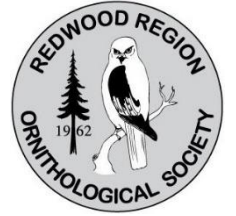
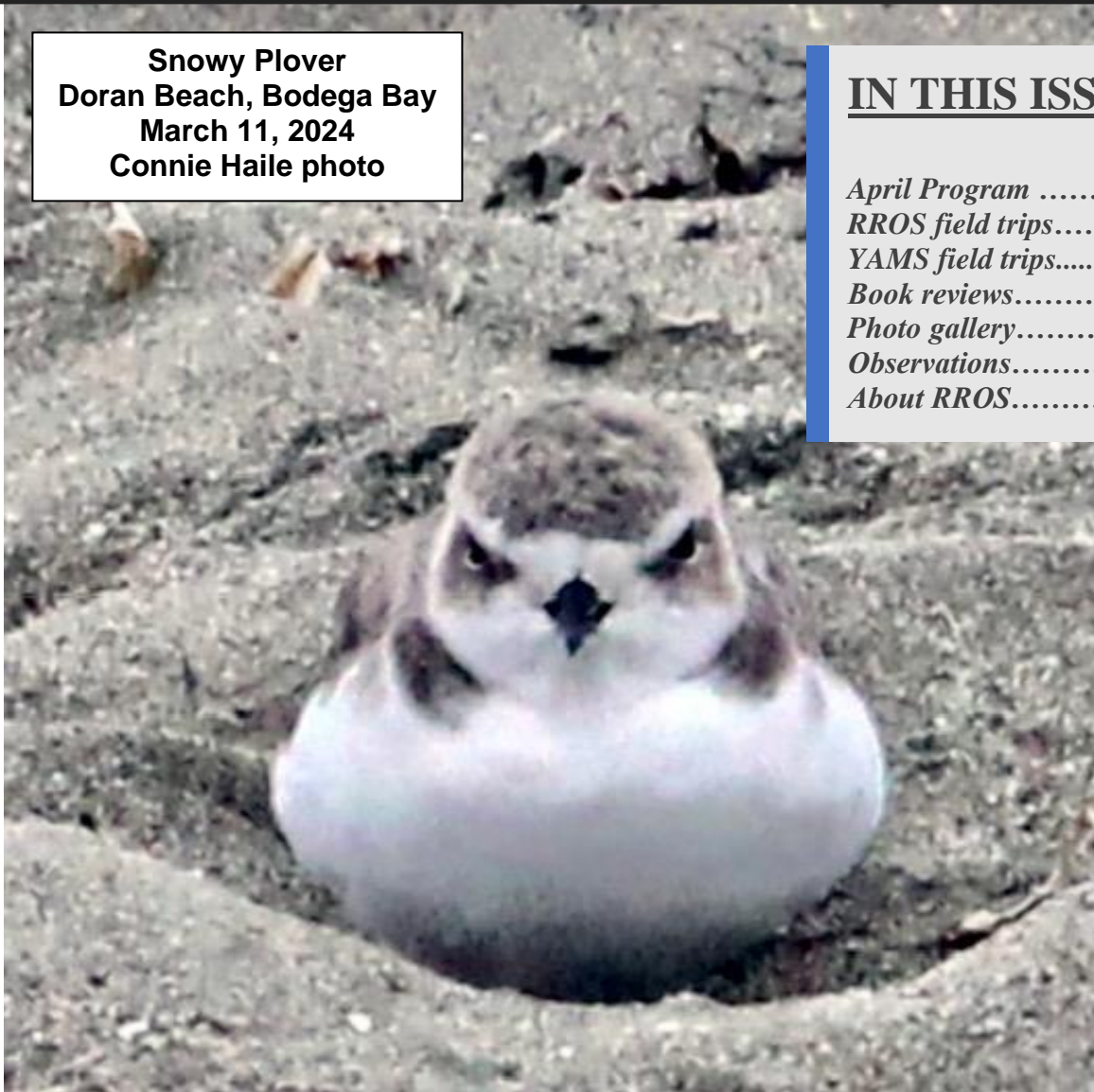


