



# ***CHIRP-N-CHATTER***

**The Newsletter of the Shasta Birding Society**

**A Wintu Country Chapter of the National Audubon Society**



SHASTA BIRDING SOCIETY  
A WINTU COUNTRY CHAPTER OF THE AUDUBON SOCIETY

## **50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE**

**December 10<sup>th</sup> ✦ Turtle Bay Museum ✦ 6:00pm**

Join us in celebrating a half-century of birding, conservation, and our many volunteers. Connect with fellow bird enthusiasts, explore the SBS artifacts, meet founding members, and enjoy some cake!

**GUEST SPEAKER:**

**ERIKA IACONA, SHASTA COUNTY ECOLOGIST**

**"Uncovering the Secret Lives of Northern Saw-whet Owls"**

**MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND  
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**[www.shastabirdingsociety.org](http://www.shastabirdingsociety.org)**



Have you been curious to learn about owl migration? Wednesday, December 10th, Erika Iacona will be presenting on the methods and procedures of banding Northern Saw-whet Owls (*Aegolius acadicus*) as part of a continent-wide demographic and migration study. The Northern Saw-whet Owl is one of the smallest forest owls in North America. Known for their nocturnal and nearly-silent migrations, these owls move in hordes annually across our continent, without hardly being detected! This fall, Erika led Shasta County's fourth monitoring season for Northern Saw-whet Owls. Join us in learning about why this citizen-science is so important, why researching this species requires staying up late under the stars, and an update about the results of our banding efforts over the last four seasons!



Erika is a local ecologist with over a decade of bird banding experience. Her love for owls grew in 2015, when she was introduced to Northern Saw-whet Owl migration monitoring at Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve. In 2022, in cooperation with Shasta Birding Society, AltaCal Audubon Society and Lassen National Park, Erika led Shasta County's first Northern Saw-whet Owl migration monitoring program. Since then, she has received her master bander permit from USGS, and just completed her fourth season leading this program. She is passionate about the big impacts seemingly-small citizen science efforts can make for local and continent-wide datasets.

Shasta Birding Society's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

When: December 10<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00pm

Where: Turtle Bay Museum

Information below on Zoom meeting details.

Shasta Birding Society is inviting all members past and present to celebrate our 50 years in the greater Shasta county area and the North State of California. Our event is limited to two-hours and it will include: Displays of artifacts and memorabilia, testimonies and time for sharing. We will have cake and beverage, and an exciting presentation by Erika Iacona.

In 2022, in cooperation with Shasta Birding Society, AltaCal Audubon Society and Lassen National Park, Erika led Shasta County's first Northern Saw-whet Owl migration monitoring program. We are all proud of the dedication that Erika has put into this wonderful mission, and love that she will be sharing this with us.

Here are a few things for anyone who wants to join this event by Zoom:

Zoom meeting has a special start time: at 6:40pm: This will allow those who can attend in person a chance to capture what we hope are the highlights of our evening when specific speakers of our membership will share moments of our past, present, and our future. Our Zoom time will end after the presentation by Erika.

Mark your calendar and join us:

#### Zoom Details

Shasta Birding Society is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82961463406>

View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion

<https://us06web.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=758b15e9-5d6a-4d3b-a227-c0b9e6dad9c7>

Meeting ID: 829 6146 3406

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One tap mobile

+16694449171,,82961463406# US

+16699006833,,82961463406# US (San Jose)

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Join by SIP

• [82961463406@zoomcrc.com](mailto:82961463406@zoomcrc.com)

Join instructions

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/82961463406/invitations?signature=I61UaO0j9eteDLuqMxN56Kn9hxBK5NvvUpqZV2bxoBU>

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## THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS!

To show how much we appreciate our donors we want to recognize you in our monthly newsletter! These are our recent generous donors: Jerry Andrews, Dawn Smith, Catherine Camp and Larry Jordan - Thank You!

Donations can be made either through our [PayPal link](#) or by check at Shasta Birding Society, PO Box 994533, Redding, CA 96099-4533

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## DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

**Note:** If you have been exposed to COVID-19 within the last 10 days you must provide a certificate of vaccination or negative test results no longer than 72 hours prior to and as a requirement to participating in these events.

