

Plumas Birds e-mail list postings January through July 2008

January 29, 2008

Tony Hall and I went birding in Sierra Valley on January 27. There was a Northern Shrike along Hwy 49 in Plumas County. The bird was 1.2 miles northeast of the Plumas/Sierra County line. That was my first in Plumas County and it made me smile to find it! A loggerhead shrike was about 2 miles down Hwy 49, this one in Sierra County. The white-throated sparrow that Bob Battagin found on Dec 19 in Loyalton was still present. It was a tan-striped phase bird and is coming to bird feeders at 801 Main Street in Loyalton. Rough-legged hawks were common along Hwy 49 and Dyson Lane in both Plumas and Sierra County.

Little Last Chance Creek canyon was beautiful with all the frozen waterfalls and huge icicles. A single American Dipper was along the creek and two common ravens were inspecting all the ice fisherman out on Frenchman Lake.

On January 26 I found 2 snow geese on Quincy Junction Rd opposite the high school tennis courts.

Today, Jan 29, I found 35 tundra swan and 2 barrow's goldeneyes at the Quincy Sewage Treatment ponds. The duck numbers were relatively high out there today - for example 135 ring-necked ducks.

Colin Dillingham

February 28, 2008

The birds are coming back. I just came back from an evening walk where Lindsay Lane joins the Clear Creek Road. Out in the meadow I saw two bright male Mountain Bluebirds and a female. Next to the Ponderosa Pines I saw a pair of Western Bluebirds. Flocks of American Robin and Canada Geese were active in the meadow and I detected the still form of a Great Blue Heron in a wet patch in the meadow. Three pairs of Sandhill Cranes have been serenading us, especially in the evening from the meadow on the south side of Chandler Road. One pair would reach for the sky with their beaks and call. Then another pair would reach for the sky with their beaks and call. Are they establishing territory for breeding? Pairs of Mallards are coming to the marsh on Clear Creek Road near to Quincy Junction Road and I expect the Wood ducks will be here soon. The squirrels are busy chasing each other and carrying nesting material around.

Tony Hall

February 28, 2008

To add to that I saw the first Tree Swallow of the year today flying over the Feather River. Below are the first sightings of Tree Swallow from the last few years. They

always show up on a warm clear days then disappear on cold and cloudy days until late March. Also, last week there was a Northern Shrike along the Feather River in Chester where the Collin's Railroad crosses it. Probably the same bird I saw during the Christmas Bird Count about ¼ mile from here.

2008 – 2/28

2007 – 2/18

2006 – 2/9

2005 – 2/26

Ryan Burnett

February 29, 2008

Just finished a short bike ride in American Valley. If you are reading this message this morning - the weather is great - get out and enjoy the sunshine and the birds –

The highlights included:

To adult male tricolored blackbirds. Tricolored blackbirds are very rare in Plumas County. Both were perched on a wire over a house at 500 Bell Lane at 9:30 this morning.

A merlin was perched in a tree adjacent to Quincy Junction Rd between Bell Lane and Lee Rd. The merlin was about 100 yards S of Bell Lane junction. I've seen less than 10 of these in my 8 years in Plumas County.

Sandhill Cranes were abundant - I counted 37 from Quincy Junction Rd between Bell Lane and the bike path.

Colin Dillingham

March 2, 2008

The birding in American Valley this last week has been a nice mix of remaining winter visitors, early migrants, and residents enjoying the warm weather. Last week at the Quincy sewage ponds there were still about 150 ducks of ten species, mostly RING-NECKED DUCK and also 2 BARROW'S GOLDENEYE as well as 1 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE. Today near the junction of Chandler and Quincy Junction Roads, signs of spring included a flock of 10 TREE SWALLOWS, 1 TURKEY VULTURE, and 2 SAY'S PHOEBES. At the north end of Chandler Road there was a flock of about 200 AMERICAN ROBINS as well as a juvenile GOLDEN EAGLE. The hillside at the north end of Quincy Junction Road where it meets the railroad tracks was active with WRENTIT, SPOTTED TOWHEE, FOX SPARROW (Rocky Mtn subspecies), ANNA'S HUMMINGBIRD, and MOUNTAIN QUAIL. The bird of the day, a PINE GROSBEAK, recognized by the distinctive combination of vireo-like call notes and finch-like warble, was heard up the

hill from the tracks towards Mount Hough Road in the pine forest, but I didn't get a visual.

