

## Napa Solano Audubon Society Birding Notes #11

Hello NSAS friends and members –

Spring is coming! This week the Tree Swallows were back at American Canyon Wetlands and we saw an Allen's Hummingbird that has just returned from its winter getaway. Also, a beautifully blue male Western Bluebird was checking out a nesting box. Spring is just about here, and the early migration is underway.

**Note #1 – “Rollback of Migratory Bird Protections has been Delayed.”** The rollback of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) that was set to take effect February 8 has been delayed. The rule change—which would dramatically weaken the century-old MBTA—is being fully reassessed by the U.S. Department of the Interior and **a public comment period is now open until March 1.** The National Audubon Society is asking you to act now to help ensure critical bird protections will be reinstated. See this website for information about this legislation and for ***a link that will enable you to provide input and comments now.*** It's important that we make our views known on this critical issue. [https://www.audubon.org/news/rollback-migratory-bird-protections-delayed-new-administration?ms=policy-adv-email-ea-x-engagement\\_20210213\\_advisory&utm\\_source=ea&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=engagement\\_20210213\\_advisory&emci=8d3dcca6-6b6d-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&emdi=16bc238e-236e-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&ceid=3257812](https://www.audubon.org/news/rollback-migratory-bird-protections-delayed-new-administration?ms=policy-adv-email-ea-x-engagement_20210213_advisory&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20210213_advisory&emci=8d3dcca6-6b6d-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&emdi=16bc238e-236e-eb11-9889-00155d43c992&ceid=3257812)

**Note #2 – “Hopefully you participated in the GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT on February 12 to 15.”** As of the start of the last day of the Count, participation had been tremendous with nearly a quarter-million eBird checklists having been submitted and ***close to 6,000 of the world's bird species having been observed.*** Here are a few pictures that were submitted with the checklists. I especially like the picture of the Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush (India) by Himanshu Gupta. More photos from this year's Bird Count can be seen on the Cornell Facebook album at [https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=cornellbirds&set=a.4386004864777970&utm\\_campaign=GBBC%202021%](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?vanity=cornellbirds&set=a.4386004864777970&utm_campaign=GBBC%202021%20)

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Photos via Macaulay Library, clockwise from top left: Chestnut-crowned Laughingthrush (India) by Himanshu Gupta; Carolina Wren (Vermont) by Kyle Tansley; Red Kite (Spain) by Mu Sano; Lark Sparrow (Ontario) by Nathan Hood.

**Note #3 – “This is a follow up to the very enjoyable and interesting presentation in January by Alvaro Jaramillo.”** If you missed the talk, the recording is posted on Youtube. You can find the Youtube link on our website at <http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/Main/2020-21SpeakerSeriesPage>.

- On February 12 Alvaro posted a message to a number of Bay Area birding chat websites and I wanted to pass along his message to you. *If you are interested in a Pelagic trip*, he has put together a schedule of preliminary dates for pelagic trips for this season. Right now, *he is taking names/emails for reservations*. The dates for the trips can be found at <https://www.alvarosadventures.com/pelagic-dates-2021.html>. He also has a page on how to pick a trip which can be found at <https://www.alvarosadventures.com/how-to-pick-a-pelagic-trip.html>.
- Alvaro is also offering a workshop on owls and nightbirds. This workshop will include visual and acoustic identification, as well as lots of detail on their ecology, predator-prey relationships, migration, taxonomy, behavior and habitat. To sign up and for more information about this workshop check out <https://www.alvarosadventures.com/events.html>.
- As an added note, I recently heard from Jennifer Lamb who is a birder from St. Helena. She indicated, "I just completed Alvaro's class on sparrows - what an amazing and thorough class! ***I highly recommend any of his future classes.***"
- And, in honor of owls, Mia McPherson recently posted these photos of a Barn Owl and a Great-horned Owl. *To see all four owl pictures, go to <https://www.onthewingphotography.com/wings/2021/02/07/its-superb-owl-sunday/>*



#### **Note #4 – “In case you missed it, February 2 was WORLD WETLANDS DAY”**

**What Are Wetlands?** Wetlands are areas where water (either freshwater or salt water) covers the soil or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year, including during the growing season. Water saturation largely determines how the soil develops and the types of plant and animal communities living in and on the soil. Wetlands may support both aquatic and terrestrial species. The prolonged presence of water creates conditions that favor the growth of specially adapted plants.

