Lisa Hug, Arnold Joe, Maxwell Keetch, Rebecca Lawton, William Legge, Duan Li, Brook OConnor, Rebecca Olsen, Chris Overington, Josh Snead, Scott Sorby, Townes Stanley, Elliot Steinfelds, Patrick Syslong, David Tomb, Glo Wellmsn, Alan Wight, Ken Wilson, Jim White, Corinne Williams, **many observers**

*RRROS members often meet informally for a long Sierra Nevada birding weekend sometime in June. A favorite location is Sierra Valley, 41 miles north of Truckee on State Highway 89. The best camping nearby is at Cottonwood Creek, a Tahoe National Forest campground,. Lots of good birds at the campground and a restaurant and store close by in the town of Sierraville. Motel or cabin accommodations are available at Truckee, Calpine, or Graeagle. This high valley (5000' elevation) has extensive wetlands on Marble Hot Springs Road and lots of good sage steppe, with riparian and pine habitat up side canyons. South from Sierraville Highway 49 climbs to Yuba Pass (6200) in fir forest, then downhill to the west to Bassett's for ice cream.*

## ABOUT RROS

*Redwood Region Ornithological Society was organized in 1962 "to encourage the study and conservation of birds, other wildlife, and their natural habitat."*

Annual dues are \$25 per individual, \$30 per family, and \$5 per student.

Membership forms can be found at [www.rros.org/join-rros](http://www.rros.org/join-rros)

Dues can be sent to RROS Membership Chair, Nancy Hunn, 1504 Smokey Mtns. Dr., Petaluma, CA 94954

Visit us on the web at [www.RROS.org](http://www.RROS.org)

### RROS STAFF: OFFICERS

President: Malcolm Blanchard..... [mab@mabco.com](mailto:mab@mabco.com) // 707-480-2210  
 Vice President: Bob Hasenick.....[bobhasenick@att.net](mailto:bobhasenick@att.net) // 707-486-0055  
 Secretary: Annette Roth..... [annette.roth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:annette.roth@sbcglobal.net) // 707-792-1132  
 Treasurer: Geri Brown..... [geri\\_browncpa@yahoo.com](mailto:geri_browncpa@yahoo.com) // 650-619-1711

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Field Trips: Garrett Pierce, [garrettallenpierce@gmail.com](mailto:garrettallenpierce@gmail.com), 415-260-7406

Observations: David A. Hofmann, [nnamfoh@comcast.net](mailto:nnamfoh@comcast.net), 707-546-0325

Kite Tales: Eugene "Gene" Hunn. [enhunn323@comcast.net](mailto:enhunn323@comcast.net), 707-981-7301

YAMS Coordinator: Lisa Hug [lisahug@sonic.net](mailto:lisahug@sonic.net), 707-535-9370

Membership: Nancy Hunn, [nancyjhunn@gmail.com](mailto:nancyjhunn@gmail.com), 707-981-7301

Hospitality: B.J. Blanchard, [mab@mabco.com](mailto:mab@mabco.com), 707-480-2210

Website: Malcolm Blanchard, [mab@mabco.com](mailto:mab@mabco.com), 707-480-2210

Kite Tales deadline is the **20th of each month**, August through April.



#### A note from your Membership Chair, Nancy Hunn

#### Welcome New Members: Nancy Anne Lang, Richard Shipp

If you have not yet returned your membership renewal, please send it in ASAP.  
 \$25 for Individuals, \$30 for families, \$5 for students.