Good birding,

David Arsenault

March 13, 2008

Hi Plumas Birders,

Yesterday (Thursday) morning Tony Hall and I spent a little time birding in the vicinity of Chandler Road and Quincy Junction Road. At 2312 Chandler Road there are many thistle and seed feeders as well as a couple hummingbird feeders. Quite a few birds visit this location and among the thirty or so Red-winged Blackbirds we observed a single male YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD. We also observed three LEWIS'S WOODPECKERS, one of which was on the large snag that is a couple hundred yards south of 2312 Chandler in the open field. The others were in a couple oak trees on the hill behind the house immediately east of 2312 Chandler. Also of note were two pairs of WOOD DUCKS in the marsh adjacent to Clear Creek Road just east of Quincy Junction Road. Over the course of the morning we noted two dozen Western Scrub Jays, more than I usually find along Chandler Road.

The preceeding day my brother, Jim, and I birded many locations around American Valley. As many birders have noticed, there are lots of American Robins around and we saw them everywhere. We saw over 500 Tree Swallows and a single CLIFF SWALLOW. There was a GREATER YELLOWLEGS in the seasonal wetlands just south of Golden Eagle Avenue near the entrance to Feather River College. At the Quincy Community Service District sewer ponds we found 18 WOOD DUCKS and 4 BARROW'S GOLDENEYES. We saw one of the two AMERICAN DIPPERS that have overwintered below the Highway 70 bridge that crosses Spanish Creek adjacent to Gansner Park. A Dark-eyed Junco flock behind the Chevron Station had a single Slate-colored subspecies. At the Thompson Valley Ranch stock pond there were 28 GREATER WHITE-FRONTED GEESE and 17 HOODED MERGANSERS. Finally, at the spot where Oakland Camp Road crosses Spanish Creek, at about 6PM, I heard a GREAT HORNED OWL hoot repeatedly - the first time in the last ten years I've managed to hear or see a Great Horned Owl in American Valley.

Good birding,

Bob Battagin

April 13, 2008

Migrants arrive late at our place because it is in a cool location on Galeppi Ranch surrounded by conifers. However, things are beginning to happen around the house. The

first Black-Headed Grosbeak arrived today. A few days ago we were serenaded by our first warbler which was a brightly colored male Yellow-rumped (Audubon's). Many Lesser Goldfinches have been visiting my thistle feeder. Several Red-beasted and a pair of Pygmy Nuthatches are nesting nearby and visit my suet feeders. A young Mountain Chickadee has taken over my birdhouse with much pecking to the interior but does not appear to have attracted a mate. Many Dark-eyed Juncos have been feeding on the ground with one Slate-colored among the many Oregons. Several Band-tailed Pigeons and a Red-winged Blackbird are visiting my tray feeder. About two weeks ago when I had just gone to bed I heard an owl. The muffled hoo hooing suggested to me it was a Great Horned Owl. Something has begun to build a large home in a large space in the side of our house. The home has many long branches, some of which are about three feet long. Any guesses what may be doing this. Steller's Jays have been looking for a place to nest near the house but I have never seen one carry a branch three feet long. Would a squirrel build a dray in the side of a house? It is not high enough up for a Great Horned Owl since it is only about 12 feet from the ground.

Best Regards

Tony Hall

April 19, 2008

Hi Birders,

I saw a strange duck in the Galeppi Ranch pond today. It's head was like a male Mallard but it had a greenish-yellow bill and no white neck ring and it's body was dark brown. Is this an American Black Duck x Mallard hybrid or some domesticated type duck? This pond attracts several wild fowl in addition to lots of Canada Geese. Today there were some Amercian Wigeon and a pair of Ring-necked ducks. Yesterday in addition to these there were some Common Goldeneyes and a Double-crested Cormorant. The cormorant was standing on the edge of the dock with its feet wrapped around the edge as if it was about to dive in -- but it didn't. In the trees along Clear Creek Road I saw my first Nashville Warbler of this season.

Regards

Tony Hall

April 20, 2008

Hi Plumas Birders,

I did a little birding in American Valley last Friday, the 18th. The most unusual bird I ran into was a Green Heron along Spanish Creek. Starting at Highway 70, travel down stream 0.6 mile along Spanish Creek Road. On your left you'll notice a broad bend in the creek and a lot of rip-rap on the streambank. Looking back upstream, the bird was about

200 feet upstream on the left bank in the willows next to the creek. I'm going to attach a couple photos - you've got to use some imagination to see the bird. Hopefully we'll hear from Colin Dillingham that he also saw the bird...he was going to float down the river later in the day to try and find it.

While checking on the American Dippers that hang out under the Highway 70 Bridge where it crosses Spanish Creek, I noticed a mink working its way upstream along the airport side bank. Admittedly, I was totally surprised to find a mink so close to town. I'll attach the one photo I managed of the mink.

As Tony Hall mentioned in an earlier email, sure is nice to see the bird mix changing as spring advances.

Good birding,

Bob Battagin

April 20, 2008

Hi Birders,

This morning Evening Grosbeaks visited for the first time this season. They tend to be bullies and no other species come to the sunflower feeders when they are present. In Galeppi Ranch they stay just a few weeks and then they continue their migration and presumably make nests higher up in the mountains. The Black-headed Grosbeaks, in contrast, are not bullies and some of them stay here all summer and presumably make nests in the local forest. Please let me know if I am in error in these assessments.

