


KITE TALES

a monthly newsletter from the
Redwood Region Ornithological Society

Volume 57 Number 9

May 2022



Great Egret  Malcolm Blanchard



Next RROS Meeting
Spring Pot Luck @ Sugarloaf SP
May 11th // 5:30 pm



What's New on the RROS Website?

Did you miss last month's membership meeting? Or maybe you just want to watch it again?

A recording of April's Presentation can be found on the *Zoom Meetings* page!

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SAVE THE DATE

May Membership Meeting : Wednesday, May 11th , 5:30 pm

This month's program: Annual Spring Outdoor Meeting Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, 5:30PM

This is our final Membership Meeting for 2021-22 to be held live, COVID restrictions permitting. Meet at Sugarloaf at the picnic tables on the right, just past the entrance kiosk and across from the main parking lot.

Come earlier 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 near the first parking lot. BYO - everything. Only share safely!!

If desired, bringing your own camp chair and/or blanket to help with safe distancing. Even though we'll be outdoors, social distancing and mask-wearing will be strongly encouraged to the extent practical.

Where: Sugarloaf Ridge State Park.

Directions: From Hwy 12 East, about 6 miles beyond Calistoga Road, take a left on 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.

UPCOMING RROS FIELD TRIPS & EVENTS

RROS Field Trips in the Time of COVID-19

This last year, due to Covid, we required field-trip attendees to make reservations in order to limit the size of the group. We will not be doing that this year, 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.

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

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Saturday - May 14, 2022, RROS Field Trip to Santa Rosa Creek Trail with Brian Webb , 8:00AM – 12:00PM

Brian Webb will lead us along the Santa Rosa Creek trail, west of Willowside Road. Brian has birded this trail almost every day for the last few years. To say he is knowledgeable of the birds here is an understatement—he knows the individuals and what they're up to. We will meet on Willowside Road where it crosses Santa Rosa Creek (38.4450107, -122.8068619) at 8:00AM. It is possible we'll see the Common Blackhawk x Red-shouldered Hawk hybrid that has established a territory nearby. Also, spring migrants should be coming through. To RSVP or for more information contact Malcolm Blanchard at (707) 480-2210.

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Sunday - May 22, 2022, YAMS Field Trip: Pine Flat Road , 8:00AM – 3:00PM

Meet at 8:00am at the corner of Pine Flat Road and Red Winery Road just east of Jimtown which is east of Healdsburg. We will drive up the road slowly stopping at various places to look for spring migrants and other goodies. Bring binoculars, various field guides to birds, butterflies, reptiles flowers etc., water, snacks, lunch and layered clothing.

To RSVP or more information, contact Lisa Hug.

RROS Camping Trip to Tahoe National Forest and Environs with Gene Hunn

Thu, Jun 9, 2022 12:00 PM Sun, Jun 12, 2022

The Spring RROS camping trip will be held the weekend of June 9 through June 12. Notice these are different dates than were previously announced. Gene Hunn will lead us birding in the vicinity of the Tahoe National Forest. Our base will be the Cottonwood Creek Campground. There is a fine diversity of birds right in the camp, where we can bird each morning. Also, potential for Flammulated Owl, Common Nighthawk, and Common Poorwill at night. Woodpeckers and Empidonax flycatchers. Maybe Northern Goshawk, maybe Sooty Grouse.

You may reserve a campsite at <https://www.recreation.gov/camping/campgrounds/232871>. If you think you might attend, you should probably reserve a campsite sooner rather than later. We will be arriving on Thursday, June 9, and departing on Sunday, June 12. Reservations cost \$68 for the weekend. If you cancel, you'll get \$50 back. For those who choose not to camp, there are rooms available in Truckee and Calpine, which are near enough to join us at the campground (or perhaps another location) for our daily birding.

We will explore Sierra Valley habitats, including marshes (Sandhill Crane, White-faced Ibis, American Bittern, Sora, nesting Willets and Wilson's Phalaropes, etc.), sage steppe (Sage Thrashers, Brewer's Sparrows, Horned Larks, Swainson's Hawks...), and nearby canyons.

One day we may bird at Yuba Pass (6300 ft.) for montane species, dropping down the west to Bassett's (ice cream and hummingbirds) and the Sardine Lakes.

