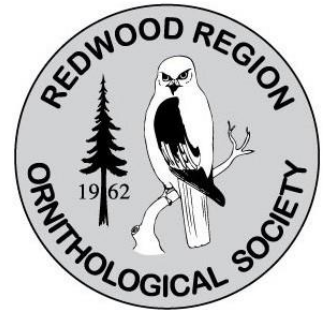
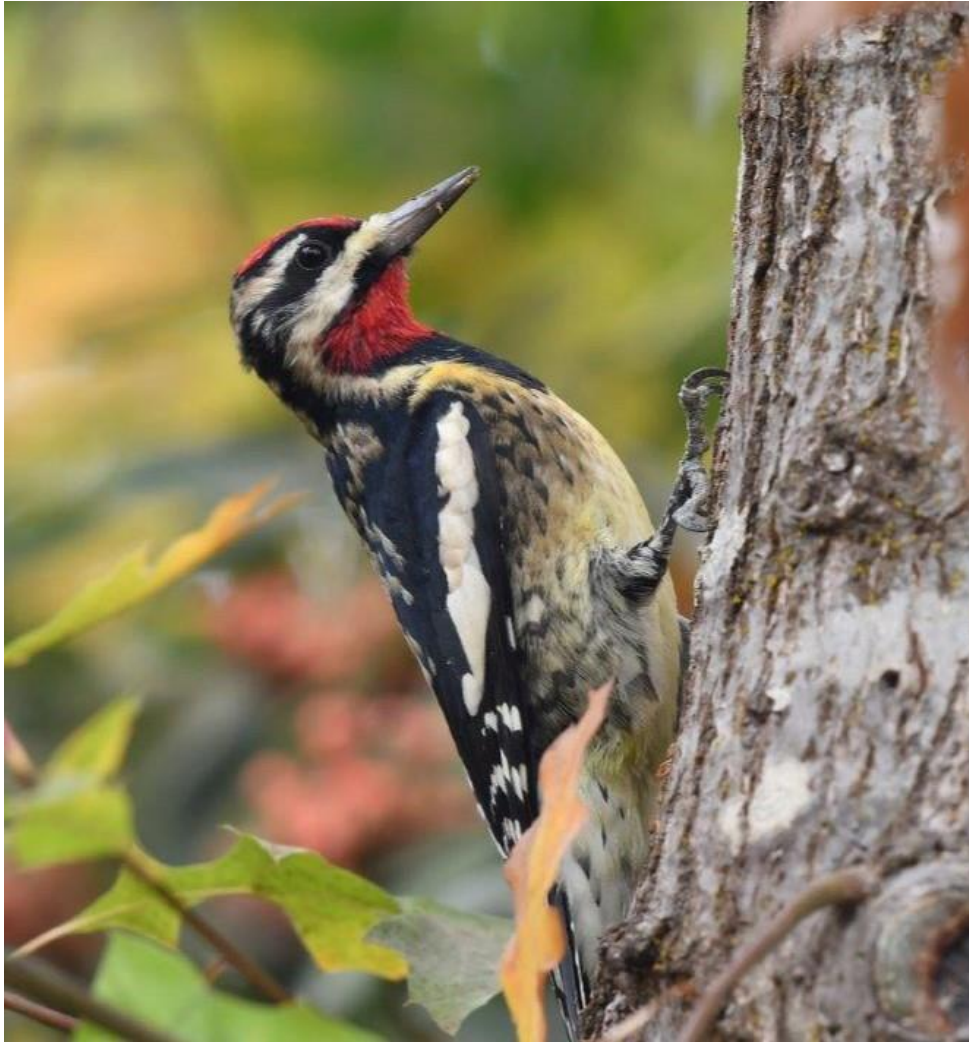


# KITE TALES

A monthly newsletter from the Redwood Region Ornithological Society



**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
Creekside Village  
November 25, 2023  
Rick LeBaudour photo**

## IN THIS ISSUE

*Next meeting, etc.* .....2  
*Upcoming field trips*.....3  
*Christmas bird counts*.....4-5  
*YAMS field trip report*.....6  
*Photo gallery*.....7  
*Observations*..... 8  
*About RROS*..... 9

### **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 our website at [www.RROS.org/virtualmeeting](http://www.RROS.org/virtualmeeting).

Or just click on <https://youtube/FAew-4z09v0> for the YouTube recording of the RROS presentation last month.