Tony Hall

April 20, 2008

Thought I would share this little guy getting started for the morning right outside our window.



Raymond Gipson

April 21, 2008

Tony and everyone, good morning!

Evening grosbeaks seem to move regionally in flocks. There have been 20-40 birds hanging out in our neighbors' backyard aspens and around their feeders for weeks. Their loud, high-pitched "chree!" calls are incessant -- or seem so when they're right outside one's office window.

Anyone wanting a good look and listen should hang out a block west of the courthouse in Quincy, near the corner of High Street and Buchanan Street in the 8-9 a.m. hour. The evening grosbeaks make a racket, so they're easy to find.

Linda Blum

April 21, 2008

Raymond - thanks for the nice photo of the male lesser goldfinch.

Henry and I were successful relocating the green heron that Bob Battagin found on Spanish Creek. It was much further downstream from where Bob originally found it, probably 1 - 1.25 miles downstream of Gansner Park.

We put the canoe in at Gansner Park and floated downstream to Chandler Rd. We flushed the green heron about five times out in front of us in about a 250 yard stretch of Spanish Creek. It was about half way between Gansner and Chandler Rd in a dense thicket of willow and cottonwoods.

Colin Dillingham

May 6, 2008

This afternoon Bob Battagin found a solitary sandpiper at the Quincy Sewage Ponds. Angie and I were able to get out there to see the bird as well. It is located in the mudflat habitat on the far side of the large reservoir.

There were also spotted sandpiper, killdeer and least sandpiper there. Good diversity for American Valley shorebirds.

This morning I had an unusual bird fly over my backyard - an American Bittern. My guess is that it is hanging out at Thompson Valley ponds, as it was flying in that direction. Also saw a Lazuli bunting in my yard this morning (400 First Street in East Quincy).

Colin Dillingham

April 23, 2008

Barabara Bazan in Calpine reported seeing hundreds of white-faced ibises in Sierra Valley near Sierraville on Tuesday.

I hope to enjoy the spring birding around Quincy this weekend :)

David Arsenault

April 28, 2008

In East Quincy at Fairgrounds/Hwy 70 the Nashville Warblers were back on Friday, similar to return dates I have for the last two years (16th and 25th) although the dates aren't very accurate since I'm only there about once a week. I also heard a Hermit Warbler, which I haven't heard there before. Along Quincy Junction Road near Lee Road several Cassin's Vireos were calling on Saturday. Along the North Fork of the Feather River between Rich Bar and Belden, the Black-throated Gray Warblers were quite active on Sunday.

Good birding,

David Arsenault

April 28, 2008

The Yellow Warbler that breeds in my backyard showed up right on time the 25th, the same exact date as the previous 2 years. Tree Swallows are defending nest boxes, Black-headed Grosbeak are singing till dark, Song Sparrow are all paired up – it is finally spring in Chester.

Ryan Burnett

April 28, 2008

Good stuff, David and Ryan. Welcome back migrants! My family and I did a hike along the Cascade Trail near Keddie on April 13th and heard 5 or so singing Black-throated Gray Warblers and 1 singing Warbling Vireo near the trailhead.

Cassin's Vireos, Warbling Vireos, BTGW's, Nashville Warblers, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Yellow Warblers galore at the Earth Week event on the Heart K Ranch on Saturday (4/26)! Lots of Bank Swallows as well.

Best,

Paul Hardy

April 30, 2008

Visiting birder Juan Caicedo from Bisbee, AZ had a great morning birding in Quincy, see message below:

Hi Birders,

I spent the morning at Gansner Park and the Quincy Wastewater Treatment Plant and saw/heard lots of activity. I started at Gansner Park (7-9am) near the baseball field and then followed the trail downstream that goes between the ball field and Spanish Creek. After the park I headed to the wastewater plant (9:30-10:30) and followed the road between the main pond and Spanish Creek. The first number after the species is for Gansner Park and the second for the wastewater plant. A very nice 52 species morning. Do Common Goldeneye and Golden-Crowned Sparrow seem to be a little late in leaving?

