

KITE TALES

A monthly newsletter from the Redwood Regional Ornithological Society



Western Bluebird photo by Dennis Luz

*Next RROS Meeting
February 8 @ 7:00 PM*

What's New on the RROS Website?
Details and analysis of 2022 CBC's.
The most current and up to date info on
Field Trips, Presentations, Meetings, and
more can be found at www.RROS.org

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SAVE THE DATE

February Membership Meeting: Wednesday, February 8th , 7:00pm

First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr, Santa Rosa.

Meet in the McMullin Room, which is just east of the entrance to the main sanctuary.

Before the meeting you're invited to join us for dinner at 5:30 pm at Mary's Pizza,

535 Summerfield Road, Santa Rosa.

February's program: Birding in Panama. Another international adventure, this time to Panama. Bob and Carol Hasenick will share photos and stories about their birding in Feb 2022.

UPCOMING RROS FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

RROS Field Trips in the Time of COVID-19

We are not requiring field-trip attendees to make reservations, unless a specific trip needs to be limited due to physical restraints. However, you are encouraged to RSVP for all trips. In return, you will receive a reminder of the trip and automatically be shared on the group eBird list., unless you opt out. As always, car pooling is encouraged.

To RSVP, contact Malcolm Blanchard: email mab@mabco.com or text at (707) 480-2210

Saturday - January 21, 2023 San Pablo Bay shore sites, Gene Hunn, 8:00AM – 1:00PM

Meet at Port Sonoma parking lot next to the Petaluma River (38.1166961, -122.5031966) 8:00AM We'll bird the north shore of San Pablo Bay, south of Highway 37. Gene will lead us checking out the large concentrations of raptors, shorebirds and other waterfowl. We will check the abandoned docks for Ridgway's Rail and the mouth of the Petaluma River for shorebirds and waterfowl before heading east to Reclamation Road, the Tubbs Island trail near the mouth of Tolay Creek, and the wetlands at the Skaggs Island spur off Highway 37. Finish by 1:00PM. Expect a fair bit of walking. Bring your lunch. Carpooling is encouraged.

For more information or to RSVP, contact Malcolm Blanchard (707) 480-2210.

Saturday, January 28, 2023 YAMS Field Trip: Tolay Regional Park Lisa Hug 3-5:30 pm

Meet in the parking lot of Tolay Regional Park for a late afternoon walk and stay for the evening to watch for Short-eared owls to hunt over the wetlands at dusk and into the darkness.

Bring plenty of warm clothes for this one!

Saturday, February 11, 2023 Hudeman Slough Malcolm Blanchard 8am-12pm

Meet at the parking area (38.2211039, -122.3953507) off Ramal Road at 8:00am.

South of the town of Sonoma, near Skaggs Island, is a rich birding area hosting many water fowl when the fields are flooded. Join us for a survey of the area. Owls, shrikes, and raptors are expected. No bathrooms. Bring a lunch.

Sunday, February 19, 2023 YAMS Field Trip: Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility 7:30am 12:30pm

Meet at 8:30 am for a walk around the wetlands at Ellis Creek ponds. We hope to see lots of ducks and other waterbirds. Bring a lunch and lots of warm clothes!

Saturday, February 25, 2023 YAMS Field Trip: Owling at Armstrong Woods State Park 3-6:30 pm

Meet at the parking lot by the Visitor Center at Armstrong Woods State Park. There is a \$10 per car day use fee so we may arrange some carpooling into the park itself. No owls are guaranteed, but there is a pretty good chance of hearing Barred Owls. Bring lots of warm clothes and you might want to bring a flashlight.

Calling All Young Birders!

! YAMS !

Western Field Ornithologists has free Zoom presentations for young birders.

Do you have young students in your family who are curious about birds or a career in ornithology? WFO is offering free Zoom presentations for young birders beginning Wednesday, January 18. The presentations on different topics continue through March. Times listed below are Pacific Time. All interested young birders and youth are welcome to attend!