## Next RROS Meeting, January 10, 2024 @ 7 PM

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

### Julie Woodruff;

## Understanding the Northern Saw-whet Owl Migration in the Bay Area, California

The Northern Saw-whet Owl (*Aegolius acadicus*) is one of the smallest raptors in North America, and breeds in primarily coniferous forests in the intermountain west, as well as the boreal forest from Alaska to Nova Scotia. In the fall, saw-whet owls migrate to lower elevations and latitudes in large numbers, allowing them to be one of the most banded avian species in North America. Thanks to the efforts of Project OwlNet, a large-scale network of researchers collaborating to understand the species' migration, migration pathways and population trends, these objectives are well understood in the eastern portion of the species range, but less understood in the west. A banding station was established in 2019 in the east Bay Area in partnership with the Mt. Diablo Audubon Society to broaden the collaboration effort in the west, and was run at least four nights a week during peak saw-whet owl migration (October-November) for five years, to determine scale and timing of the owl's movement in the area. Preliminary results suggest the Bay Area provides a critical migration path and stopover area for saw-whet owls, but additional data and regional collaboration is needed to fully understand the species' stopover use and scale of migration.



Northern Saw-whet Owl juvenile  
Jack London State Park. May 4, 2018  
Rafael Lorenzo photo

**Julie Woodruff** is a biologist based out of Santa Rosa with over 14 years of experience conducting surveys and/or monitoring for various special-status species in California, and has been employed at Sequoia Ecological Consulting, Inc. for over 6 years as a senior biologist and project manager. She graduated from Chico State with a degree in Biological Sciences and volunteered with the Altacal Audubon Society banding northern saw-whet owls prior to relocating to the Bay Area. Her research during her Master's work included radio telemetry of northern saw-whet owls to understand their winter habitat use in the foothills surrounding Chico. Ms. Woodruff has been banding northern-saw whet owls for over 12 years and holds a Master Bander permit for three owl species; northern saw-whet owl, western screech-owl, and burrowing owl.

## 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](mailto:lenneln@comcast.net).

## 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**

**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.

## Eponymous Bird Names of Sonoma County

**Will we need to learn a bunch of new names next year?**

**For bios of those honored below, see E.A. Choate, *Dictionary of American Bird Names***

Ross's Goose	Thayer's Iceland Gull	Bewick's Wren
Clark's Grebe	Forster's Tern	Townsend's Solitaire
Vaux's Swift	Wilson's Storm-Petrel	Swainson's Thrush
Anna's Hummingbird	Leach's Storm-Petrel	Lawrence's Goldfinch
Costa's Hummingbird	Townsend's Storm-Petrel	Brewer's Sparrow
Allen's Hummingbird	Murphy's Petrel	Harris's Sparrow
Ridgway's Rail	Buller's Shearwater	Bell's Sparrow
Virginia Rail	Brandt's Cormorant	Nelson's Sparrow
Baird's Sandpiper	Swainson's Hawk	Lincoln's Sparrow
Wilson's Snipe	Williamson's Sapsucker	Bullock's Oriole
Wilson's Phalarope	Lewis' Woodpecker	Scott's Oriole
Scripps's Murrelet	Nuttall's Woodpecker	Brewer's Blackbird
Craveri's Murrelet	Hammond's Flycatcher	Lucy's Warbler
Cassin's Auklet	Say's Phoebe	Virginia's Warbler
Bonaparte's Gull	Hutton's Vireo	Blackburnian Warbler
Franklin's Gull	Cassin's Vireo	Wilson's Warbler
Heermann's Gull	Steller's Jay	