White-faced Ibis --,3

Canada Geese 8, 15+ (1 pair w/8 chicks, lots more in the marshy field past the main pond)

Wood Duck 2, 6

Mallard 6, 9 (lots more in the marshy field past the main pond)

Cinnamon Teal -,1

Ring-necked Duck -, 25

Bufflehead -, 11

Ruddy Duck -, 2

Common Goldeneye -, 1

Turkey Vulture 2, 4

Osprey -, 1

California Quail 5, -

Killdeer -, 5

Vaux's Swift -, 7

Anna's Hummingbird 2, -

Rufous Hummingbird -,1

Downy Woodpecker 1, -

Northern Flicker 2, -

Red-Breasted Sapsucker 2, -

Dusky Flycatcher 1, -

Black Phoebe 1, 2

Warbling Vireo 7

Cassin's Vireo 1, 1

American Crow 3

Common Raven 1, 2

Black-billed Magpie -,1

Steller's Jay 2, 7

Tree Swallow -, ~30
Northern Rough-winged Swallow -, ~20
Violet-green Swallow -, ~25
Cliff Swallow 2, ~20
Mountain Chickadee 4, -
Red-Breasted Nuthatch 1, -
House Wren -, 2
American Robin 12, 4
European Starling 5, 3
Wilson's Warbler 1, 1
Macgillivray's Warbler 1, -
Yellow-Rumped Warbler 7, -
Nashville Warbler 3, -
Black-Throated Gray Warbler 2, -
Yellow Warbler 2, -
Western Tanager 1, -
Black-Headed Grosbeak 7, -
Song Sparrow 1, 4
Spotted Towhee 9, 3
White-crowned Sparrow
Golden-Crowned Sparrow 3, -
Red-winged Blackbird --, 10
Black-Headed Cowbird 5, 4
Lesser Goldfinch 6, 2
Purple Finch 1, -

Juan Caicedo
Bisbee, AZ

David Arsenault

April 30, 2008

Juan also had this to share from yesterday along Caribou Rd:

I spent a great hour and a half on 4/28 (5-6:30pm) along Caribou Rd. east of Belden around the North Arm Campground and saw the following:

2 Common Merganser
3 Canada Geese
1 Anna's Hummingbird
1 Downy Woodpecker
1 Warbling Vireo
2 Cassin's Vireo
1 Hutton's Vireo
5 Steller's Jay

15 Tree Swallow
1 American Dipper
7 American Robin
1 Townsend's Warbler
5 Nashville Warbler
3 Black-Throated Gray Warbler
2 Yellow Warbler
1 Yellow-Breasted Chat
2 Western Tanager
1 Bullock's Oriole
2 Song Sparrow
3 Spotted Towhee
6 Black-headed Grosbeak

David Arsenault

May 5, 2008

To add a little to that..... Juan is working on PRBO's Northern Sierra project this summer which includes a number of QLG related projects (black oak and aspen enhancement, DFPZ monitoring, etc). Juan was a graduate of FRC in the 1990's so in some ways he is what we call a recapture! Ryan Burnett

May 15, 2008

Arie from Beckwourth is wondering how to keep the Steller's jays from ravaging his feeders. Any suggestions? I know that thistle feeders and other small-bill-only feeders aren't used much by jays. It may also help to have a jay feeding area away from other feeders to keep them distracted. I'm sure some of you have a lot of experience with jays and feeders and I have almost none so please share your knowledge.

Note that there are some new e-mail addresses on the list so please respond to this message for your next posting.

Best,

David

May 15, 2008

You can buy a cage sort of thing that hangs over your feeder. The jays give up - its just too hard for them to reach in, but the little birds have no problem. Works for me.

I got mine at Wild Birds Unlimited and they are online, I believe.

Mary Abbott

May 15, 2008

The advice of the ornithological world is not to feed birds during the breeding season, especially when squirrels, Jays, and cowbirds are around. They are all nest predators and cowbirds are using all the energy they get from feeders to produce more eggs to lay in other birds nests. I find feeders up in summer also attract a lot of House Sparrows which like to compete for my tree swallow boxes. Carpodacus finches (siskins, goldfinches) are obligate granivores but the other birds are primarily foraging on insects this time of year. If you don't have House Sparrow, Cowbird, or Jays at your thistle feeder then it is probably ok to feed goldfinches through the summer. However, we recommend the best way to attract and support birds in your yard is through native plants and other bird friendly vegetation. I put up my feeder in September and take it down in early April. Feeding birds at your feeder is nice but watching a robin nest in your yard or a Calliope Hummingbird working the penstemon flowers is even more exciting. Also, if you have an outdoor cat or your neighbor has one that gets in your yard it is in the birds best interest not to attract them to your yard, including hummingbirds. Enjoy the warm weather. I hope you all can make it up here for Collins Biodiversity Days birding around Lake Almanor. The smell of willow flowers is intoxicating right now and I have been waking up each morning to splendid dawn chorus of birds. Ryan Burnett

May 15, 2008

I'm afraid I've been a little tardy reporting out to all of you the results of our Big Day on May 7. For those of you unfamiliar - a big day is one calendar day spent in search of as many species as possible. Usually a geographic boundary is set - we used the confines of Plumas County.