### Fall River Lake/McArthur Swamp - Saturday, December 6th, 9am to 1pm



No fee event. We will all meet at Safeway parking area in Burney at 8:30am. Here we might be able to carpool before we reach Fall River Mills.

Walking distance estimated at 1-1.5 miles (1.6-2.4 km), Driving distance (while birding) 6-10 miles (9.7-16.1 km). Our first destination to visit is Fall River Lake which is great for Water Birds and an occasional Raptor. As we approach the town of Fall River Mills, we will turn left on Long St. and head north to the end of the road at a boat launch and picnic area. We will bird from here then slowly head back towards town making stops at each pullout to make observations along the way back to the dam. We will make additional stops below the dam with one final stop at the south end of Long St. to see which species are available at the Bridge St. bridge. Done at Fall River Mills, we will now head out for McArthur. In McArthur, we will be turning north at Main St. then turn

northeast on Rat Farm Rd. We will caravan on Rat Farm making our observations where we should see many raptors as we travel. This road will end at Big Lake Boat Ramp where we will certainly see more water birds. To complete our field trip, we will return back to Main St, and drive northwest on McArthur Swamp Rd continuing our caravan looking for what we can find along the ditch up to the end of the road, where we will reach the Tule River. Then we are done.

We will postpone and possibly reschedule if severe weather is forecasted. Please check our calendar or contact Trip Leader if you have questions. Our calendar is available at: <https://shastabirdingsociety.org/calendar/>

Trip Leader: Dan Bye, contact me at [danbye56@gmail.com](mailto:danbye56@gmail.com) for more information.

## Turtle Bay Second Saturday Beginner Friendly Bird Walk - Saturday, December 13th, 9am to 10am



Always wanted to know more about birds?  
Don't know where to start??  
Not sure the difference between a bird and a plane???

 **WE GOT YOU COVERED!** 

@shastabirding society Shasta Birding Society Presents www.shastabirding society.org

**SECOND SATURDAY  
BEGINNER AND  
FAMILY FRIENDLY  
BIRD WALKS**

JOIN us at the benches by the Sundial bridge at 9 am to walk the Turtle Bay Sanctuary Trail and discover the hidden world of birds all around us!

Always wanted to learn more about birds but not sure where to start? Join Shasta Birding Society for a family and beginner friendly bird walk at the benches by the Sundial bridge at 9 am to walk the Turtle Bay Sanctuary Trail and discover the hidden world of birds all around us! The trail is wheelchair accessible and benches are found throughout. The walk will last about an hour. Binoculars are provided. Join us as we take a leisurely one mile walk along the Turtle Bay Sanctuary Trail. This walk will begin at the south end of the Sundial Bridge and take us along the Sacramento River to view waterfowl, woodpeckers, raptors,

sparrows, and more. One of the best attributes of this trail is that we cannot only enjoy the excellent views along the river, on the other side of the trail we will be able to find several species of songbirds. Raptors are common in the area, including the Bald Eagle and Osprey. Park in the [Turtle Bay Parking Lot](#). Rain cancels.

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## THE CONSERVATION CORNER

### from Bruce Webb

For many years under previous administrations the definition included water courses and ponds which may dry up during summer but have eventual connectivity during the wet season to a “navigable” stream. These ephemeral, seasonal or periodic wetlands provide essential habitat benefits to birds. Unfortunately the definition of WOTUS advocated by the current Administration ignores wetlands’ benefits to birds and other wildlife and furthermore ignores the very reasons wetlands are protected under the CWA. The EPA now proposes to issue a rule change removing seasonal wetlands from the definition. This means industries, home builders, and federal and State agencies can fill, alter and build on these wetland features, despite their importance to birds and wildlife, without a permit from any federal agency or consequences for the losses in habitat AND bird populations. The change would likely accelerate wetland losses and have devastating impacts on many bird and other wildlife species.

The EPA rule change has begun a 45 day public comment period. Deadline to comment is January 5, 2026. To comment please see

<https://www.regulations.gov/document/EPA-HQ-OW-2025-0322-0001>



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## TRIP REPORTS

### Kum Bey Xerel - Saturday, November 1st



Eight eager Birders gathered for a cool but beautiful morning to tour along the Sacramento River in pursuit to see how many species we could find. We have one huge shout out to Ren, a new birder that joined our little troupe. We think she has a cool name which sounds like the Wren.

