

# THE HOOT OWL



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San Joaquin Audubon Society  
San Joaquin Audubon Society

## PROGRAMS

There will be no in-person general membership meetings until Covid-19 pandemic conditions allow. In the interim, we will do our best to offer programs via Zoom or other media.

**TUESDAY, November 10, 7:00 p.m.**

**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**Dr. Tara Thiemann**

***"Birds, West Nile Virus, and the Mosquito Connection"***

West Nile virus was introduced to the United States in New York in 1999 and, by 2003, it had spread across the country and was detected in California. It has since remained endemic throughout the country and state. West Nile virus is a mosquito-borne virus that primarily infects birds, sometimes decimating populations. Additionally, with opportunistic feeding by mosquito vectors, the virus can be transmitted to mammals such as horses and humans. Host selection by these mosquito vectors is a crucial factor in the transmission of this virus and other pathogens. The goal of the current project was to characterize the feeding patterns of *Cx. tarsalis*, the *Cx. pipiens* complex, and other mosquito species according to habitat type in San Joaquin County. Over 600 bloodfed females were collected from different habitat types between August 2009 and November 2012. Over 80% of the bloodmeals were successfully identified. These bloodmeals represented 77 host species: 44% were mammalian and 56% were avian, with being collected from riparian and agricultural habitats. Overall, the most commonly fed upon species were cattle, house finches, and American robins. American crow, yellow-billed magpie, and California scrub-jay, species known to be highly impacted by West Nile virus, were also fed upon in this study.

Dr. Tara Thiemann is an Associate Professor of Biological Sciences at University of the Pacific. She was born and raised in Missouri, receiving her B.S. and M.S. in Biology at Truman State University in Kirksville, MO.

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## FIELD TRIPS

### (Cancelled until further notice)

**All: Due to the ongoing pandemic, all upcoming San Joaquin Audubon Society field trips will remain cancelled. We hope to resume as soon as Covid-19 pandemic conditions allow. Meanwhile, we hope you are all able to bird in the county and beyond, keeping your safety, and the safety of others in mind. Please share your trip information or pictures on one of our many social media outlets.**

## 2020 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

### REMINDER

Barring any significant change in COVID-related circumstances, this year's **Stockton Christmas Bird Count** (CBC) will be held on **Sunday, December 20**. Our count area is a 15-mile diameter circle covering parts of the Delta, north Stockton, and most of Lodi. We identify and count each bird we see or hear during this all-day event. We have area captains for the 15 locations we survey every year. If you participated last year and would like to participate again, your area captain will be contacting you. If you are new and would like to be part of this exciting event, please contact co-compilers Donna Marciano ([paulmarciano@att.net](mailto:paulmarciano@att.net)) or Jim Rowth ([rowth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rowth@sbcglobal.net)), and they will have an area captain contact you.

The **Wallace-Bellota Christmas Bird Count** will be held on **Saturday, January 2**. The count circle is mostly in northeast San Joaquin County, but it also overlaps into Calaveras and Stanislaus Counties. Co-compilers for this "foothill" count are Pat Paternostro ([broncos30@hotmail.com](mailto:broncos30@hotmail.com)) and Kasey Foley ([kaseyfoley@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kaseyfoley@sbcglobal.net)). Contact either of them for more details or to volunteer for this count.

Like the US mail, we run our counts irrespective of the weather--unless it's biblically bad! As a concession to the pandemic, we will follow recommendations on social distancing and masking as appropriate in the field, and we will not be meeting in person this year for the traditional countdown tally at the end of day. However, we plan to have a Zoom meeting to tally our birds, swap stories and talk about rare & interesting bird sightings. Dinner/refreshments will be provided (i.e., your own refrigerator).

Hope to see you at one or both of our local counts this year!

## To Help Birds This Winter, Go Easy on Fall Yard Work

There's a certain satisfaction in autumn chores. When the weather's right, dead-heading flowers, pruning trees and shrubs, and raking leaves can feel less like manual labor and more like a rite of the season. But if you want to make your backyard a welcoming winter haven for birds, some fall tasks call for a laissez-faire approach. "Messy is definitely good to provide food and shelter for birds during the cold winter months," says Tod Winston, Audubon's Plants for Birds program manager.

So let someone else keep up with the neighbors this weekend. Sleep in, linger a little longer with your morning coffee, and follow these tips for a bird-friendly yard you can be proud of.

**SAVE THE SEEDS.** When fall arrives, some tidy-minded gardeners might be inclined to snip the stems of perennials in the flower garden. But the seed heads of Coneflowers, Black-eyed Susans, and other native wildflowers provide a helpful food cache for birds. "They're almost invisible, those seeds, but birds eat them all winter long," Winston says. Grasses—not the stuff you mow, but native species like bluestems or grammas—also make for good foraging after they go to seed. And letting other dead plants stick around can fill your property with protein-packed bird snacks in the form of insect larvae, such as the fly and wasp larvae that inhabit oak galls.

**LEAVE THE LEAVES.** You can help birds and other wildlife—and save yourself some backache and blisters—by skipping the leaf raking. "Those leaves are important because they rot and enrich the soil, and also provide places for bugs and birds to forage for food," Winston says. If a fully hands-off approach doesn't work for your yard, consider composting some leaves and letting the rest be. You could also rake them from the lawn to your garden beds, or mulch them with a mower to nourish your lawn.

**BUILD A BRUSH PILE.** Along with shaking loose showers of leaves, blustery fall days also tend to knock down tree limbs. Rather than hauling them away, you can use fallen branches to build a brush pile that will shelter birds from lousy weather and predators. You'll find that the pile settles and decomposes over the seasons ahead, making room for next year's additions.