Contact administrator@westernfieldornithologists.org to register or if you have questions.

Wednesday, January 18, 5:00 pm PST: Eleanor Diamant, PhD candidate at UCLA will discuss her experience researching and studying ornithology.

Saturday, January 21, at 12:00 pm PST: Liberty Wildlife in Phoenix, AZ. Meet ambassador animals (including live birds) and learn about their non-eagle feather repository.

Saturday, February 11, at 12:00 pm PST: WFO student scholar panel! Learn from your peers about their experience as birders and their career goals.

Thursday, March 16, 2023, at 5:00 pm PST: Panel of research ornithologists discusses their career path, and offers tips and tricks for the next generation of birders.



White Throated Sparrow
Photo by David Hofmann

The Santa Rosa 62nd Consecutive Christmas Bird Count, 12-18-2022:

The weather was particularly fine this year. Crisp and chill in the early AM but sunny and still all day long.

We were a bit understaffed in the field this year with 55 observers (plus 4 at feeders). Due to my oversight, Area 4 (Calistoga Road and ne Santa Rosa) was not covered this year. This probably did not affect the total count of species but reduced numbers of woodland and suburban birds.

Ruthie Rudesill is our master owler. She described her pre-dawn experience as among the best she could recall: Barn (1), Western Screech (11), Great Horned (8), Northern Pygmy (4), Northern Saw-whet (4), plus a bonus pair of Spotted Owls and a rare Long-eared Owl.

The crew in Area 2 (Santa Rosa Creek from Fulton to Delta Ponds), Don Kirker, Brian Webb, Dea Fried, and Rick LeBaudour, as is customary, tallied the largest number of species (105), including staked-out rarities: Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Chipping and Swamp Sparrows, plus our only Gadwalls, Redhead, Lesser Scaup, Black-necked Stilt, Long-billed Dowitcher, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie and Peregrine Falcons, Violet-green Swallow, and Pine Siskin, plus count week Snow Goose, Eurasian Wigeon, and the Black x Red-shouldered Hawk hybrid. Gordon Beebe's feeder added Pygmy Nuthatch and a "Slate-colored" Dark-eyed Junco.

Other unique and/or notable finds included Short-billed Gull, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (cw), and Pacific Wren (Area 1); Lewis's Woodpecker (and many owls, Area 3); Spotted Owl (Area 5); a SRCBC first, 8 Scaly-breasted Munias (Area 6); Cattle Egret and Orange-crowned Warbler (Area 7), Mute Swan, Common Gallinule, Green Heron, Osprey, and Great-tailed Grackle (Area 8); Virginia Rail and Sora and a Western Screech-Owl (Area 9); Ross's Goose and "Thayer's" Iceland Gull (Area 10); Cackling Goose, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and Loggerhead Shrike (Area 11); House Wren and ten Lark Sparrows (Area 12). And every bird counts!

Our species total of 143 is somewhat above average. However, the total of individual birds counted (14500) was low. It seems that species across the board – water birds (e.g., American Coots, gulls), small forest birds (e.g., Varied Thrush, Pine Siskin, Townsend's Warblers), even European Starlings and House Sparrows -- were rather scarce compared to counts in previous years. I composed a master list** of species counted in 2022 ranked by the ratio of this year's totals to the maximum counts over the previous 61 years. These ratios are rather meaningless for rare species, while other low ratios are skewed by exceptionally high count in some early year, for example, 528109 European Starlings (1976) versus just 581 this year; 3600 Northern Pintails (1970) versus just 3 this year; 1577 Short-billed (Mew) Gulls (1978) versus just 49 this year, 2400 Western Meadowlarks (1970) versus 214 this year; 7400 American Robins (1971) versus 721 this year, 9670 Brewer's Blackbirds (1974) versus 362 this year. It seems as if the Santa Rosa CBC circle has shrunk over decades as bird habitat. No doubt an unintended consequence of urban development. There are a few more positive trends notable: Lots of Acorn Woodpeckers (441 this year versus an all-time high of 556; all-time high counts of Western Screech-Owls (12), White-breasted Nuthatches (117), and White-throated Sparrows (29) with decent totals for Western Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, Spotted Towhees, Turkey Vultures, Anna's Hummingbirds, and Say's Phoebes.

