

KITE TALES

A monthly newsletter from the Redwood Region Ornithological Society



photo by B. Samuel

Violet-green Swallow Spring Lake Regional Park Photo by Barry Samuel



**Next RROS Meeting
May 10 @ 5:30 PM**

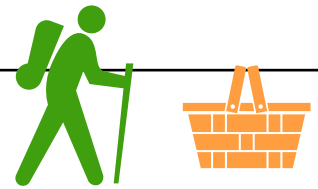
What's New on the RROS Website?

The most current info on Meetings, Field Trips, Presentations, and more can be found at www.RROS.org.

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SAVE THE DATE !!



May Membership Meeting: Wednesday, May 10th, 5:30 pm
Annual Spring Outdoor Meeting Sugarloaf Ridge State Park

This is our last Membership Meeting for 2022-23. 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. 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.

Members and Non-members are welcome to join for the May 10 picnic potluck, Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, the last Membership Meeting of the 2022-23 birding year.

UPCOMING RROS FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

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.

Along with the birds, chances for extraordinary **WILDFLOWER SPOTTING** could be a treat for those participating in the RROS field trips and joining in the membership meeting at Sugarloaf.



As reported by Jack Lee in the SF Chronicle (4/23/23): Colder-than-normal weather this year has meant a delayed spring, so Bay Area residents still have a chance to experience amazing blooms. According to Cyndy Shafer, natural resource program manager for the Bay Area District of California State Parks, "There are going to be incredible opportunities through May for people to still see wildflowers".

YAMS Sunday, April 30, 2023 7:30 am-12:30 pm Pine Flat Road Lisa Hug

Meet at the intersection of Red Winery Road and Pine Flat Road, just east of Jimtown which is north and east of Healdsburg. We need to meet early to beat the heat and to try and avoid clashing with other outdoor activities that occur on the mountain. We will be in the car much of the time, traveling from site to site looking for spring migrants and other natural history wonders. Bring lots of snacks, water and lunch. We will try to compress in as few cars as possible.

YAMS Sunday, May 28, 2023 8:30 am-12:30 pm Coastal Prairie Trail Lisa Hug

Meet at the Bodega Bay Community Center lot on Highway 1, just 1 mile north of the town of Bodega Bay. This is a lovely trail that goes through some coastal dunes habitat. We will walk at a relaxed pace and see what we encounter! Be sure to bring lunch and layered clothing.

SPRING CAMPING TRIP**JUNE 1-4****Susanville Area**

The Spring RROS Camping Trip will be the weekend of June 1-4 in the Susanville area. The final details are still being worked out. If you would like to get updates, contact Malcolm Blanchard (707) 480-2210.

Report of ... RROS field trip: Pine Flat Road, April 15, 2023**led by Josh Snead**

Our Pine Flat Road field trippers were greeted with overcast skies at 8 am. The original plan was to drive straight to the top and bird our way down, but hopes were high that we might re-find the **Vesper Sparrow** that was present on my recon a few days prior, so the first stop was at the Ferguson Springs pullout. We were greeted by fairly thick fog and no sign of the target bird... we settled for poor views of a **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** just visible in the mists singing from a prominent rock.

From there we drove almost nonstop to the top: we had to slow down for the **Purple Martins** at Schoolhouse Flats and have a quick stop for a singing and newly arrived **Ash-throated Flycatcher**.

At the top we had good numbers of **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher** and **California Thrasher** but it was otherwise fairly quiet. The relative quiet allowed for a great lesson in the call of the **Wrentit**, often heard but not seen and a "lifer" for some in terms of bird calls. A lone **Double-crested Cormorant** soared around the top of the hill at one point, an unexpected addition to the list at that elevation.

We returned to Schoolhouse Flats and spent a pleasant hour or so eating lunch and searching the area. At least 8 **Purple Martins** were easy to see and hear as they explored potential nesting cavities in the tall burned up trees. We also added **Hermit Thrush** and **American Kestrel** to the tally but the real prize was a **Mountain Quail** spotted by Jeff Valfer - we were able to get excellent views of this hard to see bird and enjoyed hearing a range of seldom heard vocalizations in addition to the usual, distant, "QUEark!".

We picked up a few more returning springtime birds on the way back to Ferguson Springs and had much better views of **Rufous-crowned Sparrow**. The final treat was a singing **Grasshopper Sparrow** at this spot before parting ways.

Good weather, company and birds!

- Josh Snead



California Thrasher Pine Flat Road
photo by Brendon Westerhold

Birding with Babies

by Beatrice Blanchard

More and more younger birders are bringing their children along on birding journeys. It seems like a natural fit: kids in the outdoors, parents and kids together, escapades galore. The families of Josh Snead, and Eva and Jeff Valfer, both of Sonoma County, have become Besties over the years and their children have come enthusiastically along for the ride.