Bob Battagin, David Arsenault and I had a wonderful day! Our general route - Meet at 2:30 am and start owling around Butterfly Valley, American Valley and Thompson Valley, then up Peppard Flat Rd West of American Valley. We birded the forest with the dawn chorus, around American Valley then shot east to Little Last Chance Creek Canyon and Frenchman Reservoir Area. After that we enjoyed Sierra Valley, headed back through American Valley, to Indian Valley and finished the daylight up at Lake Almanor. Continue owling around Canyon Dam and back to American Valley where we finished the big day at midnight.

Best birds –

Black-bellied plover, dunlin (both County birds for all three of us)
Solitary sandpiper (David Lifer) and lark sparrow (both second county records for me)
Black Tern, Red-necked grebe (David lifer), Barred owl (Bob Lifer)

Great duck and shorebird and larid diversity made for a grand day, and even going a week earlier than previous Plumas big days didn't seem to hurt the warblers/flycatchers. Although we missed pac-slope flycatcher and dusky,

we had 7 other species. We pretty well landed all the expected warblers except Orange-crowned. It rained hard from Portola and up Little Last Chance Creek to Frenchman.

We had a golden moment on a ridge above the east side of Frenchman when the sun popped out and the birds jumped out from behind every bush! Sierra Valley was wonderful, with loads of ducks of all sorts, the two county shorebirds for me, cooperative bitterns a sora and more.

On the drive back to American Valley from Sierra Valley, Colin informed the group with his analysis of the current total, and the potential remaining species, that we had a good chance to beat the second place record of 135 (we were sitting at a total of 118 species), but that beating the record of 146 species was pretty much out of the question.

Two solitary sandpipers at the Quincy Sewage Treatment Ponds were congenial and allowed us to study them for a long time and a nearby barn owl was cooperative.

Indian Valley species fell into our lap in rapid succession, and we left there with smiles on our faces. The first 70 minutes at Lake Almanor were incredibly slow, and we added only 1 species bringing our total to 128. We had a nice run with white-headed woodpecker, gray flycatcher and pygmy nuthatch in a pine stand outside of Chester, then birded the causeway (slow), found a couple lark sparrows in Chester, then hiked to the mouth of the North Fork of the Feather River where it enters Lake Almanor.

As the sun was looming low on the horizon, we broke into a new second place at 138 (previous second place was 135). Then magic over the next 15 minutes all from the mouth of the North Fork- the flock of bufflehead we'd been staring at for 45 minutes miraculously had 5 common goldeneyes. A greater white-fronted goose was swimming right in front of us where we'd been scoping. 7 canvasbacks appeared out of nowhere. A least sandpiper was standing 30 feet from Bob. 3 American pipits and 3 semipalmated plovers appeared in the short grass. A horned grebe surfaced right where we'd been scoping, the lighting improved as the heat waves died down. An eared grebe was found as a northern harrier flew in front of the setting sun. Unbelievably we realize we just broke the record at 147! We hike back to Chester, stop at a rail spot (next to the trail rails!) and finally get a Virginia rail just before 9 pm for 148. Over Pizza, we realize Colin had missed a couple on the checklist, so with a recount we are now at 150 species! The next couple hours of owling are unproductive so our final count of 150 species is a new Plumas County Record.

I've attached our list of species (2 pages) as well as a data dump from my

birding database (21 pages) that includes details of where each species was sighted (it includes more than one record for some species).

(See attached file: Plumas_BigDay_20080507.doc)(See attached file: bigday_Plumas_wDetails_20080507.doc)

Colin Dillingham

May 16, 2008

Coming back from Sierraville on A23 towards Portola tonight, we saw some turkeys in an area where turkeys have not really been observed much according to locals, including one Audubon member, and we saw some turkes cross the road into the woods way ahead of us. Almost all the turkeys make it into the sage in the pine but the last one crossed a bit more slowly so we got right up on it and it was a totally white turkey. I could not get a good look at eyes but could not detect any red showing that it might be an albino. My first thought that it was like the white tigers, not an albino, but instead a bird with mutation in genes for color. It was located about 1/2 mile north of the Sierra County line into Plumas County. I take it if he has lived this long, he will be around that area for awhile if anyone wants to go check and see if they can find it also. Neat viewing this bird this evening. I have a freind who had seen a whitish multicolored wild turkey but have never head of complete white one. Has anyone else seen an ALL white turkey in the wild?

Raymond Gipson

May 19, 2008

Hi birders,

I participated in a highly successful birding tour of Indian Valley led by David Arsenault last Saturday. We saw lots of birds and the weather was beautiful. A high point for me was seeing, for the first time, an Ash-throated Flycatcher that was brought in close by David using a Stokes CD. In the afternoon we went to Genesee Valley where Bob Beckwith led us in building lots of bird boxes. If you want information on the boxes we built and birds we saw contact David. When I got home I immediately installed four bird boxes because even though the nesting season is advanced I was hoping to get lucky.

