ALTACAL Programs

Programs for the general community are normally held on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m., at the Chico Creek Nature Center, 1968 E. 8th St. Chico.

In December the program is held on the second Monday and in July and August there are no programs.

December
Monday, December 14, 2015  6:30 p.m.
Chico Creek Nature Center

MEMBERS’ SLIDE SHOW

December is a special month and we will celebrate it at the Altacal Program by inviting members and friends to share some photos they have taken over the past year. Our annual Members’ Slide Show is a favorite program for many. There are always some great new, and sometimes old, pictures to see and tales of how they were gotten, to hear. Join in and bring a few of your own photos of birds/wildlife/nature (on disk or memory stick). We will have plenty of time for all who want to participate.

Also at this program we will hear about plans for the annual Chico and Oroville Christmas Bird Counts taking place over the following two weekends. Call or email Jennifer Patten, 530 345-9356 (jpchico@sbcglobal.net) so we know ahead of time how many will be showing photos.

Standing flock by Steve McDonald

January
Wednesday - Sunday, January 27 - 31, 2016
Chico, California

The 17th Annual SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL of the Pacific Flyway

Altacal Audubon is having their biggest program of the year! All sorts of wonders are in store for birders and outdoor enthusiasts of all skills and ages at the 17th Annual Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway, Wednesday-Sunday, January 27-31, 2016.

There are things to do - take a hike, stroll along a river and see a White-tailed Kite. Learn a duck call, view a swan, and hear the cranes calling on and on. Snow Geese galore, people don’t get bored, when you see thousands take off and soar! Eagles, hawks, falcons, and owls,- raptors are what they’re called.

With over 60 field trips, workshops and presentations, free family activities, exhibits, vendors, and the amazing Pacific Flyway Art Exhibit in downtown Chico, the festival is a great opportunity to spend the day or all five-days learning about the natural wonders of the Pacific Flyway and its inhabitants.

(continued on page 2.)
GEORGE LEPP, joins the Festival this year as our Keynote Speaker at the “Gathering of Wings” Banquet & Silent Auction. George will share some of his greatest bird photography success stories, and some very funny failures, as he employs creative tactics and techniques to get the winning shot in locations around the world in “True Confessions of a Wild Bird Photographer”. Don’t miss this special event!

Visit our website for program and registration information. For early notification of our exciting field trip and workshop schedule, be sure you are on our email list and “like” us on Facebook as that is a great source for instant Festival information and updates.

snowgoosefestival.org
info@snowgoosefestival.org
530-345-1865
Snow Goose Festival, P. O. Box 1063
Chico, CA 95927
With the Snow Goose Festival just around the corner it’s a good time to extend a sincere dose of gratitude to all the Altacal Officers and Members who play such critical roles in making this Festival the premier event it is. Altacal is fortunate to have many birders who possess such pertinent and thorough knowledge about our birds and their habitat, and these folks are so willing and able to share that knowledge with nature lovers of all levels.

Altacal thanks each and every one of them as I am sure you will. Altacal is likewise so fortunate and indebted to Jennifer Patten, SGF Coordinator, Kathy Trevino and all the members of the Steering Committee for their time, talents and dedication. It is already shaping up to be another exceptional Festival celebrating the Pacific Flyway and all that it entails.

There is lots to be positive about as we progress into the second half of the decade. For instance: there is now a National Monument (berryessasnowmountain.org) in our backyard; also the pipeline will not be built - for now anyway; and Dawn’s Saw-whet Owl monitoring efforts finished a most successful year of banding back at the BCCER; plus, Altacal has some great bird friendly coffee to offer, to name just a few.

Wishing all of us a wonderful, wet, winter with still many hours of Happy Birding.
UPCOMING
Birding Trips

All of our field trips are open to beginning birders. Anyone with a sense of wonder is welcome to participate.

January 16, Saturday
INDIAN FISHERIES AND WASHOUT
Trip Leader: Matt Forster
Meet at Indian Fisheries parking lot at the intersection of W. Sacramento Ave and River Rd at 8:30 am. We’ll walk the short trail and see lots of woodpeckers, resident titmice, nuthatches, herons and egrets. Then we’ll drive over to the washout to see if we can find some shorebirds and maybe some diving ducks. Contact Matt Forster at 619-347-2269 or findforster@yahoo.com.