The secret to birding with Sada (8-years old) and Saul (5-years old), according to Jeff and Eva, is SNACKS! and a second set of clothes. "Eva is the master of knowing what the kids will need long before they do, which really helps make for a better experience for everyone in the field" exclaims Jeff. "Eva always has the best food, snacks and drinks for the kids and that all-important second set of clothes to ensure the kids really get to enjoy their outdoor experience. Whether for those unexpected cold days at the coast or stomping through and sloshing in the muddy trails of Tolay, parents always have to be ready."

Additionally, Eva has introduced a lot of art projects with the kids that are centered around being in the field. Art has really helped the kids engage with nature and made it accessible at their level. Since they can access it, they have begun to love it. Especially when it comes to nesting season and baby birds, Sada and Saul cannot get enough of that exciting time of year.

Jeff, being a teacher in Sonoma County, has experience working with children and adolescents. Jeff finds it important to remind himself that, "when you're with kids in the field, you're on THEIR time", and should pace your adventure to their speed and interests, and just guide.

Josh Snead of Monte Rio and his three Littles: Effie (8 years old), Freya (6 years old), and Julius (2), are out on the trails often. Because Josh "birds obsessively", the adventures become a social event for the foursome and an opportunity to hang out with their good friends, the Valfers.

Josh's kids, who favor Bodega Bay, are into birds even at home. A favorite game is Bird Bingo, and an evening game named Sibley's Bird flashcards can become contentious, when one child's pile of correct cards becomes bigger than another, and the competition becomes tense.



Great Horned Owl
by Sada

Kite Tales

It is noticed by other Birders, that when all these children are along on a venture, there are no cries for attention, complaints about the length of the trip, or disgruntled attitudes. If a mild melt-down is imminent, Birder parents quietly whisk the child away so as not to interrupt the quiet experience of others.

The two 8-year-old girls, Sada Valfer and Effie Snead have moved to a slightly higher level of maturity than their younger siblings, and now hike out in front away from parents and siblings. More importantly, the girls have enthusiastically joined the Young Ancient Murrelets (YAMS) headed up by Lisa Hug of Sebastopol. These parents are delighted their daughters have Lisa Hug as a model of an experienced woman in science.

Josh is an East Coast kid who as a younger guy was a competitive bicyclist. Always an outdoors type – skateboarding, cycling, snowboarding – his interests now veer toward birding and parenting his little birders

Growing up in New England, Jeff Valfer made his way to California almost 25 years ago and is now home in Sonoma County, while Eva, originally from northern California, traveled the world, lived in many regions, and also made her home in the preferred northern portion of this beautiful state. Together they have created a family of young outdoors naturalists.

How fortunate are all these tykes to have such marvelous and charming Birder Parents. Lucky all.

PHOTO GALLERY - end of season salute to some SoCo residents, seasonal visitors, & a '23 rarity: LAGO



L: Cattle Egret; R: Black-Crowned Night Heron - Ninth St Rookery, Santa Rosa photos by Malcolm Blanchard



