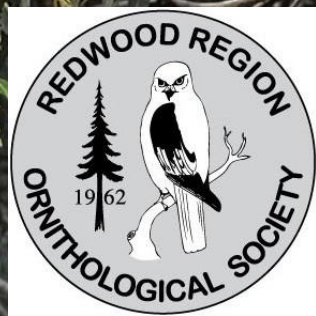


KITE TALES

A monthly newsletter from the Redwood Region Ornithological Society



Great Egret
Ellis Creek heronry
Len Nelson photo



2024 CALENDAR

Birds of Petaluma Wetlands
Photography by Len Nelson

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.

If you missed a previous program, video recordings are available our website at www.RROS.org/virtualmeeting.

Or just click on <https://youtu.be/FAew-4z09v0> for the YouTube recording or Arthur Dawson's RROS presentation last month.

Next RROS Meeting, Dec. 13 @ 7 PM

United Methodist Church,
1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa

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2023

Our next Membership Meeting for 2023-24

Where: United Methodist Church, 1551 Montgomery Dr., Santa Rosa, in the Fellowship Room located on the west side (left) of the church.

Zoom Link for the Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87012594653?pwd=dDAf1FKOmMSBHp8Y87JpxZ1BoDQiLo>

.1

Meeting ID: 870 1259 4653

Passcode: 398696

Members' Photo Share Night

December's program will be the annual "fan favorite", an RROS Member Sharing event. Please consider actively participating with a sample of your photos, bird recordings, bird artwork, stories, sketches, etc. and/or any other bird-inspired offerings. Please e-mail Bob at bobhasenick@att.net with your presentation ideas so he can arrange the program's flow. This will again be a hybrid meeting so if you're Zooming in, have camera & microphone at the ready. If you are bringing material to the room to share on the computer, please bring your content on USB stick or SD card. (Handy formats are PDF, DOC, PPTX, JPG). Plan on average share time of 4 mins



A note from your Membership Chair, Nancy Hunn:

Welcome our new RROS members:

Brian Fujizawa, Shawn Moon, Hunan Rostomayan, Bridget Shiels

We have gratefully received this donation:

Rita Bevans in honor of Bill Bevans



A note from Len Nelson for the Petaluma Wetlands Alliance

I am Research Chair for the Petaluma Wetlands Alliance (PWA). In 2007, Andy LaCasse built 10 Tree Swallow houses installed at Shollenberger. that fall, I helped him clean them out and also began helping him build more nest boxes at Ellis Creek and Tolay. There are now 60. I repair, replace and monitor them on a weekly basis mid-April through July. I can share the results of that monitoring effort for a future issue of *Kite Tales*. I produced a **calendar** of birds found in our wetlands for the **PWA**. See the *Kite Tales* cover images of the Great Egret. If you would like a 2024 PWA calendar, the cost is \$15 payable to the PWA, a non-profit dedicated to helping with the education of 3rd graders in our local schools. I could mail it to anyone interested at no cost, Contact Len Nelson at lenneln@comcast.net.

2023

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**

December 2, 2023, 8:00AM – 12:30PM, Ellis Creek, Peter Colasanti

Ellis Creek is one of the best birding hotspots in central Sonoma County, where many rare birds have been documented over the years. We will be led by Peter Colasanti, who knows Ellis Creek and the Petaluma Wetlands like the back of his hand. Expect waterfowl, shore birds and much more (perhaps the Least Bitterns will still be around?) Meet in the parking lot off Cypress Drive, Petaluma (38.2268466, -122.5850014) at 8:00AM.

January 20, 2023, 8:00AM – 1:00PM, Gulls of Bodega Bay and Jenner, Eugene Hunn

Who here doesn't want to improve their Gull identification skills? To help us further our Gull understanding, Gene Hunn will lead us around Bodega Bay (Doran Spit, Gaffney Point, Salmon Creek) and Jenner in search of all the many different species that congregate around the bay in the height of winter. Meet at Doran Regional Park at the parking lot across from the Rich Stallcup Platform (38.314249, -123.044244) at 8:00AM. Bring lunch. Carpooling is strongly encouraged. For more information or to RSVP, contact Garrett Pierce (415) 260-7406.

UPCOMING YAMS Field Trips (for youth and guardians only)

All field trips meet at 8:30 am at the site unless otherwise noted. Most are half-day excursions ending at 12:30pm with a group lunch and field trip bird list compilation. As always, bring binoculars, water, snacks, lunch, plenty of layered clothing, and field guides.

Sunday, December 3, 8:00am to 12:30pm - Hamilton Wetlands and Pacheco Pond. Hamilton Wetlands is a newly restored saltmarsh recovered from the old military airport in Novato. There is always a wide diversity of shorebirds and waterfowl. We will hike from the overlook located by Hangar 7 on Hangar Avenue to Pacheco Pond and back. This is a flat, approximately 2-mile hike. We will meet at the Park-and-Ride at the corner of Hwy. 101 and Lakeville Hwy. at 8:00am and carpool to the overlook on Hangar Avenue. Bring binoculars, field guide or app, water, snacks, and lunch.