# KITE TALES



A monthly newsletter from the Redwood Region Ornithological Society



**Snowy Plover**  
Doran Beach, Bodega Bay  
March 11, 2024  
Connie Haile photo

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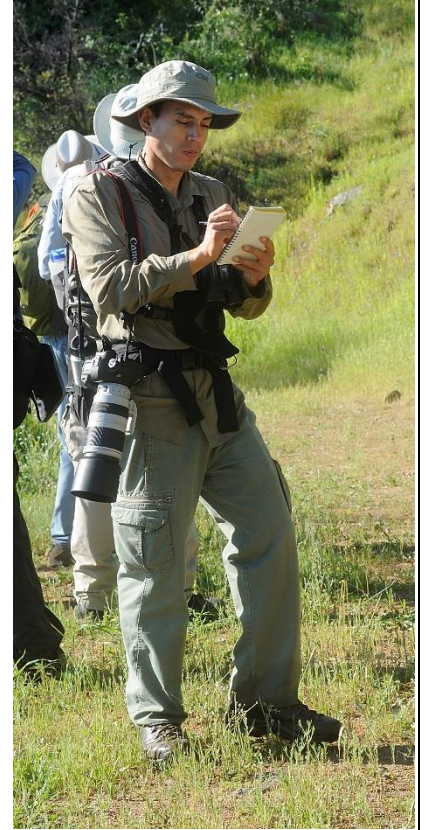
**What's New on the RROS Website?**  
 The most current info on meetings, field trips, presentations, and more can be found at [www.RROS.org](http://www.RROS.org).  
 If you missed a previous program, video recordings are available on our website at [www.RROS.org/virtualmeeting](http://www.RROS.org/virtualmeeting).

## What's On The Program?

### Climate Change, Sonoma-area Birds, & Real Solutions

Description: Would you like to know how climate change will impact Sonoma-area birds, and people? Do you feel that it's such a big problem, you're just overwhelmed? Most importantly, do you want to learn real solutions that you can be a part of that can actually solve, and avoid, climate catastrophe? Then this presentation is for you! You have the power to be part of real solutions. Join us!

Bio: **Juan Pablo Galván Martínez** is a professional conservationist who has lived and worked in different parts of California, Mexico, Costa Rica, and the East Coast. He loves being able to have a career focused on studying, protecting and restoring wildlife and nature. Even before he graduated from UC San Diego with a BS in Ecology, Behavior and Evolution, he was already engaged in bird research and conservation. Receiving an MS in Sustainable Development and Conservation Biology from the University of Maryland College Park increased his opportunities. Some of his bird-specific experience includes: studying the effects of rice cultivation on waterbirds in the Americas, surveying birds in the coffee plantations of Chiapas, determining the reproductive success of coastal sage scrub birds in San Diego, and helping to protect the nesting birds of Isla Alcatraz in the Gulf of California. When he is not working as the Senior Land Use Manager of Save Mount Diablo, he volunteers as the Conservation Chair of Mount Diablo Audubon Society, hikes and birds the Mount Diablo region, contributes data as a certified California Naturalist, assists conservation efforts in Mexico and tries to apply what he's learned as a certified California Climate Steward.



### RROS FIELD TRIPS, UPCOMING

*We do not require 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, carpooling is encouraged. For more information or to RSVP, contact **Garrett Pierce (415) 260-7406**.*

#### **April 13, 2024, 8:00AM-1:00PM, Pine Flat Road, Scott Carey**

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.

#### **April 27, 2024, 8:00AM-1:00PM King Ridge Road, near Cazadero, Josh Snead**

Josh Snead will lead us around this remote northwestern corner of Sonoma County. *In order to minimize the number of cars on this narrow road, the trip is limited to 12 people. You must RSVP. First-come, first served, with preference given to RROS members.* Meet at 8:00AM in the parking lot near the bakery in Duncans Mills (38.4530148, -123.0532010). Bring lunch/snacks, fluids, and folding chairs (for the lunch stop). No bathrooms once we start up the hill. Possible Sooty Grouse. To RSVP contact Garrett Pierce – [garrettallenpierce@gmail.com](mailto:garrettallenpierce@gmail.com) or (415) 260-7406.

## RROS field trip to Cosumnes River Reserve, Woodbridge Rd., and Staten Island March 10, 2024



On the boardwalk  
at Cosumnes

This trip was a late addition to the field trip program. The goal was to catch the tail-end of the winter congregations of geese and cranes at a prime Central Valley region, between Sacramento on the north and Stockton to the south. A late February scouting trip by Gene & Nancy Hunn and early March e-bird reports held out the prospect of good numbers still of the target species.