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## PROGRAMS

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She then moved to California to pursue graduate work at University of California Davis. Dr. Thiemann graduated from UC Davis in 2011 with a Ph.D. in Entomology and a Designated Emphasis in the Biology of Vector-borne Diseases. Her dissertation focused on the bloodfeeding patterns of the *Culex pipiens* complex and *Culextarsalis*, two primary vectors of West Nile virus in California. At Pacific, Dr. Thiemann continues to study mosquitoes, while training both undergraduate and graduate students in her research lab. Projects include continued exploration of the bloodfeeding patterns of California mosquitoes, studying the transmission of dog heartworm, and characterizing insecticide resistance in local populations.

Get yourself a snack of choice, click on the ZOOM link (found on the San Joaquin Audubon Society website [San Joaquin Audubon Society](#) the day of the program), kick back and enjoy the presentation.

**TUESDAY, December 8, 7:00 p.m.**

**VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM**

**David Yee**

*"Christmas Bird Count Review and Prep"*

Please join us online for this VIRTUAL meeting with David Yee. David will be going over the birds we are likely to see during this year's modified Christmas Bird Count CBC. We will discuss how we think the CBC will be run during the meeting to keep everyone safe.

David Yee has been the President of the San Joaquin Audubon Society, the Central Valley Bird Club, and has been on many bird review committees in California. David created and has run the annual Central Valley Bird Symposium for 23 years, sadly it was canceled this year due to COVID-19. David is a born mentor for new (and existing) birders and has an excellent reputation by respected birders worldwide.

So, grab some popcorn, or other snack of choice, click on the ZOOM link (found on the San Joaquin Audubon Society website [San Joaquin Audubon Society](#) the day of the program), kick back and enjoy the presentation.

## Member Photos of some recent San Joaquin County Rarities

(See Bird Sightings column below for details of these and other recent sightings in San Joaquin County)



Sagebrush Sparrow  
Photo by Liz West



Tennessee Warbler  
Photo by Liz West



Solitary Sandpiper  
Photo by Kasey Foley

## BIRD SIGHTINGS

*August 15, 2020 - October 14, 2020*  
(All sightings pertain to San Joaquin County)

Submitted by Liz West

Rosemarie Richardson saw a **Bank Swallow** on Woodbridge Rd, August 17<sup>th</sup>, a continuation of the Bank Swallows first reported by Jim Rowoth on August 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Ralph Baker reported a **Black Tern** passing through the Ripon Waste Treatment Plant on August 23<sup>rd</sup>.

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, Jim Gain found a **Willet** at the Ripon Sewage Ponds.

David Yee found two **Pectoral Sandpipers** and a juvenile **Short-billed Dowitcher** at the Ripon Sewage Ponds on September 7<sup>th</sup>.

On September 22<sup>nd</sup>, David Yee found a cooperative **Tennessee Warbler** feeding fairly low in the Valley Oaks along Laurel Ave in Lodi. It was still present the next day. Kurt Mize reported a **Tennessee Warbler** at Laughlin Park in Stockton on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Rich Peterson and Kasey Foley saw a **Solitary Sandpiper**, September 26<sup>th</sup>, at the Tracy Sewage Ponds.

John Harris reported a probable **Sagebrush Sparrow** along Waverly Rd. on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. It is a review species for the newly formed San Joaquin Bird Records Committee. The most similar sparrow to it would be Bell's Sparrow subspecies *canescens* normally found in the Mojave Desert.

See above for member photos of some of the rarities seen in San Joaquin County recently.

## To Help Birds This Winter, Go Easy on Fall Yard Work

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**SKIP THE CHEMICALS.** You might see your neighbors spreading “weed and feed” mixtures in the fall to fertilize their lawns and knock back crabgrass and other unwanted plants. In most cases, though, grass clippings and mulched leaf litter provide plenty of plant nutrition. Not only are chemicals bad for the birds, but, generally speaking, native grasses, shrubs, trees, and flowering plants don’t need them. Save a few bucks and keep your yard healthy for bugs and birds.

**HIT THE NURSERY.** Although laziness can be a good thing when it comes to creating a bird-friendly backyard, it’s worth putting in some hard work planting native shrubs and trees. (Cooler temperatures also make fall a more comfortable time to tear out some turf grass and expand your native plant garden.) Native trees and flowering shrubs produce small fruits that not only feed birds during the colder months, but can also provide a welcome pop of color when winter gets drab.

Adapted from:

Andy McGlashen, Associate Editor, Audubon Magazine  
 “To Help Birds This Winter, Go Easy on Fall Yard Work”  
 Audubon Magazine, October 7, 2017  
 <[www.audubon.org/news/to-help-birds-winter-go-easy-fall-yard-work](http://www.audubon.org/news/to-help-birds-winter-go-easy-fall-yard-work)>

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Website: [www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org](http://www.sanjoaquinaudubon.org)  
 Listserve: <http://groups.io/g/SJBirds>

### Other California Birding E-mail Listserves

- <https://groups.io/g/calbirds>
- <https://groups.io/g/centralvalleybirds>
- <https://groups.io/g/StanislausBirds>
- [https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/CSAS\\_Birds/info](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/CSAS_Birds/info)

### Membership

*National Membership*  
 By joining the National Audubon Society you are also a member of the San Joaquin Chapter. This includes subscriptions to the award-winning *Audubon Magazine* and to the chapter newsletter, *The Hoot Owl*. Both publications are bimonthly. For *national membership*, send check payable to the **National Audubon Society** to the address below.

- National Audubon Membership Rate: \$20

**San Joaquin Audubon Society**  
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 This includes a subscription to the bimonthly chapter newsletter, *The Hoot Owl*. For *local membership*, send check payable to **San Joaquin Audubon Society** to the address below.

- Chapter Newsletter—electronic copy \$15

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**Attn: Membership (Local)**  
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