

Napa Solano Audubon Society Birding Notes #19

Hello NSAS friends and members –

Hope you are enjoying your summer activities. Nesting birds are now beginning to come together in large flocks. Breeding season songs are dying away. Tree Swallows are beginning to head south. And the shore birds are returning to the wetlands. On Friday we were watching a flock of ~ 5,000 Sandpipers flying back and forth along Highway 37. A wonderful sight to see!

Note #1 – NSAS announcements – There are no announcements as we are all enjoying our summer break. We'll start up with activities again at the end of August when the fall migration of birds will be moving through the Bay Area.

Note #2 – *Are you interested in participating in a weekly bird walk? If yes, this may be of interest to you.*

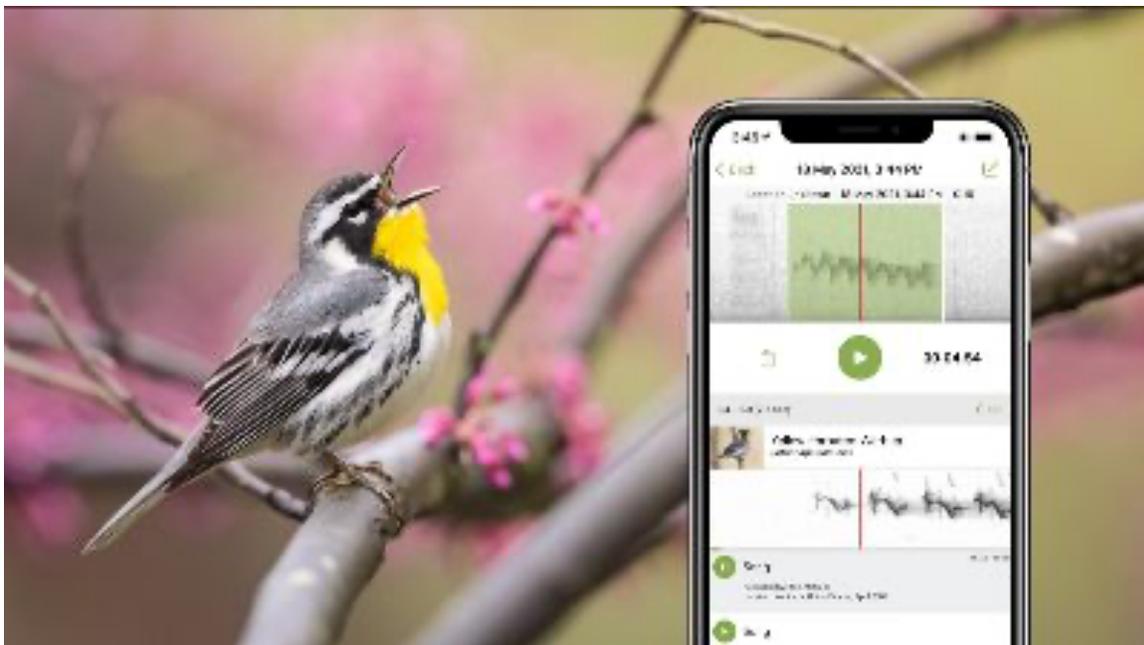
Every Wednesday morning, we do a bird walk at Benicia Community Park. There are 3 stopping points during the walk where we watch for a specific subset of birds for a 15-minute time period. Our observations are recorded on the Nature's Notebook website and are used by researchers who are monitoring climate change in North America. If you'd like to join us for these walks, please contact Tom Slyker at tcslyker@comcast.net. No birding experience is required. If you don't have binoculars, we can provide them for use during the walk.

Details for the walk are:

- We start at 7:30 AM to avoid the morning traffic at Matthew Turner School.
- We walk every Wednesday, 52 weeks a year. The exception is that we won't bird in the rain.
- We meet at the entrance to the park on Kearney Street.
- Our 3 stopping points are at the Kearney Wetlands, in the Community Park, and at the south end of Lake Herman.
- Total walking distance is ~ 2 miles.

- Total time spent during the walk is ~ 2 to 3 hours depending on the level of birding activity that day.
- The eBird checklist for each walk ends up at ~ 30 species so you will have a chance to see a good variety of birds. Species highlights so far are the Bald Eagle, nesting Red-tailed Hawks, nesting Western Kingbirds, Baltimore and Hooded Orioles, a predatory Cooper’s Hawk, and lots of Robins, Blackbirds, and House Finches.
- For me, the real benefit is that this is “Patch Birding.” By birding your patch every week, you begin to learn the rhythms of the area you are birding. You see the arrival of the spring migrants and the budding of the trees. You find the nesting sites for different birds and watch them raise their young. You record the departure of the fall migrants and the arrival of winter visitors like White-crowned Sparrows. It is a wonderful way to become more in tune with the changing of the seasons as the year moves on.