Six dedicated birders met at sunrise, having reset our clocks the night before for daylight time. The drive to Cosumnes River Reserve followed the Sacramento River levee from Rio Vista to Walnut Grove, scenery suggestive of a Louisiana bayou. Approaching the reserve, we spotted what appeared to be a field of snow, which proved to be some few thousand distant **Snow Geese**, with maybe another thousand **Greater White-fronted Geese** scattered across the pasture just off the road. We were able to pick out one blue-phase Snow Goose, which for us old-timers used to be considered a distinct species, common on the Gulf coast, but now just a fashion statement. The Snow Geese were quiet but the white-fronts honked and yelped in chorus.

Next stop was at ponds full of dabbling ducks, including a nice pair of **Blue-winged Teal**, hiding amongst the shovelers, pintails and green-winged teal, with a pair of **Cinnamon Teal** for contrast. At Cosumnes we hiked the main dike trail across the marsh. Highlights there were close studies of a cooperative **Sora** and **Wilson's Snipe**. Amongst the dabblers were a few diving ducks: **Buffleheads**, a pair of **Common Goldeneyes**, and a nice flock of **Ring-necked Ducks**. Some hundreds more of noisy white-fronts dropped in. **Marsh Wrens** chattered happily, punctuating the shorebird symphony of **Black-necked Stilts**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Killdeer**, and **Long-billed** distant arctic nesting grounds. **Dowitchers**. Peter spotted a single **White-faced Ibis** heading our way and the scopes confirmed a distant **Osprey**.



Sora lurking

After our lunch break we wound our way south to Woodbridge Road and the Isenbeg Crane viewpoint in hopes of spotting lingering **Sandhill Cranes**. It seems we were a bit late, though we could hear a few calling in the distance and glimpsed a small flock through the heat waves. (The weather was perfect. Puffy clouds on the horizon, blue sky, cool with a light breeze.) An early migrant **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** perched for us on a nearby fence and a **Common Yellowthroat** showed itself. We decided to try to get closer to the distant cranes, which we supposed might have been on Staten Island, a few miles distant. We figured that would wrap up the trip nicely. We heard cranes there also but were only able to see two in flight. But Staten Island still hosted several hundred **Aleutian Cackling Geese** of the 50,000 or so that now winter there (after recovering strongly from near extirpation). A flock of 100 **American Avocets** alarmed the local e-bird editors. A single **Lesser Yellowlegs** was notable. All agreed it was a fine day

Gene Hunn, photos courtesy of Monica Schwalbenberg-Peña

### YAMs Trip to Giacomini Wetlands (Liz Lewis)

We greeted St. Patrick's Day by traipsing through the damp, green wetlands at the mouth of Lagunitas Creek in Point Reyes Station. In addition to Bea, Clayton, and Nolan, we were joined by our newest YAM Townes Staley, and his dad Zac. As we piled out of Lisa's car, we were greeted by the rattly call of a **Brown-headed cowbird**. We began scanning the ducks in the small pond below the Giacomini wetlands trailhead when Bea yelled out **Blue Winged Teal** and Clayton quickly added **Cinnamon Teal** and **American Coot** to our list. The cattails and willows lining the pond were loaded with **Song Sparrows! Common Yellowthroats** and **Marsh Wrens** contributed to the chorus of bird song.

Nolan bravely led us down a muddy trail undaunted by the ankle-deep water in his knee-high rubber boots. While we carefully picked our way along the trail, we stopped to admire the **Ring-billed Gulls** flying north when Lisa yelled out **Caspian Tern!** We finally made it to the west side of the pond where we were treated to a closer view of the teal trifecta including **Green Winged Teal**, with their soft whistle-like calls.

As we scoured the cattails, we heard the grunt of a **Virginia Rail!** Soon we were surrounded by the buzz of **Anna's** and **Allen's hummingbirds** perched atop the trees next to the pond. We retreated from the muddy trail to check the barn for owls. While no owls were to be found, a newly arrived **Cliff Swallow** was checking the old mud nests under an eave. **Tree Swallows** were circling the nest boxes along the trail. While the sky was buzzing with swallows, Bea, Clay, and Nolan showed us the **Coast Garter Snakes** slithering into the sunshine.

