



The Mountain Quail

Newsletter of Plumas Audubon Society

Chapter of the National Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3877, Quincy, CA 95971

Vol. 20, No. 4 - May, 2009

Newsletter Editor - Harry Reeves - hgreaves@att.net

Plumas Audubon home page www.plumasaudubon.org

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, May 13: "Bird Watching in Southeast Arizona" presented by Henry and Colin Dillingham. 6:30 pm, Quincy Library, 445 Jackson Street. Colin Dillingham and his son Henry spent a week birding around the Chiracahua, Dragoon, Santa Rita and Huachuca Mountains of southeastern Arizona. They visited a number of hot spots and enjoyed the hospitality of residents who set out feeders and welcome visiting bird watchers to enjoy the special birds of their part of Arizona. The birds, being relatively tame, allowed the Dillinghams to take many good close up photographs. Colin and Henry wish to share their Arizona experiences with local Plumas County birders and the general public. Anyone is welcome to attend all Plumas Audubon events. Contact David Arsenault (530-283-0455, david.arsenault1@gmail.com) for more information.

May 9: Maddalena Ranch Celebration: This event takes place on International Migratory Bird Day. It is a celebration of the new interpretive trail at the Maddalena Ranch in Sierra Valley. A birdwalk will be led by Mellouise Curry at 8 AM and at 9 AM there will be a botany walk with Nancy Harnach. *This event also celebrates Plumas Audubon Society's 20th anniversary.* At noon long standing Plumas Audubon Board Members will be honored with prints donated by Bill Peters and Lou Bosche. Contact Darrel Jury (530-283-0202 x262, djury@frc.edu) for more information.

(See schedule of other events for Biodiversity Days, May 1 - 31, on last page)

Board Notes

At the April 16 Board meeting, hosted by Isabelle Stone, there was discussion of adopting new bylaws. Not only should they be brought up to date, but no one seems to be able to locate the old ones anyway. Jerry and Terry Williams have taken the lead in obtaining samples from the Altacal (Chico area) chapter which we will tailor to our chapter's situation. The board also discussed the advantages to incorporating as a non-profit organization in order to be in a better position to obtain grants and contributions for various activities. It is not an expensive thing, but there is paperwork that needs to be handled properly. Anyone with the necessary business and accounting skills willing to help spearhead filing for 501C3 non-profit tax status, please give our President, David Arsenault a call.

Treasurer -- Darrel Jury reported that our treasury currently has \$1700 available for regular business including education and newsletter production. March dues payments have been very prompt and are necessary. A number of members have sent in additional donations which will be especially helpful to get our Audubon education program rolling again. We wish to thank Herb and Wanda Longnecker, Tony Hall, Michael and Vreni Welser and others who have sent Plumas Audubon contributions in addition to regular dues. We also thank those National Audubon members who have additionally sent us \$15 chapter dues.

Membership -- Isabelle Stone says the e-mail newsletter is now going to 54 addresses and our postal list continues to shrink. It was at 98 last month. This is saving a few trees and a lot of money. If you would like to receive this newsletter by e-mail send a note to Isabelle at quinston@sbcglobal.net.

Education -- Terry Williams has talked with 28 teachers in 6 local schools and one teacher in Chester has asked for Audubon materials for two elementary grade classes. In Portola she has a request for a speaker to a 3rd grade class. The Williams have purchased three types of Audubon Adventures packets, as a donation, to evaluate and have been authorized to get three more kits for distribution. Terry also is developing a color wall chart with photos of local birds and spaces to write in sightings.

In the course of discussing plans for Plumas Audubon's 20th anniversary celebration at the Feather River Land Trust Maddalena Ranch in Sierra Valley, David Arsenault said that after many years absence peregrine falcons are once again nesting in nearby cliffs. Good timing, birds!

BIRDING ABROAD -- by Bob Battagin

Last summer I was "kidnapped" by my partner and another couple. Knowing I was on the verge of one of those fateful decadal birthdays, they decided to help me celebrate by secretly planning a bird watching trip abroad. My clues were slim: "Pack your binoculars, and have your passport in hand," destination undisclosed. A couple months later (faster than any birthday should arrive) we were off.

It's amazing how fast a person can change locations on planet Earth. In a little over a day I found myself at a place called La Selva Lodge situated in the Ecuadorian Amazon jungle. After 24 hours of sitting in aircraft and on plastic chairs in airport lobbies I was eager to start exploring and discover what this far-away place was like. With wide eyes I watched Toucan *Oropendola manikin*, Antbird, monkey, snake and butterfly species unknown to me as they went about their business in the Amazon jungle that surrounded us. Being the midst of this phenomenal biological bonanza I felt like I was on another world, full of exotic surprises.

Our guide was a native whose entire command of the English language was restricted to the names of all 526 species of birds that inhabited the nearby jungle. He was one of the best birders I have ever met and with his help over the next few days we saw 130 of those 526 species. When we are birding a new environment quantity takes a second seat to the marvelous experience of observing each new and incredible bird specie. We encountered Cotingas that looked like glowing jewels, Paradise Tanagers that display an impossible rainbow of luminous colors, brilliant green Honeycreepers with contrasting red legs. The list of "aaaahs" was long. Too soon it was time to pack up and depart for our second destination.

Six hundred miles off the coast of Ecuador and smack dab on the equator, the Galapagos Islands are a study in contrasts. Surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, their lower elevations are arid and populated by cacti and other desert plants, whereas the higher reaches benefit from more frequent rainfall and can be quite lush. But the real story here centers on the Galapagos Islands' association with Charles Darwin and his serendipitous development of his theory about the force that drives evolution – natural selection.

