



The Mountain Quail

Newsletter of Plumas Audubon Society

Chapter of the National Audubon Society

P.O. Box 3877, Quincy, CA 95971

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Newsletter Editor - Harry Reeves - hgreaves@att.net

Plumas Audubon home page www.plumasaudubon.org

Plumas Audubon Society Meetings & Events

All programs are free -- the public is welcome

Wednesday, Nov. 11, 6:30 p.m. Plumas County Public Library, 445 Jackson St, Quincy: **Plumas Audubon Society monthly program.** Our guest speaker, **Jordan Wellwood**, will talk about **Protecting California's Birds: Audubon California's Conservation Efforts.** Jordan is Audubon California's Conservation Coordinator for the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada regions. She will explain the major threats that birds face in California and show what Audubon California is doing to protect the landscapes that birds will need in order to survive into the future. Jordan will also point out opportunities where local citizens may get involved to make a significant difference in their communities.

Tuesday, December 1 - PAS Board meeting. Time and Location to be determined.

Wednesday, Dec. 9, 6:30 p.m. Plumas County Public Library, 445 Jackson St., Quincy: **Plumas Audubon Annual Membership Meeting and Pre-Christmas Bird Count Winter Bird ID Workshop.** This is the Plumas Audubon's annual membership meeting and we would like to hear from you! Let us know what we are doing that you like, that you may not like, or that you are interested in seeing us do in the future. This is also a good opportunity to learn about how you can become more involved with our chapter. Following the membership meeting, we will have a winter bird ID workshop to get ready for the local *Christmas Bird Counts* that Plumas Audubon conducts in *Sierra Valley, American Valley, and Lake Almanor.* Come meet the count coordinators and learn how you can participate.

Christmas Bird Counts Dates and contacts:

Sierra Valley Coordinator: Colin Dillingham, < dillingham7@juno.com > Date: December 14, 2009

Lake Almanor Coordinator: Ryan Burnett, < rburnett@prbo.org > Date: December 16, 2009

American Valley Coordinator: Darrel Jury, < djury@frc.edu > Date: December 19, 2009

(Please call 283-0455 or < www.plumasaudubon.org > for event or program information)

October Program

A dozen people enjoyed *Jerry and Terry Williams'* program "Birding in Costa Rica and Yucatan" last month at the Portola Public Library. The Williams, who chair Plumas Audubon's education program, shared their excellent photographs and talked about highlights of recent trips they have taken to Costa Rica and Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula. It was a virtual journey to a couple of the best birding and wildlife watching destinations in the Americas.

Friends of Plumas Wilderness Celebrated the Bucks Lake Wilderness 25th Anniversary

The flared tail of a goshawk was back lighted against the crisp October sky as it circled above the clearing on the shoreline of Silver Lake where fifty of us were gathered to enjoy the community wide accomplishment of having established the Bucks Lake Wilderness a quarter of a century ago. No speaker could express greater appreciation than that silently soaring bird. Nearly all of the Friends of Plumas Wilderness who had petitioned and lobbied for many years to accomplish this feat were there. Wilbur Vaughn, who had begun the campaign and had seen it through to completion, came to the event, and everyone who had played a part agreed that without Wilbur's tireless determination it never would have happened.

There was recounting of events, reminiscing, and acknowledgments, but it was mostly a quiet time to be together and to appreciate the nature of it all. For those who helped make this Wilderness happen it was rewarding to see young hikers passing by, not necessarily even being aware of the history behind of our celebration.

Darrel Jury led a wrecking party to remove a shelter structure at Mud Lake, that was not in keeping with Wilderness. A fleet of kayaks from the college was cruised around Silver lake for most of the day and hikes, long and not so long, added something for everyone.

22,000 acres is not particularly large as western Wilderness designations go, but size need not be the determinant of value. One of our group offered the comment that Spanish Peak rises as high above American Valley as El Capitan rises above the floor of Yosemite Valley; not as dramatic perhaps, but we can deal with that.

WATER NEWS

(Contributed by Audubon California Conservation Director, Jordan Wellwood)

Our San Joaquin Valley is suffering, no question. Economic recession, drought, and the foreclosure crisis have hit this region with particular brutality. But to blame the hardship in the Valley on the Delta smelt or on the Endangered Species Act is not logical.

We are in the middle of an economic recession, and California (not just the Valley) is suffering from record unemployment levels. We are in the third consecutive year of lower-than-average precipitation. Demand for water is dangerously exceeding supply and even in wet years it has become difficult to meet these demands without totally destroying the ecological framework of our state's waterways.

A recent study by the University of the Pacific Business Forecasting Center showed that construction job losses driven by the foreclosure crisis are eight times greater than those created by water shortages. And although unemployment rates in the Valley have risen recently, over time they have fluctuated with no correlation to water deliveries.

It's true that water deliveries were reduced to some areas in the Valley for part of this year. In particular, to areas with junior water rights. In other words, to those who are promised less water in dry years. Deliveries were reduced largely as a result of low precipitation for three

consecutive years, but also in part because of mandated water deliveries to help fish species in the Delta from going extinct.

There is a belief among some people in the Valley that water flowing down a river and to the ocean is wasted. That instead it should be entirely captured and diverted for our use. But if we treat our rivers this way, if we overlook the inherent value of a living river system, we are simply poor stewards of these resources.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta sustains the most important estuary on the west coast of the Americas and provides drinking water for the majority of Californians. An entire food chain relies on conditions in the Delta, and by allowing conditions to continue to worsen we risk losing the entire system.

If our elected representatives make policy decisions based on propaganda instead of facts, both nature and people will lose out in the long run. Instead, we must insist on an approach to water policy that reflects the best science available to us.

(Editor's note: Although the San Joaquin flows from the southern Sierra and is not within our watershed California's is an interconnected ecosystem with a political environment such that what may occur downstream does affect us at the top of the watershed. Consider the front page article in the October 28 Feather River Bulletin in which Brian Morris points out that the users of water far from Plumas County could cost those living here dearly in getting watershed restoration funding and in our continuing efforts to improve the quality of water as it passes through our community to the rest of California.- HR)

Plumas Audubon is a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt organization, however we need some help to get our status current with the IRS and State of California. Anyone with some business or accounting background who would be able to help with completing forms and other follow-up details should contact David Arsenault. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

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 <hgreeves@att.net>
Membership	Isabelle Stone	530-283-2745 <quinston@sbcglobal.net>
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

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PLUMAS AUDUBON SOCIETY

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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___ renewal - \$15.00 payable to ***Plumas Audubon Society*** (Includes *the Mountain Quail* newsletter - 6 issues per year).

Name _____

Please send my newsletter by e-mail to _____

Mailing address _____

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

Chapter member renewal \$15.00 is due in March

Mail this completed form with check to:

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

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

Happy Birthday #25 Bucks Lake Wilderness