## THE SANTA ROSA 2023 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

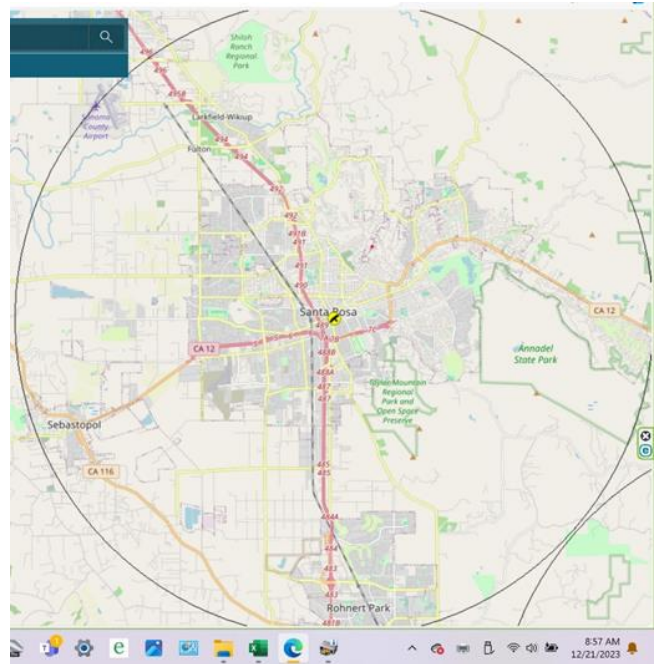
The 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Rosa Christmas Bird Count, December 17, 2023, is history.

Our 53 intrepid bird counters braved a few fierce rain squalls (and hail at one oint) to survey the 177 square miles of our traditional count circle. We tallied **142 species** and nearly **30,000 individual birds**, pre-dawn to near dusk. Thirteen teams reported their finds at the end of the day.

Area 1, Tiffany Erickson, Corinne Williams, Mookie Fudemberg, and Peter Leveque reported 79 species at Shiloh Park, the airport, Mark West Springs and River roads, and points between. Highlights included four Cackling Geese, a Green Heron, 18 White Pelicans, and an Orange-crowned Warbler.

Area 2, Don Kirker, Brian Webb, Scott Sorby, and Hunan Rostomyan surveyed the Santa Rosa Creek Trail from Fulton to Delta Pond and neighboring fields. They noted 97 species in this prime territory. Highlights included a Greater White-fronted Goose, lots of ducks, including our only Canvasbacks, Horned and Eared Grebes, a Spotted Sandpiper, a Bald Eagle, the resident Black Hawk x Red-shouldered Hawk hybrid, two Peregrine Falcons, 85 Violet-green Swallows, and our only Wrentit!

Area 3, Monica Schwalbenberg-Peña, Mary Grishaver, Peggy Albright, Karin Day, Tiffany Erickson, Bob and Carol Hasenick, and Ruth Rudesill recorded 74 species in north Santa Rosa, Fountaingrove Parkway, Nagasawa Park). Riebli Rd. and vicinity. Highlights included Ruthie's owls (Western Screech, ,Great Horned, Northern Pygmy, and Northern Saw-whet);uncommon ducks such as Wood Duck, Gadwall, Common Goldeneye, and Hooded Merganser; a Sora, and a Marsh Wren.



Area 4, Miles and Teresa Tuffli covered Calistoga Rd. to the edge of the circle with lots of woodland and relatively few birds, 53 species total. Highlights included three Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Varied Thrush and White-throated Sparrow.

Area 5, Colin Meusel with owling help from Ruth Rudesill. This area includes Los Alamos Rd. and tributary streets to the top. It suffered considerable damage from recent fires. Highlights among the 58 species included Wood Duck, Merlin and Sharp-shinned Hawk, Western Screech and Northern Pygmy-Owls, and Lark and Rufous-crowned Sparrows.

Area 6, Dan Nelson and Malcolm Blanchard covered Sebastopol, Laguna de Santa Rosa, and vicinity, tallying 68 species. Highlights included our only Cattle Egret (where did they all go?), a "pure" Yellow-shafted Flicker, and 210 Western Meadowlarks.

Area 7, Gene Hunn covered Roseland, the Santa Rosa waste water facility, a Place to Play Park (in a hail storm), Colgan Creek Trail, and various weedy fields. Highlights of his 64 species

included a gathering of gulls (including Herring, Thayer's Iceland, and Glaucous-winged) and blackbirds at a dairy off Llano Road, two White-tailed Kites, and a Wilson's Snipe.

Area 8, Jeff Valfer, Josh Snead, Craig Roth, Colin Talcroft, and Glo and Al Wellman (and friends) surveyed Spring Lake, Howarth Park, Arroyo Sierra Creek, and Bennett Valley Golf Course and vicinity counting 84 species. Highlights included Lake Ralphine's Mute Swans, two Osprey, a Peregrine, a Sora, 3 Barn Swallows, House and Marsh Wrens, our resident Great-tailed Grackles, two Hermit Warblers, and a single **Wilson's Warbler**, a first for the count, at least since 2010.