The famous thirteen species of Darwin's Finches inhabit these islands and we got to see nine of them including the incredible Woodpecker Finch, one of the few birds in the world that uses a tool to aid in food acquisition. Isolated on these islands, most of the wildlife have no predators and consequently no fear of humans. We had flycatchers practically landing on our hats and Narza Boobys taking nesting

sticks from our hands. For many bird studies we had no need for binoculars; we were free to walk (carefully and respectfully) among breeding and roosting species of land and sea birds.

I've traveled aboard a few times now and it's a wonderful world out there. Of course there is the fascinating experience of meeting new people and learning about their ways. In the birding realm I continue to be astonished by the diversity of our planet's avifauna. An interesting phenomenon is that my observations of distant foreigners result in greater appreciation of those who are familiar. No matter how engrossed I may be while watching exotics, I am often stimulated to flash back to "my own patch" with questions or musings about the birds at home.

A last thought: Travel abroad does have environmental impacts and they can be substantial. However, there are ways they may be mitigated. Here are a few suggestions. Perhaps you can add others. Most importantly, do not over consume, i.e. travel, but don't overdo. Use eco-friendly tour and hospitality operators who support their local conservation efforts through acts of good will and monetary donations. I always make a donation to one of my favorite conservation organizations equal to 10 percent of the vacation's cost. I think it's a good investment in the future of bird watching and the planet's well-being.

PLUMAS AUDUBON OFFICEERS

President (Outings and Website)	David Arsenault	530-258-9137
Vice President	Michelle Fulton	530-283-1632
Secretary	Anthony Hall	530-283-3052
Treasurer	Darrel Jury	530-283-2939
Newsletter	Harry Reeves	530-283-1230
Membership	Isabelle Stone	530-283-2745
Education	Jerry and Terry Williams	530-832-5992
Board member	Bob Beckwith	530-283-0967
Board member	Darla DeRuiter	530-283-2939
Board member	Sally Yost	530-284-6649

PLUMAS AUDUBON SOCIETY C59

Please sign me up:

_____ **New member - NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY - \$20.00** payable to **National Audubon Society**. You will get *Audubon magazine*, also become a member of Plumas Audubon Chapter and receive the local newsletter, *the Mountain Quail*. (Do not use this form for renewal of National Audubon membership. You should get a renewal notice directly from National)

- OR -

_____ **Chapter membership - ___new or___ renewal - \$15.00** payable to **Plumas Audubon Society**
(Includes *the Mountain Quail* newsletter - 6 issues per year).

Name _____

E-mail _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Chapter member renewal \$15.00 is due in March

Mail your completed form with check to:

Plumas Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3877, Quincy, CA 95971

Plumas Audubon does not sell or share the chapter e-mail or mailing list with any other organization or businesses.

Plumas Biodiversity Days 2009 - Schedule of Events May 1-31:

Plumas Audubon Society will host the second annual series of activities this year.

Please call trip leaders to let them know you wish to attend. Dates, times, or meeting places may change.

May 1-31: Plumas Biodiversity Days Art Show. Artistic diversity representing biodiversity is our theme. A number of local artists are displaying their artwork depicting biodiversity in Plumas County at Morning Thunder Café in Quincy.

May 17: Nest Box Building Workshop: Come enjoy the abundance of birds using nest boxes at Bob Beckwith's property in Genesee Valley. Meet in Taylorsville in front of the store at 9 am to carpool to Bob's place. We will build nest boxes for a variety of bird species, as well as bat boxes and bee blocks. Materials will be available, but wood scraps and screw donations for future workshops are greatly appreciated. Participants will be able to bring a nest box, bat box, and/or bee block home with them. Suggested donation is \$15 to support the Plumas Audubon Society. Contact David Arsenault (530-283-0455, david.arsenault1@gmail.com) for more information.

May 21 and 22: Owl Prowl and Workshop: Learn about the natural history and how to find and identify the 12 species of owls that occur in Plumas County. David Arsenault studied owls for over ten years and will share his expertise during a Thursday evening slide show from 7 to 9 pm at the Quincy library, followed by a Friday night owl prowling from 6 pm to around midnight (meet at Quincy library). Suggested donation is \$20 to support the Plumas Audubon Society. Contact David Arsenault (530-283-0455, david.arsenault1@gmail.com) for information.

May 27: Birding by Bike in American Valley: You need to bring your own bike for this field trip, which starts on Quincy Junction Road and proceeds to Gansner Park and back. Meet in the parking lot at the Quincy High School baseball fields on Quincy Junction Road at 6:30 a.m. Contact David Arsenault (530-283-0455, david.arsenault1@gmail.com) for information.

May 30: Butterfly Valley Botany Excursion: Jim Battagin will share his wealth of knowledge about the plants of Butterfly Valley during this morning trip. Meet at the Mt Hough Ranger District forest service office at 9:30 a.m. Contact David Arsenault (530-283-0455, david.arsenault1@gmail.com) for information.

May 31: Humbug Valley and Lake Almanor Bird Watching: Ryan Burnett of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory will lead this trip starting in Humbug Valley in the morning and proceeding to the west shore of Lake Almanor in the afternoon. Meet in Chester at 6 a.m. at the Lake Almanor USFS Office or at the Humbug Valley Road-Hwy 89 intersection at 6:30 a.m. Bring lunch. Contact Ryan Burnett (530-258-2869, rburnett@prbo.org) to pre-register for the trip and for more information.

**Plumas Audubon Society
P.O. Box 3877
Quincy, CA 95971-3877**