Note #3 – The Merlin App can now be used to identify bird songs!



Yellow-throated Warbler by Ryan Sanderson/Macaulay Library

Merlin is a free app from Cornell Lab of Ornithology. It should be on the cell phone of every birder. It is an invaluable resource for identifying birds. By

simply answering 5 quick questions about your location / habitat and the bird you are looking at, Merlin will provide you with pictures of the most likely birds that match your information based on the time of year.

Now Merlin has added a new “Sound ID” feature. If you can get close to a bird and record it’s call or song, Merlin will help you ID the bird. And you can record sounds in the field away from a cellular hot spot and then ID the bird later when you get home. It is a great new addition to the Merlin capabilities. For more information about Merlin’s Sound ID, check out the Cornell Labs website at https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/whats-that-bird-song-merlin-bird-id-can-tell-you/?utm_source=Cornell%20Lab%20eNews&utm_campaign=f910527ad4-Cornell-Lab-eNews-July-2021&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_47588b5758-f910527ad4-320297257.

Note #4 – *Items of interest to me and hopefully to you –*

- Do you want to see ***Bird Photography*** that will *take your breath away*? Audubon has announced their list of winners of the 2021 photography contest and there are some stunning photos to be found on their website. I especially liked the Video Award Winner by Bill Bryant that showed a hovering Red-tailed Hawk. The bird twitches its body and wings to maintain position, but it’s head never moves during the 17-second video. It was amazing to see. Enjoy the winning images at https://www.audubon.org/magazine/summer-2021/the-2021-audubon-photography-awards-winners-and?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-newsletter-engagement_20210707_audubon-magazine_summer-2021-issue&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20210707_audubon-magazine&utm_content=summer-2021-issue&emci=98f2e3a1-40df-eb11-a7ad-501ac57b8fa7&emdi=ba586294-47df-eb11-a7ad-501ac57b8fa7&ceid=3257812.
- Sue Johnson has been keeping us up to date with reports from her friend about the breeding Green Herons of the Benicia marina. There is now a new generation of Green Heron chicks! This second clutch of chicks joins the three juveniles with almost adult plumage from the first generation. Pictures of both the first-generation birds and a fuzzy-headed chick from the second

generation climbing through a tree are included below. Sue reports that there are at least three Green Heron nests in the area.



Green Heron nestling at the Benicia marina – photo from Sue Johnson, July 12



Green Heron fledged young – photo from Sue Johnson, July 1

- Pinnacles National Park reported via email that the raptor breeding season is over for 2021. Prairie falcons (PRFA) and peregrine falcons (PEFA) have finished nesting in cliff cavity sites and the raptor advisories that limit areas of access have been lifted for the remainder of the year. For the 2021 season they reported eight PRFA pairs and four PEFA pairs successfully nested and fledged young. This has been the most productive year for breeding falcons at Pinnacles since 2013, with falcon nests fledging 31 PRFA and 9 PEFA young. There were nine beautiful raptor pictures included with the email message. Two images are included below. If you would like to see all of the photos, email me at tcslyker@comcast.net and I will forward the message to you.



Prairie falcons (PRFA) nestlings from Gavin Emmons - Pinnacles NP



Prairie falcon (PRFA) from Gavin Emmons - Pinnacles NP

Note #5 – *Five incredible ways birds change their bodies for Spring and Fall migration* –

With the fall migration season beginning, I thought it would be a good time to share an article that was published by the Audubon organization. It is amazing what changes birds undertake to be able to migrate. They are able to manipulate their bodies in ways we could never consider. They are utterly amazing in their adaptations to live the way they do. *“To power perilous journeys, birds undergo extreme feats like doubling their body weight and rearranging or even consuming their internal organs.”* The article that describes all of the incredible changes that occur in birds during the migration process can be found at <https://www.audubon.org/news/five-incredible-ways-birds-change-their-bodies-spring-and-fall-migration>.

- 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.
- 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 19 of our biweekly series. Past copies of Birding Notes are posted on the NSAS website at <http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/>
- If you would like to unsubscribe from receiving all email communications for NSAS, including these Birding Notes, please send your unsubscribe request to SolanoBirder@gmail.com.