Black-throated Gray Warbler - Spring Lake Regional Park photo by Rob O'Donnell

Lawrence's Goldfinch - Santa Rosa Creek Trail photo by Garrett Pierce

Observations March 21, 2023 to April 20, 2023 compiled by DAVID A. HOFMANN

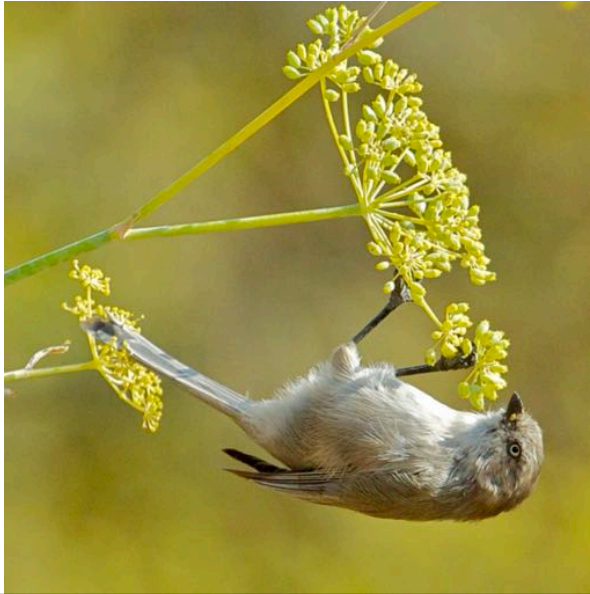
Species	Date/s	Location	Cty	#	Observer/s
Tufted Duck	03/22-25/23	Shollenberger Park	SON	1f	DaM, EIC, ScS, JaH photos
Mandarin Duck	03/23-04/01/23	Spring Lake Regional Park	SON	1m	RoO, BLR, JeV, ChO, BoH photo
Black Scoter	03/25/23	Sea Ranch—Pipers Reach	SON	1m	KaW photo
White-winged Scoter	04/07-15/23	Doran Regional Park	SON	1	AiB, DoK
Sooty Grouse	03/26-4/16/23	King Ridge Road	SON	2m	DoK, WiG, MoF, DeH, CoW, LHC
Solitary Sandpiper	04/15/23	Gualala Point Regional Park	SON	1	The Wildlab photos
Solitary Sandpiper	04/20/23	Stony Point Pond	SON	1	AIW photos
Black-legged Kittiwake	03/22/23	Bodega Head State Park	SON	1	JeV, EvV
Lesser Black-backed Gull	03/24-25/23	Jenner Overlook---Redwood Region Ornithological Society--10 observers	SON	1	JoS, ToB, ReM, BrW, MaB, LiH, RAR photos
Least Bittern	04/05-09/23	Ellis Creek WRF	SON	1	EIC, EuH heard only
Common Black Hawk x Red-shouldered Hawk	03/21-04/20/23	Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road/Delta Pond	SON	1f	BrW, ToC, MoF, WiG, BrS, GaP, Ma&LuS, MaS, MaG, BaK, LiH, JiC, LaN, MoD, EuH, DoK, NaS, MiS, JeV, ReO, KeW, IaM, EIF, AIW, MaP, JeG, MiG, DaF photos
Lawrence's Goldfinch	03/23-04/10/23	Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road/Delta Pond	SON	4m 3f	BrW, Ma&LuS, MoF, JoS, MaG, BaK, GaP, LiH, ScM, Ro&AnO, WiG, BrW, CoW, JiC, MaS, MoD, EuH, BoH, MaB, DoK, LaN, BoT, JuC, MiR, NaS, LHC, GrP, WvD, MiS, JeV, ScC, ReO, KeW, IaM, EIF photos
Lewis's Woodpecker	03/24-04/18/23	Nagasawa Community Park	SON	1	MaG, DaS, BrW, AIW photo
Say's Phoebe	04/11/23	Taylor Mountain School: on a nest	SON	1	PeL
Townsend's Solitaire	04/16/23	Glen Ellen-Sonoma Botanical Garden	Son	1	MaS photos
Phainopepla	03/23-04/01/23	Foothill Regional Park	SON	1m	GaP, MoF, DoK photos
Phainopepla	04/20/23	Pine Flat Road---MM3.0	SON	1m	De&DaH
Vesper Sparrow	04/13-14/23	Pine Flat Road-Ferguson Spring	SON	1	JoS, ScC photos
Northern Waterthrush	04/02-20/23	Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road/Delta Pond	SON	1	BoT, JuC, BrW, JiC, WvD, MoF, DaM photos

Observations March 21, 2023 to April 20, 2023

compiled by DAVID A. HOFMANN

OBSERVERS FOR THIS PERIOD: Malcolm Blanchard, Tony Briggs, Aidan Brubaker, Scott Carey, Juli Chamberlin, Lee-Hong Chang, Elizabeth Crouthamel, Jim Crumpler, Tom Crusse, Mollie Donahue, Elizabeth Ferber, Dawna Foreman, Mookie Fudemberg, Will German, Jeffer Giang, Mike Gragg, Mary Grishaver, Denise & David Hamilton, Denise Herzberg, James (Jim) Holmes, Lisa Hug, Eugene Hunn, Barbara Kendrick, Don Kirker, Peter Leveque, Renee Masotti, Dan Maxwell, Scott Morrical, Ian Morrison, Larry Nigro, Rob O'Donnell, Rob & Anne O'Donnell, Rebecca Olsen, Chris Ortega, Mataan Peer, Garrett Pierce, Gregory Petersen, Mike Rochford, Ruth Ann Rudesill, Blake Rushworth, Mario Santi, David Schmidt, Marc Simmel, Nathan Smale, Josh Snead, Scott Sorby, Michael Spencer, Bridget Spencer, Mark & Lucas Stephenson, Bob Toleno, Eva Valfer, Jeff Valfer, Brian Webb, Brendon Westerhold, Alan Wight, Karen Wilkinson, Corrine Williams, Ken Wilson

PHOTO GALLERY



Bushtit-Spring Lake Regional Park photo by Rob O'Donnell



Red-necked Phalarope-Doran entrance ponds photo by Bob Hasenick



Fox Sparrow - Sonoma Co photo by David Hofmann



Anna's Hummingbird-Sonoma Co photo by Dennis Luz

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 5:30 pm.

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
For 2023-24, send all other content to KT Editor Gene Hunn enhunn323@comcast.net