Area 9A, Bill Doyle and Helen Kochenderfer got blown off the mountain in Annadell by a mid-morning downpour, so settled for just 16 species (and a warm bath back home?).

Area 9B, Dawna and James Foreman led the Oakmont Bird Club in their home turf, recording 61 species. Highlights included Western Screech and Great Horned Owls, four Pileated Woodpeckers, seven Golden-crowned Kinglets, 13 Varied Thrushes, and four White-throated Sparrows.

Area 10, Lisa Hug and Liz Lewis led a crew of YAMS (Bea Pezzolo, Aubrey Phipps-Parnay, Kyle Rogers, and Nolan Bollinger) for a survey of the Llano Sewage Ponds (guided by Sean McNeil of the Santa Rosa Water Department). Aubrey will provide more detail in her report for *Kite Tales*. Mike Nelligan and Sandy Smith surveyed the eastern sector. Area 10 gets the prize this year with **101 species**. Highlights include many ducks and a Western Grebe, all sorts of gulls (Bonaparte's, Mew, Western, Thayer's, etc.) and shorebirds (100 Dunlin, 300 Least Sandpipers, 24 Long-billed Dowitchers, etc.), both Golden and Bald Eagles, a Pygmy Nuthatch, and a Tree Swallow.

Area 11, Garrett Pierce and Scott Morrical covered the Sonoma State campus, Petaluma Hill Road, and Crane Canyon Rd. and Crane Creek Park, counting 77 species. Highlights included six Cackling Geese, two Northern Pintail, six White-tailed Kites, three Northern Harriers, Barn and Great Horned Owls, and 22 Savannah Sparrows.

Area 12, Kathleen Mugele, Iris Lombard, Mary Rooney, and Dan Noreen found 50 species in Bennett Valley and Crane Creek Park. Highlights included Green Heron, Northern Harrier, and a grand total of 111 Lesser Goldfinches.

**Liz Vekony's memorial bench mosaic,  
Spring Lake Regional Park, Santa Rosa**  
Bob Hasenick photo





## YAMS CBC 2023

December 17 was a chilly and cloudy morning. Bundled up, YAMS members Kyle, Aubrey, Bea, and Nolan met by Gravenstein Elementary. With leaders Liz and Lisa, we piled into the car and set off towards the Llano ponds, included in our Area 10. As we drove the group saw long lines of Canada Geese pass by, and Sean McNeil from the SR Water Department guided us in to see the ponds.

A pair of White-tailed Kites perched in an oak tree as we inched along on the road. The first ponds produced Common Mergansers, Double-crested Cormorants, and a family of otters. A Bald Eagle swooped in and set off the alarm calls of several shorebirds in the next pond. There, around three hundred Least Sandpipers foraged around the mudflats, and up on the levy, Killdeer cried loudly. There was also quite the variety of ducks in this biggest pond. We counted over fifty Green-winged Teals and Buffleheads, and a few Ruddy and Gadwall were scattered throughout.

Everyone got excellent views of a Merlin when it landed on a nearby oak. Sean spotted a Barn Owl as he worked on some pond maintenance. We had fun identifying a large flock of gulls resting on a sand bar. Mixed in were Herring, Iceland, and Short-billed. On the way out, it began to sprinkle lightly. The waterfowl did not seem to mind; in fact, we noticed a Western Grebe and got great views of a Bonaparte's Gull as it dipped and turned acrobatically through the air. It began to rain harder as we took a quick look around the public access point across the road from the ponds. Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Brown-headed Cowbirds were added on. Then we drove along the side roads,

Our next stop was Joe Mato's Cheese Factory. We were greeted by a cacophony of Red-winged Blackbirds and over a thousand European Starlings. The group sampled some of the cheese and went back out to look for more birds. Liz spotted a strange-looking sparrow, with rusty-red colorations. Unfortunately, it dipped down into the grass before we could get a better look. While trying to find it, we flushed up a flock of Brewer's Blackbirds and at the same time everyone saw a leucistic bird that stood out like a sore thumb amongst

the dark flock. The rain began to pour as we drove out just in time to see a couple of Wilson's Snipes in the vineyards.

Liz took us to her friends' house for lunch. They had birdfeeders in their backyard which gave us a few new species including Chestnut-backed Chickadee. Her friends treated us with such hospitality and provided warm drinks, cookies, and handwarmers!