On Sunday I went on another highly successful birding tour, this time to Lake Almanor. This one was led by Colin Dillingham and while driving there he showed me a good birding site in the willows on the right side of the road just before the right hand turn off to Taylorsville. We saw a fine Yellow-breasted Chat at this site.

After I returned home I was working in the front yard when I heard some excited twitterings. Two Tree Swallows were swooping low between the Ponderosa Pines checking out two of the bird boxes I had installed on them. These boxes were designed

to fit either Tree Swallows or Western Bluebirds and have a 1 1/2 inch diameter hole and a 6 x 6 inch floor plan. After about an hour the swallows chose one of the boxes and have frequently visited it since. Sometimes the female sits inside looking out and sometimes she sits outside looking in while the male perches nearby. The amazing thing to me is that the Tree Swallows found these boxes within 20 hours of me installing them and I had not seen swallows previously in this patch of Ponderosa Pine forest. At the back of the house I have installed two boxes on Douglas Fir trees. These boxes are suitable for either Chickadees or Nuthatches and have a 1 1/8 inch hole and a 3 1/2 x 5 inch floor plan. As of yet there have been no visitors to them but I might catch some Mountain Chickadees that want to rear a second set of young ones. Colin told me that Chickadees like to use another nesting site for their second brood.

Regards

Tony Hall

June 3, 2008

Hi Birders,

The Sierra Institute is offering a tour on June 28 called Habitat for Birds and Humanity. Ryan Burnett of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory will guide the tour and talk about birds and critical habitat in the Almanor Basin. The tour begins at a mist net station near Chester where participants will see wild birds up close and learn the names and markings of some species found in the Basin. Ryan will discuss some of the major threats to habitat in the Basin, including implications for land management. The tour starts around 8:30 am and ends around 3:30 pm. Morning coffee/tea and pastries, lunch, snacks and bus transportation are provided. The tour cost is \$45. Some moderate hiking is involved.

Contact Jennifer Kaufmann at 530-284-1022 for information.

Please note that there are new e-mail addresses on the list so please respond to this message for your next posting.

Best,

David Arsenault

June 8, 2008

Thought the group might get a kick out of seeing these pictures. My wife took them while on field trip with her 8th grade class on Friday. They are so cute and this one did not mind that she was so close. Enjoy bird lovers.

Raymond Gipson

June 8, 2008

Based on my observations it is no coincidence that this Pygmy Nuthatch (Peanut) is on a Jeffrey Pine. On the Lassen and Plumas they appeared tied exclusively to Jeffrey Pine dominated habitat. Nice pictures.

Ryan Burnett

June 9, 2008

Yesterday Harry & I saw juniper titmice, mountain bluebirds, and blue-gray gnatcatchers!!! In Canyonlands and Dead Horse Point State Park, Utah.

For once I can contribute something to this list...

Linda Blum

June 11, 2008

Hello all,

Since moving (for the summer) to Clio on May 18th we've been able to add 3 new birds to our life list: Redhead duck(sighted at Marble HS Rd; Cassin's Finch (near Beckwourth) and the Ash-throated Flycatcher(Clio's River Edge RVP). The Species List of 5/7/08 has been great help, we use it regularly when out and about. Thanks again.

We have a pygmy nuthatch nesting in a fence post just out our door, and a killdeer nesting about 30 yards away with 4 eggs in the middle of her pebble nest, and there is a solitary Sandhill Crane in attendance too. Other than that it's all the "usual suspects" for us.

I do have a (stupid?) question, On the species list, what does the notation "cpd" stand for? I haven't been able to figure it out.

Mary & Bob Wilcox

June 11, 2008

Hi Birders,

Last Saturday, Gregorio and I birded Spanish Creek from Highway 70 to past the sewage ponds and then up Clear Stream. We saw 45 species most notably 2 Bullock's Orioles along Spanish Creek, lots of warblers including orange-crowned, black-throated gray, Wilson's, yellow, Macgillivray's, Nashville, and yellow-rumped, and also lots of swallows including bank, barn, northern rough-winged, cliff and tree. There were a number of wood ducks that bred in the boxes along Clear Stream. We had a great

observation of a young wood duck that dove when we approached and swam under only about 6 inches of water for about 50 feet down the stream with its neck stretched straight out in front of it and its body flattened. We also saw mating adults and tadpole western toad, adult bullfrog, tadpole western tree frog, racer, and western pond turtle.

On Sunday, we birded Sulphur and Barry Creeks along Highway 89 near Clio where we also had a lot of warblers including orange-crowned, yellow-rumped, wilson's, Macgillivray's, yellow, Nashville, and hermit as well as high numbers of flycatchers including dusky, Hammond's, western wood-pewee, and pacific-slope. Near Clio, we watched a sandhill crane repeatedly attacked by red-winged blackbirds and the crane acted as if nothing was happening. Sometimes, the blackbirds would even land on its back. It must have been foraging near their nest!