While we recorded a goodly total of 143 species, we might credit that total in part to just plain luck, given that just a single individual was noted for 21 of those species (nearly 15%). I've made a list** of this year's species ranked by how many individuals of each were recorded. American Robins (721), White-crowned Sparrows (806), and American Crows (906) were the most numerous this year.

Finally, I have a list** of this year's species ranked by how frequently they have been recorded over the 62-year history of the SRCBC. Fifty species (35%) have been recorded every year since the inception of the count; and additional 16 have been missed just once or twice in those 62 years.

This year's data will be added to the Audubon CBC master data base on the Cornell University website. You might browse that site for all sorts of intriguing details and comparisons. Thanks to you all for your contributions to the RROS Citizen Science program.

Gene Hunn, SRCBC compiler

** Lists of numerical counts and analysis can be found on History and Archives page of website at RROS.org.

Barn Owl photo by David



Sonoma Valley CBC, 12-30-2022:

Count Day coincided with the arrival of an atmospheric river which shrouded the hills in cloud and bespeckled our lenses and made owling nearly impossible. Our dedicated observers persevered in the face of this adversity, blessing the rain nevertheless as somewhat relieving our years of drought. The weather no doubt reduced our species count by discouraging both birds and birders. Still, we tallied a respectable 151 species and just over 50,000 individual birds on count day, with three species that eluded us count day relocated during count week, for a grand total of 154 species. Last year's tallies - with decent weather -- were a more typical 159 and 163 species respectively. We note also that last year's 90 observer count was whittled this year to 72.

As usual, the Petaluma Wetlands area had the highest count day total, 116 species, thanks to the inclusion there of Shollenberger, Ellis Creek, the Petaluma sewage lagoons (available by special permission for the count), and Tolay Regional Park. The Wingo area also recorded over 100 species (103), again thanks to the extensive wetlands along the lower reaches of Tolay and Sonoma Creeks. Many wetland species are regularly found only in those areas. However, our urban and upland areas helped round out a diverse inventory.

Notable finds include Green Heron and Varied Thrush (Sonoma area), Western Screech-Owl and Hutton's Vireo (Highlands area), Merlin and Purple Finch (Schellville area), Golden Eagle and Ferruginous Hawk (Adobe area), Osprey and Pileated Woodpecker (Glen Ellen Area), Golden-crowned Kinglet, Pacific Wren, and Townsend's Solitaire (Trinity area), and California Thrasher and Lark Sparrow (Napa Ridge). These are just a sampling of species recorded this year in low numbers. Thanks to all for a solid effort, despite the nasty weather.

Gene Hunn, compiler, Sonoma Valley CBC
See RROS.org website for details and analysis.