We capped off our trip to the Giacomini wetlands with a **Lincoln's Sparrow** and a pair of **Western Bluebirds**. We lunched at White House pool along Lagunitas Creek where we heard **Orange Crowned Warbler** and **Wrentit**. Both **Hairy** and **Downy** woodpeckers were calling from the willow thickets. We ended our day with great views of an **Osprey** soaring above Inverness Ridge with a kettle of **Turkey Vultures**.

### YAMS Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas block surveys:

#### **Sunday April 14 - 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 explore our block on Outer Point Reyes. Liz is a member of the steering committee for this important research project and she will be sharing the project protocols and we will see what our block holds for us in bird diversity. It will be great to be part of this important research project for Marin County! Bring binoculars, field guide and/or app, lunch, water, snacks and of course layered clothing.

#### **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.

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

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

April 28, September 8, October 13 (Alvaro's Adventures, [www.alvarosadventures.com](http://www.alvarosadventures.com))

## A New Feature: Book Reviews

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

***The Private Lives of Public Birds: Learning to Listen to the Birds Where We Live*, Jack Gedney**, illustrations by Anna Kus Park, Heyday, Berkley, California, 2022

Mr. Gedney is a local author, based in Novato. He devotes a chapter to each of 15 seemingly “too familiar” birds: California Towhee, California Scrub-Jay, American Crow, Cedar Waxwing, American Robin, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, Mourning Dove, Northern Mockingbird, crowned sparrows, Great Horned Owl, Hooded Oriole, Turkey Vulture, Red-tailed Hawk, Anna’s Hummingbird. If you thought you already knew all that you needed to know about these neighborhood birds, you would be in for a surprise... quite a few surprises, in fact. Gedney captures the essence of each in evocative prose.

We learn that the California Towhee is a dedicated monogamist, “singing” their chippy duets year around, keeping in touch. And how the scrub-jay caches several thousand acorns each season, memorizing where they were parked, but leaving half behind to spawn a new generation of oaks. He disputes the implication of the name, “Lesser Goldfinch.” Lesser than what, he asks? Certainly not in the music department: *Spinus psaltria*, lyre-playing finch in Latin, is known to incorporate notes borrowed from dozens of neighboring species for their individuated singing. I will leave the rest for you to discover for yourselves.

***John James Audubon: The Making of an American*, Richard Rhodes**, Vintage Books, New York, 2004.

Was John James Audubon saint, sinner, or a bit of both? I decided that I needed to judge the case for myself, so I ordered Richard Rhodes’ 500-page biography. Rhodes is a Pulitzer Prize winning historiographer and his account of the life of J. J. Audubon is meticulously documented from original sources. He details Audubon’s life, from his illegitimate birth in Jamaica, his fostering by kin in France, and his eventual embrace as a citizen of the newly minted United States.

What struck me most forcefully was how Audubon struggled to balance his devotion to his wife and sons with his obsessive ambition to produce an artistic masterpiece, *The Birds of America*, published between 1827 and 1838. Throughout his life he struggled to support his family and to finance his dream. Publication of his opus required selling subscriptions, a bootstrap operation that was frequently on the verge of failure. We can be thankful that he persevered. As for the allegation that he was involved in the slave trade, Rhodes summarizes that episode in his life:

“Kentucky was a slave state, and as many others did there, the Audubons kept slaves. Between 1813 and 1819 they bought and sold a total of nine boys, men and women,... Audubon is circumspect about them in his writings, typically calling them servants.... The Audubon slaves cooked, did household chores, cleaned and stocked the store, maintained the property and the animals and assisted Lucy [Audubon’s wife] at tending garden and John James at boating and hunting.... Owning slaves was another measure of the Audubons’ prosperity [at that point in their lives], a moral luxury that hardship would eventually humble and reverse” (pg. 115).

Audubon and his relatives at this point in their lives were in the business of transport and trade on the frontier but were financially ruined in the crash of 1819. Audubon was then 34 years old and had not yet embarked on his life’s work, to capture the essence of all the birds of his new homeland.