To RSVP or more information, contact Malcolm Blanchard at (707) 480-2210 (text and voice) or at mab@mabco.com.



Bring Lunch



Bring Water



Restrooms Not Available



Restrooms Available



Parking Fee

Field Trip Report : Mitchell Canyon with Rick LeBaudour

On Saturday April 23rd six intrepid birders braved the near perfect weather to explore Mitchell Canyon on the north slope of Mount Diablo. We had a total of 48 species in our five hours of birding.

The highlights were seven species of warbler, (including Nashville and Hermit), more Ash-throated Flycatchers than I can remember, with at least twelve seen or heard. Other birds seen were an adult Golden Eagle, California Thrasher (heard only), a gorgeous male Western Tanager (spotted by Monica Schwalbenberg-Peña), moments later we were on a beautiful male Hermit Warbler. On our way back we encountered a very birdy cottonwood tree with at least five species of warbler.

As is the case with most trips there are always some notable misses. We missed Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Hammond's flycatcher (although others we ran in to had Hammond's), only one species of swallow, no swifts, no Downy Woodpecker, I could go on. It's been ten years since the last field to Mitchell Canyon, perhaps our changing climate is responsible for what we did not find.

Other notable critters seen were several species of butterfly and wild flowers. The highlight was a large number of Mt. Diablo Globe Lillies. We had only one mammal, a brush rabbit. Not a single squirrel or deer.

Since Covid, Mitchell Canyon has become very popular with folks wanting to get out of the house and enjoy nature. The two very large parking lots were full to the brim. It was nice to see the many different groups enjoying nature in one of the Bay area's best spots to enjoy nature.

OBSERVATIONS

March 21, 2020 to April 20, 2022 // COMPILED BY DAVID A. HOFMANN

Species	Date/s	Location	Cty	#	Observer/s
Mandarin Duck	03/05/22	Sonoma---private pond	SON	3	GaP photo
Sooty Grouse	03/26-04/03/22	Upper King Ridge Road seen & heard on RROS field trip (12) led by Lisa Hug	SON	1m	JeV, LiH, MaB, BoH, GaP, DeS, RAR, PeA, PeC, MSP, LiP, CoW, DoK, ScC photo
Common Poorwill	03/25/22	Willow Creek Road	SON	2	GaP photo
Costa's Hummingbird	03/24/22	Petaluma yard	SON	1	LaB
Calliope Hummingbird	04/10/22	Pine Flat Road---upper	SON	1	Ma&LuS, LuC
Black-chinned Hummingbird	04/20/22	Pine Flat Road---upper	SON	1	RAR
Ancient Murrelet	03/29/22	Bodega Head State Park	SON	2	StS
Black-legged Kittiwake	04/03/22	Bodega Bay---Tides Wharf	SON	1	SaM
Glaucous Gull	03/25-04/02/22	Shollenberger Park	SON	1	NoA, JaD, BoM, AnF, TeB, DoH
Least Bittern	03/23/22	Ellis Creek WTF	SON	1	SuK heard only
Common Black-Hawk X Red-shouldered Hawk	03/21-04/20/22	Santa Rosa Creek Trail west of Willowside Road (multiple photos & tapes of mating with a male Red-shouldered Hawk)	SON	1f	BrW, DeF, CoH, EIC, EuH, SuK, ScC, RoW, AnB, RoP, EIC photos
Swainson's Hawk	03/27-31/22	Petaluma---Lakeville Hwy	SON	2	GaP, JeV photos
Swainson's Hawk	04/03/22	Petaluma---Adobe Road	SON	1	Ma&LuS
Swainson's Hawk	04/11/22	Ellis Creek WTF	SON	1	BoHu
Lewis's Woodpecker	04/08/22	Pepperwood Preserve	SON	1	CyC