Observations November 21, 2022 to December 20, 2022 compiled by DAVID A. HOFMANN

Species	Date/s	Location	Cnty	#	Observer/s
Ross's Goose	12/18/22	Llano Road---Santa Rosa Sewage Treatment Plant	SON	1	EuH
Mandarin Duck	12/07/22	Maxwell Farms Regional Park	SON	5m	MaB
Redhead	11/21/22	Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility	SON	1m	PeC, MaB photo
Redhead	12/18-19/22	Delta Pond	SON	1m	DoK, BrW, CoW photo
White-winged Scoter	12/04-12/22	Doran Regional Park	SON	1f	GaP, JeV, MaS, ZaM, ThB, MoF photos
Barrow's Goldeneye	12/19/22	Petaluma River---Sonoma Horse Park	SON	1f	GaP photo
Tufted Puffin	12/04/22	Pelagic trip---32 observers	SON	1	CoC, RaL, AdB, PhB, RiP, JaH, MaD, PeC, EvC, LiH, LuC, AnF, Ma&LuS, SuH, DoH, WeB, TeF, PhG, EuH photos
Least Bittern	11/27-12./06/22	Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility	SON	2	EIC, LeR, GaP
Com. Black x Red-shouldered Hawk	11/24-12/17/22	Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road/Delta Pond	SON	1f	BrW photos
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	12/01-07/22	Woolsey---Oakwild Lane	SON	1m	WiB, AKO photos
Red-naped Sapsucker	12/16/22	Ragle Ranch Regional Park	SON	1	JoS photos
Lewis's Woodpecker	11/21-12/19/22	Nagasawa Community Park	SON	1	EIL, DaS, MaG, AIW, BoH, ToC, DaS photo
Prairie Falcon	11/24/22	Tolay Regional Park	SON	1	JoS, JeV, EvV photo
American Dipper	12/20/22	Westminster Woods---Dutch Bill Crk	SON	1	RuS photos

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Species	Date/s	Location	Cnty	#	Observer/s
Phainopepla	11/25/22	Cloverdale--Porterfield Crk Open Space Preserve--Andiamo Trail	SON	1m	ReL
Evening Grosbeak	12/16/22	Bloomfield---Burnside Rd yard	SON	1	WhM photos
Scaly-breasted Munia	12/18/22	Santa Rosa---Darlyn Way area	SON	8	LiH,YAMS photos
Harris's Sparrow	11/21-12/19/22	Sea Ranch---Pipers Reach area	SON	1im	AaG,JaW photo
Swamp Sparrow	12/17-20/22	Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road/Delta Pond	SON	1	BrW photos
Tennessee Warbler	11/25/22	Doran Regional Park	SON	1	ScM photos
Tennessee Warbler	12/06-13/22	Bodega Bay---Diekmann's Store	SON	1	EIC, CoH, GaP, MaB, CoW, DeH, MoF, MaS, De&DaH photos
Summer Tanager	11/27/22	Healdsburg-Martorana Family Winery	SON	1	ErH photo

OBSERVERS FOR THIS PERIOD: Wendy Beers, Malcolm Blanchard, Theadora Block, Will Boucher, Aiden Brubaker, Phil Burton, Everett Clark, Connor Cochrane, Peter Colasanti, Lucas Corneliusen, Elizabeth Crouthamel, Tom Crusse, Mark Dettling, Andrew Ford, Teale Fristoe, Mookie Fudemberg, Philip Georgakakos, Aaron Gomperts, Mary Grishaver, Connie Haile, Douglas Hall, Denise & David Hamilton, Susan Harrison, Bob Hasenick, Denise Herzberg, Erich Hetzel, James Holmes, Eugene Hunn, Donald Kirker, Rachel Lawrence, Elizabeth Lewis, Rebecca Lovejoy, Scott Morrival, Whitney Mortimer, Aviv Karasov-Olson, Rita Phillips, Garrett Pierce, Levi Rehberg, Mark Sawyer, David Schmidt, Ruth Shirley, Mark & Lucas Stephenson, Jeff Valfer, Brian Webb, James Weigand, Alan Wight, Corinne Williams, Young Ancient Murrelets

ABOUT RROS

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

Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month October through April, at 7 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr, Santa Rosa.

Sept & May meetings are held outside at 5:30pm.

Annual dues are \$20 per individual, \$25 per family, and \$5 per student.

Membership forms can be found at www.rros.org/join-rros

Dues can be sent to RROS Treasurer Bob Hasenick, 4453 La Paz Lane, Santa Rosa, CA 95404-9510

Visit us on the web at www.RROS.org

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Kite Tales deadline is the 20th of each month. Observations may be sent to David A. Hofmann

All other content may be sent to Anne O'Donnell auodonnell@gmail.com