Thanks Mary and Bob for the heads up on the ash-throat near Clio, I'll check that out next time I'm over there.

Please respond to this e-mail for your next posting since some recent messages are missing some folks on the list.

Best,

David Arsenault

June 11, 2008

On Monday on Lake Almanor 100 meters from the causeway (south) there was a Common Goldeneye female with a very strange looking duck that most closely resembled a male Hooded Merganser. We suspect it was a Hooded Merganser X Common Goldeneye hybrid hence the hanging out and associated with the goldeneye. Either way both species are extremely uncommon in June up here. Our hearts jumped a beat as the thought of a Smew crossed our mind but definitely more of a Hooded Merganser look just some more white and missing the chestnut sides. I may try and get out and have another look for it again tomorrow. Also, one of my crew members saw a White-tailed Kite in the Pine Creek Valley in Lassen county north of Hwy. 44 towards Martin Creek.

Ryan Burnett

June 12, 2008

Thanks for the good stuff, David and Ryan! While hiking with the kids on Sunday (6/8) along the new bike path on the north side of Spanish Creek, between HWY 70/89 and Feather River College, I heard a Yellow-breasted Chat singing away! To be precise, it was located about 20 yards west of the last trailer in the River Ranch RV Park between the bike path and Spanish Creek.

Best,

Paul Hardy

June 13, 2008

Here are a few photos we managed to get of the local pygmy nuthatch and killdeer at their nests. Enjoy.



Mary & Bob Wilcox

June 15, 2008

An interestingly colored Stellar's Jay we spotted yesterday. An immature or hybrid?



Mary & Bob Wilcox

June 18, 2008

This morning I saw a Green Heron along Boyle Creek where it crosses the Bike path in Quincy. This is essentially behind the US Forest Service Ranger Station. That is only the second one I've ever seen in Plumas County! Colin.

Colin Dillingham

June 18, 2008

Greetings Colin,

Somewhere are my notes about a Green Heron I saw on the opposite shoreline of the Middle Fork of Feather River in Portola. It was opposite the Sleepy Pines Motel. Probably early summer, ca. 1998) or thereabouts). I'll see if the notes are retrievable. It also is the only one I've seen in PLU Co.

Thanks for the notes! Happy Birding,

Phil E. Gordon
Blairsdon, PLU Co./Hayward, ALA Co.

P.S. We'll (Pat and I) be at Yuba Pass/Sierra Valley et environs these next two weekends and in Plumas County until 10 July.

June 30, 2008

Hi Birders,

The birding tour led by Ryan Burnett was enjoyable, very informative and well attended. I met David Lind on the tour and he would like to be put on our birding lists so that he can hear about any new birds that we see and other useful information such as Mountain Quail, Plumas Audubon Society news. His email is davelind@frontiernet.net.

Tony Hall

July 3, 2008

We have had a horde of band-tailed pigeons around lately. Today we had a rare one show up. It is mottled with white feathers here and there on its back. It was a nice bird to watch and he was not quite as aggressive as the others.



Raymond Gipson

July 7, 2008

This little guy is very differently colored but may change after his first molt. But, it is the first time I have ever seen a dove with this much brown. Enjoy



Raymond Gipson

July 12, 2008

Hi Birders,

This morning I saw a Summer Tanager out of my den window in Galeppi Ranch, Quincy at 8:45 am. This is a new bird sighting for Plumas County. I called David Arsenault and

he came over. We didn't see it near the house so we walked to a nearby riparian area. We relocated the bird in this area at 11:20 am and David got a clear view of it. It had the appearance of being either a lighter red second year male or a redder female. The bird is moving around so it may be hard to locate.

The riparian area can be accessed from the end of Carol Lane East. Park at the end of Carol Lane East, go through the gate and walk towards Clear Creek Road. Call me for further directions.

Tony Hall

July 13, 2008

Tony and I spent the morning trying to relocate the tanager today, but didn't have any luck. We watched the grape jelly slowly disappear out of his den window as black-headed grosbeaks and a male bullock's oriole enjoyed the sweet snack. We put out a couple orange halves, but nobody seemed very interested.

We birded around the riparian zone between Clear Creek Rd, Carol Lane East and Carol Lane West, which is a very large area, and a tanager could easily hide out. It will certainly be worth a few more visits to try to excavate this hard-to-relocate bird in this immense willow marsh. It was a very enjoyable morning, with about 30 species seen, including bullock's oriole, yellow warbler, orange-crowned warbler, red-breasted sapsucker, pygmy and red-breasted nuthatches, bewick's and house wren, wood duck, calif quail, band-tailed pigeon, anna's and rufous hummingbird, lots of western wood-pewee, and even a double-crested cormorant on Shea Pond at the end of Clear Creek Rd.