Sunday, December 17 – Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count YAMS will have a new territory this year! It will include the Laguna Water Treatment Plant on Llano Road. This is a more rural territory than our traditional West Santa Rosa territory. All present and former YAMS are welcome to participate. We can make this a YAMS reunion event. Meeting place and time TBA. Definitely an all-day event with optional CBC dinner in the evening.

2023

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS. Mark your calendars.

Cheep Thrills CBC, Thursday, December 14

Contact Susan Kelly, shastasusan@me.com, 415-497-4240.

Santa Rosa CBC (sponsored by RROS), Sunday, December 17

Contact Gene Hunn, enhunn323@comcast.net.

Sonoma Valley CBC (sponsored by Sonoma Ecology center, Friday, December 29

Contact Gene Hunn, enhunn323@comcast.net.

West Sonoma County CBC (sponsored by Madrone Audubon), Sunday, December 31

Contact Dr. Stacy Li, stacyli@sonic.net.

All about the Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count

The Santa Rosa CBC has run every year since 1960, so this is our 64th consecutive count. Participants in the 1960 count imagined the Redwood Region Ornithological Society (RROS) which was subsequently formally established in 1962. The Santa Rosa CBC circle is the standard 15-mile diameter circle (176.7 square miles). The center of our circle is at the Santa Rosa City Hall.

A grand total of 234 species have been counted on our CBC since 1960, with annual species counts ranging from 128 to 149, typically near 140. The circle is divided into 13 sectors, each fielding teams under an area leader, as detailed below:

Area 1, Northwest: River Rd./Airport/Shiloh Park/Mark West Springs Rd.

Area 2, Santa Rosa Creek Trail to Delta Pond;

Area 3, Northend: Chanate Dr./Fountaingrove Pkwy./Nagasawa Park;

Area 4, Northeast: Montecito Rd./Calistoga Rd.;

Area 5, Los Alamos Rd.;

Area 6, Sebastopol/Laguna de Santa Rosa/Gravenstein Hwy;

Area 7, Central: A Place to Play Park/Santa Rosa Treatment plant/Colgan Creek Trail;

Area 8, Spring Lake/Howarth Park/Bennett Valley Golf Course/Fairgrounds;

Area 9A, Annadell;

Area 9B, Oakmont;

Area 10, Southwest: Llano Treatment Ponds/Gravenstein Hwy./Stony Point Rd.;

Area 11, Rohnert Park/Petaluma Hill Rd./Crane Canyon Rd.

Area 12, Bennett Valley/Crane Creek Regional Park.

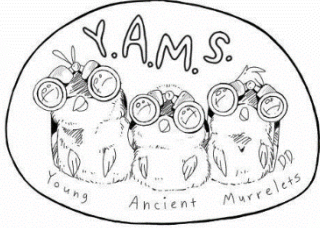
Many individuals have coordinated the Santa Rosa count since 1960. This is my fourth year, having taken the reins from Bill Doyle, who ran things 2011-2019. I would like it to be my last!

This year we plan to revive the countdown pizza party, (with a Zoom link) after the long Covid hiatus, at Mary's Pizza. If you would like to help count, contact Gene Hunn at hunn323@comcast.net.

2023

YAMS Ellis Creek Trip

Aubrey Parnay, YAMS Field Columnist



In early November, YAMs birded at Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility. It was a fun group, with Liz leading and two new members, Tiger Lily, and Kestrel, as well as Clayton and Aubrey. That morning was gray and drizzly, but it seemed like it was going to be a good day for birding.

We started in the field by the parking lot and looked at a group of Turkey Vultures preening in the low bushes. Killdeer were scurrying about in the newly turned soil and we discerned three well-camouflaged American Pipits joining the foraging. Hidden in the reeds a Marsh Wren busily chattered away. We found a side path between the ponds and chased down a Common Yellowthroat.

A little later on, we stopped by the creek and listened to the chattering of several Ruby-crowned Kinglets and watched Yellow-rumped Warblers flit through the sycamores. Back at the ponds, we looked through the nesting materials that had been dumped out of an owl box for cleaning. Two mysterious cold white eggs lay in the grass not far away.

We moved on and looked out at the ponds. A Pied-billed Grebe swam through the islands, while a pair of Gadwall paddled at the opposite end. In the sky, a small falcon sped by overhead and we identified it as a Merlin.

At one point, Aubrey was walking toward a viewpoint among the rushes. Suddenly a small bird noisily flushed up from the water's edge. She got a good enough view of its black wingtips and grey head to determine that it was a Virginia Rail.

Out in the marshland by Shollenberger, we saw flocks of sandpipers flying, so we decided to head over. There, Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets waded through the shallows. We got fantastic views of another pipit up close.

Back at the main entrance, a Lincoln's Sparrow fluffed itself up in a coyote bush. Although we did not see as many ducks as we hoped for, we were pleased with our shorebird sightings. By noon, YAMS observed 46 species!