### PHOTO GALLERY: SOME RECENT HIGHLIGHTS



**Glaucous Gull, Salmon Creek beach, March 18, 2024, Scott Morrical photo**



**Yellow-billed Loon, Bodega Harbor, March 9, 2024, Garrett Pierce photo**



**Ross's Goose, Ellis Creek ponds, March 13, 2024, Brendon Westerhold photo**



**Bushtit, Ellis Creek ponds, January 18, 2024, Connie Haile photo**

#### The Value of our Contributions (Tierra de Aves

THANK YOU! ... I am delighted to share the news of our upcoming venture—the establishment of our second banding station at Monte Alban [monumental Zapotec mountain-top capital since at least 2000 B.C.]. It is not accessible to the general public, save for those accompanied by our team. In contrast, our banding table is to the main archaeological area, where visitors can actively participate.

**Georgita and Manuel Grosselet**, Presidente Tierra de Aves A.C. ([www.tierradeaves.com](http://www.tierradeaves.com))

**OBSERVATIONS February 21, 2024 to March 20, 2024, compiled by DAVID A. HOFMANN**

<i>Species</i>	<i>Date/s</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Cty</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Observer/s</i>
Snow Goose	3/16/24	Jack London Elementary School	SON	1	TeG photos
Ross's Goose	03/11-20/24	Ellis Creek Recycling Facility	SON	1	RoS, mob photos
Slaty-backed Gull	03/19/24	Salmon Creek Beach	SON	1	JoP, BDP
Glaucous Gull	02/24-03/06/24	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	NoA, LuS, MoF mob photos
Glaucous Gull	03/12/24	Salmon Creek mouth	SON	1	ScM photos
Lesser Black-backed Gull	02/24-03/03/24	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	NoA, LuS photo
Yellow-billed Loon	02/21-03/20/24	Bodega Bay--Tides Wharf area	SON	1	RoO, AnO. mob photos
Least Bittern	03/20/24	Ellis Creek Recycling Facility	SON	1	PeC, EuH, mob
Common Black Hawk X Red Shouldered Hawk	02/22-03/10/24	Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road	SON	1	StP, BrW photo
Burrowing Owl	03/07/24	Tolay Regional Park	SON	1	GeB
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	02/25-03/02/24	Temelec Circle	SON	1	MaS, LuS, AIW
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	02/28/24	Oakwild Lane	SON	1	WiG
Red-naped Sapsucker	02/22-03/04/24	Spring Lake Regional Park	SON	1	ScS, DoK, JoC, ScC, mob photo
Hammond's Flycatcher	02/22-03/20/24	Spring Lake Regional Park	SON	1	ScS, DoK, ReO, KeW, ScM, WeD photo
Horned Lark	03/07/24	Tolay Regional Park	SON	2	GeB
Phainopepla	03/17/24	Foothills Regional Park	SON	1m	Te&MiT photos
Red Crossbill	03/07-14/24	Bodega Dunes Campground	SON	1	DeH, MoF. EuH, BrO photos
Scaly-breasted Munia	03/01-08/24	Spring Lake Regional Park	SON	6	MaM, RaL, YeM
Scaly-breasted Munia	03/18/24	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	LeR
American Redstart	03/04-09/24	Spring Lake Regional Park	SON	1f	ScM, KeW, ReO, GaP, RuR
MacGillivray's Warbler	03/12/24	Kelly's Pond	SON	1f	JoS

Observer/s: Noah Arthur, Geri Brown, Peter Colasanti, Jolene Cortright, Sean Cortright, Wendy Dandridge, Mookie Fudenberg, Will German, Teresa Griffin, Denise Herzberg, Donald Kirker, Rachel Lawrence, Mara Mahana, Yvette MacDonald, Scott Morrival, Brook O'Connor, Anne O'Donnell, Rob O'Donnell, Rebecca Olsen, Benjamin D."Mike" Parmeter, John Parmeter, Steve Pearce, Levi Rehberg, Ruth Rudesill, Josh Snead, Scott Sorby, Lucas Stephenson, Mark Stephenson, Teresa & Miles Tuffli, Brian Webb, Ken Wilson, **many observers.**

Observations may be sent to David A. Hofmann at [namfoh@comcast.net](mailto:namfoh@comcast.net).

### 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**

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
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- Website: Katharine Branstetter, [kathbran@well.com](mailto:kathbran@well.com)

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



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

#### Welcome New Members

**Tigerlily (Tiga) Levitis (YAMS), Alex Mortimer (YAMS), Norma Ferriz**

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





