

Napa Solano Audubon Society Birding Notes #5

Hello NSAS friends and members –

An early “Happy Thanksgiving” to all! Be sure to stay safe as you celebrate this holiday season. Enjoy!

Note #1 – Remember the Christmas Bird Counts are quickly approaching! More information about the Angwin (January 1) and Benicia (December 14) CBC’s will be provided in the November issue of our “*Song Sparrow Newsletter*.” We need as many pairs of eyes and ears as is possible to help count birds on these special days. Please think about volunteering to help with one or both counts. If you are interested in joining us for a day of birding please e-mail Tom Slyker at SolanoBirder@gmail.com.

Note #2 – What’s being seen locally –

There have been 3 incredible sightings recently in our counties – see below for details. If you are looking for a way to learn about these sightings when they happen, check out our November “*Song Sparrow Newsletter*.” There will be an article in the Newsletter describing methods for keeping up with new sightings in our area.

- A Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was sighted at American Canyon Wetlands on the mudflats across from the bridge. It was seen on the morning of Thursday, October 22nd by Leo Edson a Sacramento birder. Unfortunately, it left with the rising tide and wasn’t seen again in the area. Check out Leo’s e-bird report at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75234085> for information about his sighting.
- A Snow Bunting was found and filmed by Susana de Trapaga on Saturday, October 24th at Lynch Canyon. This bird stuck around for a few days and was seen by multiple NSAS birders. The last sighting was on October 26th. More recently a Snow Bunting was sighted on the coast near Bodega Bay. It may have been the same bird that is moving around the area. Check out this e-bird report at <https://ebird.org/checklist/S75362170> for close up pictures of the bird and a description of the discovery at Lynch.

- A Tropical Kingbird was discovered by Scott Restivo, Eric Pilotte, and Roger Muscat on October 31st at Lake Dalwigk Park in Vallejo. Scott's description of the find from his e-bird posting was:

“Yellowish bird flew overhead, I knew it was something unusual. Eric Pilotte and I found it in a tree and got a brief look, enough to know it was a kingbird with a very yellow bellow, gray cheeks. Eric Pilotte and I thought it was a Tropical Kingbird and tried to find it again in the marsh. Eric alerted Roger Muskat who drove over and found it in the picnic area while Eric and I were still trying to relocate it in the reeds. We went over the picnic area, and the bird was perched on a post for excellent views. Roger got a picture. "Big honking bill," said Roger. Nice find in Solano County!”

This bird (see pictures from Mark Stephenson) has remained at Lake Dalwigk and as of November 11th people are still reporting sightings.



- Another sighting that is not so local, but is a rarity, was seen by Mark Stephenson on a recent pelagic trip. The bird was a Nazca Booby. See the photo below for the close up of this bird. For details about Mark's pelagic adventures check out the story in the Fall 2020 "*Song Sparrow Newsletter*" at <http://www.napasolanoaudubon.com/Newsletters/Current>



Note #3 – Mute Swans face extermination

A small group observes birds on a weekly basis at American Canyon Wetlands (ACW) as part of the CA Birdseasons project for monitoring climate change. One of the continuous conversations that we have carried on over the years is about the presence of Mute Swans at the Wetlands. If you talk to the walkers at the site, they like to see these big birds and are eager to see them during their walks. If you talk to the birders you hear about the negative impact this invasive species has on the local environment. One of the things all can agree on is that these birds do multiply. A few years ago, we might have seen 10 – 15 birds during our ACW walks. Now we are counting at least 50 of these birds at this location. A long-range concern is what impact will this growing population have on all the other species that call ACW their home. If you check out these two websites, you

will find information on how others are dealing with this issue at Clear Lake in California and in the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland.

<https://www.record-bee.com/2020/10/20/lakes-mute-swans-face-extirpation/>

<https://www.sej.org/publications/national-us/when-mute-swans-become-a-menace-what-should-be-done>

As the author concludes, "It's a beautiful species, and people like to see them, but they are an ecological liability for the Chesapeake. If we are going to restore and conserve places and the species that go with them, we have to get serious about managing these swans."

Note #4 – Two notes from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology

- Birding Notes #3 highlighted the upcoming "October Big Day." Now Cornell has reported that on October 17th, more than 32,000 people around the globe scanned the skies, watched their gardens, and explored local patches as part of a worldwide celebration of birds. Together, participants in this year's October Big Day reported an astonishing 7,097 species on nearly 78,000 checklists. Hopefully, you had a chance to participate this year and were one of the 32,000 birders who contributed to this year's BIG DAY.
- Today I received an e-mail from Cornell that asked "Do you need a way to relax while at home this winter? Try Project FeederWatch. We will help you learn the birds around your home and track them over time, while you contribute to our understanding of birds continentwide. **Join now because FeederWatch starts this weekend on Saturday, November 14!**"

It does cost a few dollars to join, however there looks to be a number of interesting items being provided to make the investment worthwhile. If you have a feeder in your yard, or just enjoy watching the birds in your bushes, check out the FeederWatch program info at this website. It will give you an easy way to start using the e-bird app to share your sightings with others and it will help to increase the amount of information available to researchers who study the effects of climate on bird populations.

You can learn more about the program at - https://feederwatch.org/about/project-overview/?utm_campaign=FeederWatch&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=99602658&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9UA1_TWRBnCdK66bWVTByLCL_FJtwQE4ephQL-6Q_bd8WcT&wSRmeOJpsorjONychgtBwquTGM353prDCfx_d5Uqkv2Zw&utm_content=99602658&utm_source=hs_email

Note #5 – If you don't have a bird feeder for the FeederWatch program, check out this video from Audubon on how to create a feeder from a pumpkin.

https://www.audubon.org/news/pumpkin-bird-feeder-makes-happy-harvest-birds?ms=digital-eng-email-ea-x-engagement_20201031_eng-email_diy-pumpkin-feeder&utm_source=ea&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=engagement_20201031_eng-email&utm_content=diy-pumpkin-feeder&emci=636cca1b-e51a-eb11-96f5-00155d03bda0&emdi=bb75a5f9-791b-eb11-96f5-00155d03bda0&ceid=3257812

- 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 5 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 these birding notes please send your unsubscribe request to SolanoBirder@gmail.com.