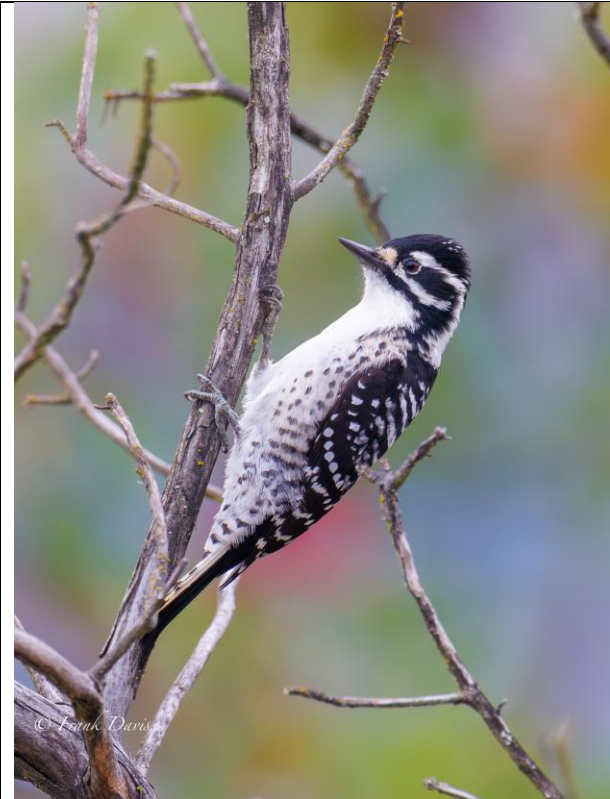


Black-necked Stilt (Aubrey Parnay)



Killdeer (Clayton Rucker)

PHOTO GALLERY: SOME RECENT HIGHLIGHTS



Nuttall's Woodpecker, November 14, 2023
Lawndale Trailhead, Kenwood, Frank David



Northern Pygmy-Owl, Jack London Stat3 Park,
September 9, 2023. Frank David photo



Burrowing Owl, Tolay Regional Park
November 7, 2023, Frank David photo



Pacific Loon, juvie, Bodega Harbor
November 17, 2023, Eugene Hunn photo

2023

Observations October 21, 2023 to November 20, 2023 compiled by DAVID A. HOFMANN

| Species | Date/s | Location | Cty | # | Observer/s |
|---|----------------|---|-----|---|-----------------------------|
| Slaty-backed Gull | 11/11/23 | Shollenberger Park | SON | 1 | MaB, JeG photos |
| Least Bittern | 11/01-20/23 | Ellis Creek WRF | SON | 1 | MiH, SuK, PaS |
| Common Black X Red-shouldered Hawk hybrid | 10/23-11/08/23 | Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road/Delta Pond | SON | 1 | KeW, ReO, KaM, BrW f photos |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | 11/12-19/23 | Guerneville---River House | SON | 1 | ScC photos |
| Yellow-bellied Sapsucker | 11/15-19/23 | W. Olivet Road X Oakwild Drive | SON | 1 | JoS, RuR, PeC photos |
| Red-naped Sapsucker | 11/19/23 | River Road X Oakwild Lane | SON | 1 | PeC photo |
| Townsend's Solitaire | 11/19/23 | Robert L. Stevenson State Park | SON | 1 | EuH, mob heard only |
| Sage Thrasher | 11/04/23 | Tolay Regional Park | SON | 1 | ScM photos |
| Swamp Sparrow | 10/24/23 | Fitzpatrick Road | SON | 1 | ScM photos |
| Swamp Sparrow | 10/27/23 | Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail | SON | 1 | JoS |
| Swamp Sparrow | 10/27-11/19/23 | Shollenberger Park | SON | 1 | PeC, LeR, JoR photos |
| Swamp Sparrow | 10/22-11/03/23 | Willow Creek Road | SON | 2 | BrM, JoS, DaN, CoW |
| Green-tailed Towhee | 11/03/23 | Laguna de Santa Rosa | SON | 1 | SuK photo |
| Northern Parula | 10/28-30/23 | Monte Rio yard | SON | 1 | JoS, BrM photos |

OBSERVERS FOR THIS PERIOD: Margot Bezruczyk, Scott Carey, Peter Colasanti, Jeffer Giang, Mike Hall, Susan Kirkbride, Bruce Mast, Scott Morrical, Dan Nelson, Rebecca Olsen, Levi Rehberg, Jonathan Rehberg, Ruth Rudesill, Josh Snead, Patrick Sysiong, Brian Webb, Corinne Williams, Ken Wilson; mob = many observers.

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 Sugar Loaf Ridge State Park at 5:30 pm.

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

RROS STAFF: OFFICERS

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Treasurer: Geri Brown.....geri_browncpa@yahoo.com // 650-619-1711

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Kite Tales: Eugene “Gene” Hunn.....enhunn323@comcast.net // 707-981-7301

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Website: Katharine Branstetter.....kathbran@well.com

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

Observations may be sent to David A. Hofmann at nnamfoh@comcast.net.

Send all other content to KT Editor Gene Hunn at enhunn323@comcast.net

2023