LLANO SECO UNIT REOPENED
See page 5. Photos by Steve McDonald

Christmas BIRD COUNTS

December 19, Saturday
CHICO CBC
COMPILER: Mary Muchowski
530-228-0625 or mmuchowski@earthlink.net
All levels of birders are welcome. Bring warm clothes, hiking shoes, lunch, bird books and binoculars. You will be assigned an area and spend the day counting birds in this area. RSVPs encouraged!

MEET at 7:30 am
Chico Creek Nature Center, 1968 East 8th Street, Chico
COMPI-LATION DINNER 4:30 pm TBA

January 3, Sunday
OROVILLE CBC
COMPILER: Gaylord Grams
530-533-1624 or gg2canoe@yahoo.com
All levels of birders are welcome. Beginners will be paired up with experienced birders. You will be assigned an area and spend the day counting birds in this area. Bring warm clothes, hiking shoes, lunch, bird books and binoculars. To do a half-day, contact Gaylord Grams ahead of time.

MEET at 7:30 am
Butte County Ag Commissioners Office, 316 Nelson Ave, Oroville east of Hwy 70 across from Home Depot.
COMPI-LATION DINNER 4:30 pm at 2330 Nevada Ave

January 16, Saturday
RED BLUFF CBC
COMPILER: Karen Scheuermann,
Cottonwood, Tehama Co, CA
530-347-1687 or karens2020@gmail.com
Please let Karen know if you plan to join the count
Altacal’s Northern Saw-whet Owl (NSWO) monitoring project was up and running this Oct - Nov 2015 due to the resolve of new Research Foundation Reserve Director, Jamie Visinoni. She managed to work through the entanglement of problems from an earlier accident that closed the Reserve to research in the 2014 season. Our banding team was very excited to have Jamie and family see our project, now in its 10th year. We think daughter Izzy brought us a good number of owls that night and she got to release three of them, naming one owl Crystal as she sent her off into the night.

We had an influx of talented new volunteers this season (Navit, Wyatt, Erika and Julie), and returning veterans (Steve, Sheila, Ken). We said goodbye to right-hand-woman Raina King and volunteer Tyler (to Idaho), and on sabbatical (in Costa Rica!) Mike Fisher. Volunteer Ken Sobon brought his family and while we waited 2 hours for the first owl (followed by 5!), we were entertained by the Taurid meteor showers, lighting up a dark and starry sky, and Ken’s kids, full of life and dreams, fun! Then the owls came, inspiring their creativity. This cool poster-art was the result of their encounter with owls.

The LLANO SECO UNIT reopened on November 2, 2015 after renovations over the summer. A formal grand opening ceremony will this winter occur for the public with family activities. The first platform was rebuilt to enhance wildlife viewing and increase access for disabled visitors. Other upgrades include a new ADA restroom, and a solar security light at the parking area. In addition, the second platform along the trail was replaced with an elevated earthen mound to view wildlife on the interior of the Unit. (see page 4.)

The Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) will be offering a variety of free weekend programs through the winter. The programs include birding tram tours, fly-offs, naturalist at the platform, owl prows and more will be offered. New for this year will include a variety of activities for families and kids during the holiday break from December 19 - January 3.

These free and unique programs provide exciting opportunities for families to learn and experience some of the incredible and memorable things that the Refuge has to offer. On tram tours, a refuge guide will assist visitors with bird viewing and identification along the 6-mile auto tour. Come see and learn about the fly-off as thousands of ducks and geese fly off about 30 minutes after the sun sets.

Looking for something to do with the kids over the holiday break? Bring the whole family to the visitor center for educational opportunities! Learn to draw a duck or goose, sketch beaks and feet, make a journal and get information about the Junior Duck Stamp program. The Complex’s new Junior Refuge Ranger booklet will be available for children to earn collector’s cards featuring different animals or plants.

Volunteers are what makes the project work. This season they are Steve King, Sheila Frisk, Ken Sobon, Julie Newman, Navit Reid, Jo Arroyo, Wyatt Hersey, and Erika Iacona. Steve King, thank you for your generous donation for 4 new nets, and the new tooter, upgrading our broadcast level significantly! Sheila donated an Ipad to upgrade the project picture taking capacity and bird related apps. Ken Sobon donated an iPod complete with NSWO toots and made a carrier for our new tooter. As of this letter we are in great standing with project and tech equipment. Thanks all!