Prairie Falcon	04/04/22	Bodega Bay---Bay Flat Heronry	SON	1	DaL
Red Crossbill	04/09/22	Upper Coleman Valley Road	SON	2	DoK
Lawrence's Goldfinch	03/27/22	Pine Flat Road	SON	1	Ma&LuS fly over-heard only
Scaly-breasted Munia	03/30-04/10/22	Sebastopol---Laguna Farm	SON	2	JoS, LeA heard only
Harris's Sparrow	03/27-04/02/22	Shellville Colony---Burndale Road X Hyde Road	SON	1m	Ma&LuS, GaP, JeV photos
Harris's Sparrow	04/11/22	Santa Rosa---Yuba Drive yard	SON	1m	ScC photo
Bell's Sparrow	03/27/22	Pine Flat Road---upper	SON	1	Ma&LuS heard only
Bell's Sparrow	03/29/22	Pine Flat Road---upper	SON	1	ScC photos
Bell's Sparrow	04/10/22	Pine Flat Road---upper	SON	2	GaP photo
Tricolored Blackbird	04/02/22	Schellville---Mulas Dairy	SON	4	Ma&LuS photos



OBSERVERS FOR THIS PERIOD

Peggy Albright • Leah Alcyon • Noah Arthur • Antony Bamford • Terry Berger • Lar Birchler • Malcolm Blanchard • Scott Carey • Peter Colasanti • Lucas Corneliussen • Cynthia Crossen • Elizabeth Crouthamel • Jakob Dulisse • Andrew Ford • Dea Freid • Connie Haile • Douglas Hall • Bob Hasenick • Bob Huffman • Lisa Hug • Eugene Hunn • Susan Kirkbride • Donald Kirker • David Lumpkin • Sam Manning • Bob Martin • Monica Schwalbenberg-Pena • Linda Petrulias • Garrett Pierce • Ron Pozzi • Ruth Ann Rudesill • Deb Sheppard • Steve Sosensky • Mark & Lucas Stephenson • Jeff Valfer • Brian Webb • Corrine Williams • Robin Wolcott

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A special thank you goes to a long-time friend and member, Don Howard, for his very generous donation to RROS. Don resides in Vancouver, Washington, but he still keeps in touch and wears his new RROS cap proudly. Best wishes, Don!

Birds of a Feather Flock Together Short Bios of Birders , By Beatrice Blanchard



It's hard to know if Monica is a Birdwatcher who dabbles in art, an Artist who enthuses for birdwatching, or an RN with passionate hobbies. Indeed, it's this trio of diverse interests that makes her such an intriguing person.

The red-headed Monica was raised in a large Catholic family in the Sunset District of San Francisco. The family lived three blocks from Golden Gate Park so young Monica and her 7 siblings could wander in the park, explore the museums, and then be home by dinner-time. There were always books, music and art supplies in the household, and visitors from all sorts of places. As a 5th grader Monica happened upon The Golden Nature Guide to Birds. The Pintail Duck illustration captivated her, and she was signed up for a children's ornithology class from Dr. Laurence Binford at the Cal Academy. A field trip to Bolinas Lagoon was magical, satisfying a longing for wild places. A lunch at Clifford Conly's Cypress Grove (now an ACR Preserve), during a 1970s Christmas Bird Count with expert birders Mary Louise Rosegay and Peter Allen, proved unforgettable. "A treasured memory: It was pouring rain during that Christmas Bird Count, and Clifford cooked up Split Pea soup and biscuits, blasting Die Walküre out over Tomales Bay".

Monica attended City College of San Francisco, taking art, science, literature and music classes, eventually following her RN sister's excellent suggestion to train as a Registered Nurse. Her first nursing job was in Montana, where she was delighted by a flock of White Winged Crossbills by her front door. Nursing, a flexible career, later found her at Redbud Hospital in Lake County, California. During a "Code", a formal resuscitation effort requiring knowledge and skill, she found her hands touching the hands of Dr. Van Peña, the

physician who was leading the Code. The rest is marital history. They live now on Sonoma Mountain, where Monica enjoys her six step-children, nine grandchildren, and daughter who thrives in San Francisco.

Monica took Peter Leveque's class at SRJC numerous times, and after birding with Mike Parmeter at Bodega Bay volunteered to participate in the Breeding Bird Atlas of Sonoma County. She names that as the most wonderful project she ever took part in, wandering through spring and summer just looking for and at breeding birds, seeing how they make their nests and raise their young. The training was by experts Lisa Hug and Ruth Rudesill, and there was access to special places like The Cedars with co-participant Gordon Beebe. This project led to membership in RROS, which has greatly enriched her life.