**Why wetlands are crucial for a healthy planet?** The health of people on our planet depends on healthy wetlands. “40% of the world’s species live or breed in wetlands, yet they are **disappearing three times faster** than forests,” says the UN Development. Here’s why wetlands matter:

- Wetlands are **“nurseries of life”** – 40% of animals breed in wetlands
- Wetlands are **“kidneys of the earth”** – they clean the environment of pollutants
- Wetlands **“matter for climate change”** – they store 30% of land based carbon
- Wetlands **“minimize disaster risks”** – they absorb storm surge
- Wetlands **“provide livelihood to one billion people”** – their ecosystems are worth USD 47 trillion annually

It makes sense to preserve, restore, and protect these wetlands for us, for the planet, and for future generations. The bay area has a large amount of wetland areas that are disappearing in the face of new housing and business developments. NSAS needs your help to do its part to aid in the protection of these open spaces.

The previous info was taken from Mia McPherson’s website where she has posted **a wonderful display of photos of animals, plants, insects, and birds that are dependent on wetlands** during part or all of their lives. To view these images, check out her website at <https://www.onthewingphotography.com/wings/2021/02/02/world-wetlands-day-2021/>

**Note #5 – “This is a story that was forwarded to us by Kathleen McCreedy.”**

- The story below was posted by one of my neighbors in our St. Helena NextDoor platform. It was so much fun reading it that I wanted to forward it along to you.

**Lonely and hungry birds.** My parakeet, Ernie, makes his daytime perch in my imitation sunflower arrangement. He flies out of his cage in the morning, sets up camp with his favorite plastic rod and commences hassling the birds outside, but outdoors has become silent lately. I kept waiting for the impending earthquake, but now I understand--salmonella, another gift from 2020!

Yesterday we met a new neighbor. Ernie was chirping like crazy and making sounds I had never heard. I walked into the living room just as a hawk crashed into the window, right in front of Ernie. The attack scared both of us, causing Ernie to make a few loops around the house, then divebomb me a couple of times. I went out to check if there was a stunned bird of prey in my hydrangeas or pots of roses, all the while Ernie was yelling at me from the other side of the glass to be careful. Of course, I was divebombed when I came back in. So, we set up post again, he on his look-out, I in my chair reading, struggling to stay off "YouTube."

I looked up at Ernie's screeching, and there was the bird, flying at Ernie, but pulling up just in time. I could see the bands of brown, white, and black on its tail as it made a couple of passes. Ernie, in the meantime, flew around the living room making...happy sounds? The punk was enjoying baiting the bird of prey! Ernie divebombed me several more times, and I could feel the glee in his flight. Then my bully bird flew back and forth at the side windows and the hawk took the bait. But this time the bird of prey outclassed my spoiled brat. The wild bird did a beautiful vertical winged flyby, and we never saw him again. But he was not to be forgotten.

I was reminded of him later when I went outside to check my mail. There was a big, white splooch on the seat of my walker that I leave on the front porch. Nothing's fair in love and war.

Author: Janis Gay of St. Helena, CA

- If you have ideas for what can be done to make the NSAS a better birding resource for our community or have Birding Notes and/or Pictures to share with the rest of the NSAS community please send them to Tom Slyker at [SolanoBirder@gmail.com](mailto:SolanoBirder@gmail.com).
- Be sure to check the calendar at the NSAS website (<http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/>) for meeting announcements and Field Trip updates.
- This is issue number 11 of our biweekly series. Past copies of Birding Notes are posted on the NSAS website at <http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/>
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