For the season fun and NSWO banding info, see http://birdbling.blogspot.com/
We all arrived at varying times at the Olema Campground and after chatting for a bit, we headed to the White House Pools trail to do a little birding before dark. It was a nice walk, not super birdy, but we did get a great look at a Merlin as it flew right over our heads. At the campground we got the adorable Pygmy Nuthatches, a couple of Hairy Woodpeckers, a Great Horned Owl and a large flock of noisy American Crows. The next day we got Yellow-headed, Brewsters, and Tri-colored Blackbirds, several American Kestrels and a Northern Harrier on the way out to the Fish Docks. We stopped at the Historic B Ranch and picked up Horned Grebe, Yellow Warbler and a pair of Great Horned Owls that we showed to passers-by (when they stopped to ask what we were looking at) who were delighted to get such close-up views.

It was a foggy and windy day at the Fish Docks, but the birding was good - there were over 100 Elegant Terns flying around and most got to see Parasitic Jaegers dive-bombing and harassing the terns; a few of the Jaegers seemed to be much larger and were possibly Pomarine Jaegers. At the cypress trees we spent quite awhile trying to convince ourselves that we had a Pine Warbler, but it turned out to be a juvenile Yellow-Rumped Warbler that did not have a yellow rump (a professor who teaches Master Birding helped). Common Murres were seen in the bay and two were seen on land near the Dock House. Heerman’s Gulls were joined by one or two Bonaparte’s Gulls, and there were several Pacific Loons, Black Turnstones, a Red Phalarope and an Eared Grebe close to the docks. We took a walk out to Chimney Rock where we all got great looks at a couple of Peregrine Falcons. At the parking lot we watched a coyote pounce on and eat several gophers, mice or voles. We then ventured over to Drakes Bay to try for a Chestnut-sided Warbler that someone had told us about and quickly located it in a small flock of Yellow Warblers and a Common Yellowthroat. We also picked up Marbled Godwits, Sanderlings, Surf Scoters, and California, Western, and Ring-billed Gulls from the beach.

On Sunday we decided to head over to Abbott’s Lagoon where we saw several Red-tailed Hawks, a White-tailed Kite, and Bewick’s Wrens, and heard several Wrentits singing in the shrubs along the trail. At the Lagoon, we got to watch a female Bobolink foraging in the rushes close to the shore.
Local Chapter
Membership Application

Please join us!
YOUR MEMBERSHIP WILL HELP
ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
CONTINUE ITS IMPORTANT WORK.

Altacal Audubon Society (AAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. AAS is a separately incorporated non-profit organization with a local chapter membership. 100% of membership dues goes to support local projects and activities. AAS is an all-volunteer organization that conducts all of its programs with unpaid staff.

We offer regularly scheduled field trips that focus on birds and bird habitats; membership programs with media presentations on birds and related topics; a bi-monthly newsletter, the White-tailed Kite; website www.altacal.org/; and advocacy to protect and conserve local habitats as well as special projects and programs.

Submission of Articles to the White-tailed Kite

Articles for publication should be sent to Denise Devine by email to dsrdevine@hotmail.com on the first of the month, prior to the next issue.

THANKS to all of you who contribute regularly by sending in reports, articles and photos for the White-tailed Kite – Denise, Editor.

ALTACAL AUDUBON SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

☐ $25 Basic ☐ $35 Family ☐ $15 Student / Low Income
☐ $50 Sponsor ☐ $100 Sustaining ☐ $_____ Additional Donation

Name ________________________________________________
Address ________________________________________________
City ____________________________ State ______ Zip ______
Phone ____________________________ email ____________________________

☐ Save Paper! Send me an email only ☐ New Member ☐ Renewal ☐ Gift
☐ email me Altacal in Action Alerts ☐ Cash ☐ Check Date _____________
☐ I would be interested in volunteering to help

IMPORTANT: Membership in Altacal Audubon Society does not include membership in the National Audubon Society. We encourage you to also support National Audubon in their important education and lobbying efforts. To join the National Audubon Society contact them at their website www.audubon.org/

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CURRENT RESIDENT

ADOPT AN OWL

see page 3. & 5.

ALTACAL Program

White-tailed Kite
DECEMBER 2015 / JANUARY 2016

DATES TO REMEMBER

Nov 29 Llano Seco
Dec 14 Program - Member’s Slide Show
Dec 19 Chico Christmas Bird Count
Jan 3 Red Bluff Christmas Bird Count
Jan 3 Oroville Christmas Bird Count
Jan 16 Indian Fisheries
Jan 27 - 31 SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL

Dec 14
Members’ Slide Show
Jan 27 - 31
Snow Goose Festival

ALTACAL
Mission: To promote the awareness, appreciation and protection of native birds and their habitats through education, research and environmental activities.