Temperatures certainly did not slow down any bird activities as we walked down the paved section of this walk. The more notables were Mourning Dove, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, American Herring Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Egret, Great Blue Heron, the Acorn, Downy, Nuttall's Woodpeckers, Belted Kingfisher, Black Phoebe, Common Raven, Oak Titmouse, Northern House Wren, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, the White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Savannah Sparrows, the California and Spotted Towhees, and Yellow-rumped Warbler.

When we reached the end of the paved trail section, we continued our journey on the path through BLM property which diverts a little more inland from the river. This part of the trail invited opportunities to see Mourning Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, Turkey Vulture, the Red-shoulder and Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Flicker, Bushtit, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren, Western Bluebird, Hermit Thrush, American Robin, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, the Red-winged and Brewer's Blackbirds, and Orange-crowned Warbler. All in a morning of fun. eBirders: Checkout our link to see our post which shares many photos on some of our observations. <https://ebird.org/checklist/S282384041>

### Turtle Bay Second Saturday Beginning Friendly Bird Walk, November 8th



After days of rain, we enjoyed a beautiful clear day at Turtle Bay on our Saturday morning beginner friendly bird walk. Five of us enjoyed our somewhat quiet walk seeing only 12 species, mostly waterfowl. It was hard to see anything other than Buffleheads. Dozens of buffleheads. There were also mallards, mergansers, double crested cormorants, and turkey vultures warming their wings on the rocks by the river. We got to see ruby-crowned kinglets, acorn woodpeckers, tree swallows,

northern flickers, white-breasted nuthatches, white-crowned sparrows and the usual scrub jays.

## **Clover Creek Preserve with Northern California Audubon - November 15th**



On a clear Saturday morning with no wind and a clear sky, ten eager birders found fifty species in a little over two hours! The morning began with a large flock of Great-tailed Grackles (38) causing quite the ruckus before they moved on. We counted a Red-tailed and a Red-shouldered Hawk as well as a Sharp-shinned Hawk and American Kestrel. We also found fourteen Northern Flickers including an intergrade male with a red malar and red naped crescent with

yellow shafted wings. Killdeer, Wilson's Snipe, Greater Yellowlegs and an American Pipit wandered the shores while the ducks frolicked in deeper water and Western Bluebirds gave us plenty of blue.

## **Coleman Hatchery and Battle Creek CDFW Area - November 22nd**



This particular day started out well with cool temperatures, no wind, and clear skies. And to top it off, we had 11 excited Birders ready for launch at the Coleman Fish Hatchery parking lot. With our group we had our returning Birder from Minnesota, Steve, who brought his better-half Ann along, and we learned that they just moved to the Redding area too. We also had a newcomer from SoCal, Amberly with AmeriCorps who will be staying one year in the Mt Shasta area.

The first bird of the day we noticed in great numbers, were the Turkey Vultures roosting in many trees around us and in some instances, we saw large numbers in a single tree as well. As we walked the Coleman Fish Hatchery Campus we saw plenty of busy birds actively moving about like Killdeer, Belted Kingfisher, the Acorn and Nuttall's Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Black Phoebe, California Scrub-Jay, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, European Starling, American Robin, and Brewer's Blackbird. As we approached the gate to enter the pond section, a call went out, "Green Heron!", called out a few times! To our surprise, indeed there was a Green Heron flying over the fingerling water tanks and into a tree that was easily in our view. However, that Heron was so stealthy in the crown of that tree, we could no longer see it. As we moved on, we saw the White-crowned and Golden-crowned sparrow at the pond area entry. The first two ponds were very quiet with no movement on the surface, but suddenly two Wilson Snipes flew over our heads heading west and beyond. We trekked over towards Battle Creek, and here we started to see Oak Titmouse, the Northern House and Bewick's Wren, the Fox and Lincoln's Sparrow, and Spotted Towhee. At the end of this short trail a Bald Eagle on a nest suddenly flew away. Our friend Lynn moved into position ahead of the crowd to setup her scope, and there waiting for was the resident Bald Eagle pair sitting together for all of us to watch.