As we checked out the Hessel Church neighborhood, the constant rain lessened. It had stopped by the time the group headed over to the Sonoma Horticultural Nursery and Hidden Forest. The swamp-like habitat there was incredible; cedar knees rose from the forest floor, and water pooled up around them. One of the YAMS noticed a Great-horned Owl huddled up in a tree, eyeing us sleepily. Bea found a Slender Salamander who played dead and Aubrey observed two Townsend's Warblers flitting around the pond.

YAMS identified a Cooper's Hawk from the blocky head and black cap by the side of Azalea Road. We wrapped up our day with one last look at the Llano Ponds and got incredible views of two bobcats.

Combined with the observations of other birders who counted in Area 10, 101 species were seen! Despite the weather, the group had a great time together and can't wait to meet again in the new year.

-Aubrey Phipps-Parnay, YAMS Field Columnist



*Brewer's Blackbird (Leucistic)*  
Lisa Hug



*Bobcat (Lynx rufus)*  
Aubrey Parnay

## PHOTO GALLERY: SOME RECENT HIGHLIGHTS



**Rusty Blackbird**, Chileno Valley Road,  
December 14, 2023, Logan Kahle photo



**Swamp Sparrow**, Shollenberger Park, November  
26, 2023, Brendon Westerhold photo



**Scaly-breasted Munia**, near Kelly Pond,  
December 2, 2023, Teresa Tuffli photo



**Forster's Tern**, Highway 37, November 27, 2023,  
Teresa Miles photo

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

Species	Date/s	Location	Cty	#	Observer/s
White-winged Scoter	11/28/23	Bodega Bay harbor	SON	1	JoF
Glaucous Gull	12/19/23	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	Ma&LuS photo
Black Scoter	12/15/23	Bodega Head State Park	SON	2	ScM
Northern Fulmar	12/12/23	South Salmon Creek Beach	SON	1	C. Beck photos
Least Bittern	11/23-25/23	Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility	SON	1	MaK, KeS, WhM, AIM heard only
Common Black X Red Shouldered Hawk	12/17/23	Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road	SON	1f	BrW
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11/21/23-12/18/23	Guerneville---River House	SON	1f	ScC photos
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11/22/23	Oakwild Lane x West Olivet Road	SON	1	AIW photos
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	11/25/23	Creekside Village---Rogers Crk Path	SON	1	RiL, DeS photo
Scaly-breasted Munia	12/02/23	Laguna de Santa Rosa Trail	SON	2	Te&MiT, DeP photos
Scaly-breasted Munia	12/13/23	Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility	SON	1	DeH, MoF
Evening Grosbeak	12/19/23	Oakmont---Oak Trail Circle	SON	1m	DaK
Lapland Longspur	11/21/23	Bodega Head State Park	SON	2	ToB, ReM
Swamp Sparrow	11/22/23-12/09/23	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	ChR, KeS, EuH, BrW, GaP, RuR, mob photos
Rusty Blackbird	12/14/23	667-835 Chileno Valley Road	SON	1	LoK, EIL photo
Nashville Warbler	12/12/23	Sebastopol---St. Stephen's Episcopal Church	SON	1	JoS

OBSERVERS FOR THIS PERIOD: C. Beck, Tony Briggs, Scott Carey, Elizabeth Crouthamel, Joe Fischer, Mookie Fudenberg, Denise Herzberg, Eugene Hunn, Logan Kahle, Max Kesecker, Dale Kuhn, Rick LeBaudour, Elizabeth Lewis, Renee Masotti, Scott Morrical, Alex Mortimer, Whitney Mortimer, Debra Payson, Garrett Pierce, Christopher Reiger, Ruth Rudesill, Dede Sabbag, Kevin Schwartz, Josh Snead, Mark & Lucas Stephenson, Teresa & Miles Tuffli, Brian Webb, Brendon Westerhold, Alan Wight, 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.”*

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
- Christmas Bird Count: Eugene “Gene” Hunn..... [enhunn323@comcast.net](mailto:enhunn323@comcast.net) // 707-981-7301
- 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: Katharine Branstetter..... [kathbran@well.com](mailto: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](mailto:nnamfoh@comcast.net).

Send all other content to KT Editor Gene Hunn at [enhunn323@comcast.net](mailto:enhunn323@comcast.net)