Tioga Pass • pastel on paper • mspart.com

An Avid birdwatcher (she can't really tell you how many birds are on her life list, though she does check them off in her original Peterson's). Monica is also an Avid Artist. A multimedia artist, she participates in Sonoma County Art Trails Open Studio, and group shows at Studio Gallery in San Francisco. Monica paints with an "every-day discipline", and ends by saying "Life is interesting: take advantage of it!" ■



Birds of a Feather Flock Together Short Bios of Birders , By Beatrice Blanchard



Long-time Sonoma County birder Ruth Rudesill is about more than just the birds. She's a big-time dog-person too.

Raised in Livermore and settling in the Valley of the Moon at about age 13, Ruth graduated from Humboldt State University, graduating with a degree in Wildlife Management, in Arcata. She currently lives in the same Kenwood house in which she was raised, on a large forested property which is home for birds, Koi, dogs, racoons, cats, and more.

As a kid, there was a family cabin in isolated Oakhurst, California, built on a huge granite slab "and where a Canyon Wren lived". Many summers were spent exploring the wild in the Sierra around the family cabin. Ruth tells a great story from those summers at the cabin: Her parents, encouraging the 8-year-old Ruthie to be brave in the dark, instructed her with her Collie Rob Roy, to go to a certain meadow and write her name in the dust to verify she had gotten that far. When Ruthie and Rob Roy bravely arrived at the meadow, there were no deer there but there were two yellow-green eyeshine discs of mountain lion eyes staring back at her from the edge of the clearing in the

dark. Spinning around, she raced for home, jumping a 15-foot creek in the process. The next morning, lion foot prints leading as far as the creek verified her tale. Ruth, who never met a dog she didn't like, was a faithful watcher of the Westminster Dog Show every year as a kid, keeping lists of breeds or mixed breeds. Her first show dog was a Bernese Mountain Dog named Ranger. Ranger was Ruthie's first Champion, and several have earned awards since. Currently she has a beautiful Rough Collie named Monte, whose promising show career was interrupted by Covid.

Later, in 1979, she went to a Peter Leveque Condor backpacking trip and that was the first real exposure to serious birding. Although she had intended to study Marine mammals like the Elephant Seal in college, an encounter with a Great Gray Owl on that trip changed her life forever. After the Owl, she took Ornithology classes "from the late great Doc Harris at HSU". Ruthie has worked as a firefighter for CalFire, and is one of the birders that keeps track of Sonoma County birds sending a seasonal report to ABA since the mid-1980s.

Ruthie loves all outdoor adventures and remembers standing next to Rich Stallcup on a pelagic trip when a Short-tailed Albatross flew by, the first seen in many years off the California coast. Rich was jumping up and down and almost tumbled overboard in his excitement. Another lasting memory is, as a child in the open space above Livermore, she happened upon a California Condor feeding on a dead deer. The Condor was taller than the astonished young Ruthie was.

Ruthie would like to add that she has made many life-long friends through birding, too many to mention, but she cherishes them all. ■





ABOUT RROS

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

In compliance with local Sonoma County Covid-19 guidelines, meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month October through April. Location TBA. The most current info can be found at www.RROS.org.

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

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

Dues can be sent to RROS Treasurer Rob O'Donnell, 421 St. Mary Place, Santa Rosa, CA 95409

RROS STAFF

OFFICERS

President: Eugene Hunnenhunn323@comcast.net // 707-981-7301
 Vice President: Jeff Valferjhvalfer@gmail.com // 415-524-3741
 Secretary: Peter Colasanti.....peter_colasanti@yahoo.com // 707-780-7296
 Treasurer: Rob O'Donnell.....robodonnell1@outlook.com // 707-694-9776

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Field Trips: Malcolm Blanchard.....mab@mabco.com // 707-480-2210
 Observations: David A. Hofmannnnamfoh@comcast.net // 707-546-0325
 Christmas Bird Count: Eugene Hunn.....enhunn323@comcast.net // 707-981-7301
 Kite Tales: Eva Valfer.....evaantonvalfer@gmail.com //415-524-3222
 YAMS Coordinator: Lisa Hug.....lisahug@sonic.net // 707-535-9370
 Membership: Rob O'Donnell.....robodonnell1@outlook.com // 707-694-9776
 Website: TBD.....

Kite Tales deadline is the 20th of each month. Observations may be sent to David A. Hofmann.
 All other content may be sent to Eva Valfer.