Now, we are 8 still excited Birders ready to continue through a maze of ponds to find more birds. From a greater distance away from the Bald Eagles, someone spotted a smaller and brave mid-size raptor seating behind the female eagle. The scope came out and we all took a look to ID a Sharp-shinned Hawk, "sweet!". The final ponds gave us a glimpse of Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Ring-necked Duck, Male Common Merganser, California Quail, several Virginia Rail and Sora sounding off with their funny laughter. As we left the final journey of the Coleman sections, a single Northern Mockingbird guided us to the end of our first part with a total of 41 species.

The continuing 8 Birders braved a much slower section of Battle Creek Wildlife Area with many of the same species and some new ones like, Common Merganser all female swimming in the creek, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Downy Woodpecker, Marsh Wren, Hermit Thrush, Song Sparrow, Red-winged Blackbird, and Orange-crowned Warbler. Since we completed the original walk, we shuttled all drivers back to Coleman. On this leg of the trip, we saw 29 species.

Then there was 2 weary Birders ready for more adventured to the Oakland Tree path of Battle Creek Wildlife Area. This area was heavily damaged in last spring's storms, but the birding was pretty fair with sightings of the Red-tailed and Ferruginous Hawk, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, and Cedar Waxwing. This short walk brought in 27 species to that count.

It was fun for all, and our total species count was 50.

If any eBirders want to view our trip, please check our public access Trip Report by clicking this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/435667>

Keep on birding!

## **Gray Lodge Wildlife Area - November 29th**



Ten eager birders arrived to a cold, foggy destination after watching thousands of waterfowl and raptors along the back roads to Gray Lodge. We checked in at the main entrance and began our first trip report on the road to parking lot 14, the usual meeting place for this wildlife area. A few in our group had never been to this incredible wildlife area and those of us who visit regularly noticed immediately that there were very few ducks on the water. Although the numbers of waterfowl in and around the ponds was lower than normal, we seem to have found most of the species we expected to find.

When we arrived at the parking area we found Lynn and several of our group already scoping the adjacent pond where a river otter was frolicking as well as several Double-crested Cormorants, a couple of Green Herons, and Black-crowned Night-Herons! As we stood there enjoying the scene, several flocks of hundreds of Red-winged Blackbirds flew over our heads. Overhead in the parking lot was a Red-tailed Hawk and a Red-shouldered Hawk having a conversation while we got our first sight of several duck species. The overwhelming duck species of the day was the American Wigeon, followed by Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, Bufflehead, Gadwall, Mallard,



Ring-necked Duck, Green-winged Teal, and Cinnamon Teal. Large numbers of Snow Geese flew overhead but only thirty-five Greater White-fronted Geese were seen. American Coots were abundant of course but we also counted thirty-four Common Gallinule!

On the Flyway Loop Trail we found two Virginia Rails and three Sora, one of which was actually seen! Also seen were many Black-necked Stilts and Killdeer, as well as Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Snipe and Least Sandpiper. Marsh Wrens were both seen and heard around the trail where we also saw one Phainopepla! Golden and White-crowned Sparrows tallied in the twenties followed by Song, Savannah and Lincoln Sparrows. The Yellow-rumped Warbler was the overwhelming warbler species seen with sixty-four sightings followed by four Orange-crowned and two Common Yellowthroats. The last leg of that trail is where the only Great Horned Owl was spotted sleeping in a large tree behind excellent cover. In the reeds near the end of the Flyway Loop Trail is where the Black-crowned Night-Herons rest and sleep during the day. We tallied thirty-two Black-crowned Night Herons that we could see. Imagine how many more there may be in that huge stand of reeds!

The auto tour loop gave us a few more species including a Sharp-shinned Hawk that flew from the top of a sign to the ground nearby. We got some decent looks at it before it flew right by us and was gone. We heard another Virginia Rail, saw a few more Herring and Ring-billed Gulls, an American Kestrel feeding on a rodent and eight Great-tailed Grackles!

Thank you all for making our Gray Lodge Wildlife Area trip a lot of fun with a great group of warm and friendly birders! We tallied a total of seventy-two species observed!

If any eBirders want to view our trip, which not only give the stats, but show all the photos taken, please check our public access Trip Report by clicking this link:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/437477>

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