Colin Dillingham

July 14, 2008

Hi Dave,

The CD I use for bird songs is Stokes Field Guide to Bird Songs Western Region which has 4 CDs and a 60 page booklet. I have copied this message to the birders list so that others may advise you on CDs, DVDs and equipment that cover not only songs but also give photos of birds and is portable. There also are internet sites that give pictures and songs such as the Cornell Ornithology site. My favorite local field guide book is the Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America but when I am travelling I also carry the National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America because it covers everything (?) I might see and also is small enough for a large back pocket.

Regards

Tony Hall

July 14, 2008

Plumas County Bird enthusiasts, There are two opportunities in the next week to view bird banding. PRBO is co-hosting with the Almanor Ranger District a bird banding demonstration at Gurnsey Creek this Wednesday (7/16). All those interested should meet at the Almanor Ranger District at 0800 to carpool/caravan out to the site.

Also, this coming Sunday (7/20) we will be co-hosting another banding day with Lassen National Park at Manzanita Lake between 0800 – 1030. To participate in the park banding day you meet up with the park ranger at the Manzanita Lake trailhead and he brings groups out to the site every 30 minutes (you can also just walk out around the lake and you will run into us).

We will discuss songbird natural history, identification, habitat management, and the importance of long-term monitoring. All ages are encouraged so please join us this week.

Ryan Burnett

July 23, 2008

I've seen our local green heron twice in the past two days. The heron seems to have found a favorite roost at the corner of Quincy Junction Rd and Hwy 70. I saw it go into the cottonwood tree on the high school front lawn area, and landed about 30 feet high, adjacent to the two Giant Sequoia trees. The cottonwood is the tree nearest the sidewalk push button for the traffic light. I saw it land there at 12:15 today, and saw it flying from that grove of trees towards Boyle Creek near the bike path yesterday. When I saw the bird a few weeks ago flying to Boyle Creek over the bike path, it was flying from the same general vicinity.

If you still need the Green Heron for your Plumas County bird list, it might be worth a visit.

Colin Dillingham

July 23, 2008

I saw my first White-tailed Kite in the Almanor Basin "kiting" over the meadow on the Almanor lakeshore. It was in the open grassy part of the meadow in the polygon formed by the feather river, railroad track, lakeshore, and hwy. 36. The western grebes were dancing this week as well so they should start nesting on the lake any day now. Ryan.

Ryan Burnett

July 24, 2008

We saw our first mountain quail a couple of days ago at Upper Sardine Lk (yes I know...that's Sierra County, but still...). And a couple of Lesser Nighthawks showed up in Clio last night. We've seen them before here, about a month ago. Having observed and heard the common Nighthawks at Wallace Island, BC CAN, the difference is readily noticed. Western Tanagers are frequenting the middle fork of the Feather River here too, as well as Upper Sardine Lake. Boy, it's nice to be able to get out again with the air clearing.

Mary Wilcox

July 28, 2008

I made it up to Lake Almanor on Friday, July 25, and walked from Chester down to the mouth of the North Fork Feather River at Lake Almanor. I saw the White-tailed Kite (Thanks Ryan - a new county bird for me) as well as two Marbled Godwits at the mouth. The godwits were also new for me in Plumas County. Two great birds, #254 and #255 for me on my Plumas County list!

Perhaps most exciting were the western grebes. At the mouth of the North Fork Feather River, there were 40 nests under construction and the grebes were very interesting to watch - especially their water dancing displays. On the NW shore of Lake Almanor, there were over 1000 grebes and I counted 234 nests that were visible. I also saw several pairs building "nests" that weren't even visible yet above the water, but I could tell that they were mounding vegetation. I wouldn't be surprised to see much larger numbers of nests in the next couple weeks. I hope the water level doesn't drop too quickly, or the coyotes will be enjoying many grebe omelettes. Many of the nests are very close to shore.

Colin Dillingham

July 28, 2008

Darrel and I just returned from a great 6-day backpack trip in the high country of the Ansel Adams Wilderness (adjacent to Yosemite National Park to the east). We spooked a juvenile golden eagle from a high perch, saw (and heard) lots of Clarks Nutcrackers, enjoyed abundant Mountain Chickadees, Dark-eyed Juncos, and Grey-Crowned Rosy Finches, and saw several Mountain Bluebirds and Rock Wrens. We got very close to a pair of White-tailed Ptarmigan (see attached) that had 3 adorable little chicks. Two surprising sightings were a California Seagull who spent the days with us at Marie Lake (11,300 feet)--probably visiting

from Mono Lake (see attached--a little blurry but cool), and a Red-winged Blackbird that we came upon as we hiked up toward the 12,023' peak we were climbing. It was fun to get up high and see what's hanging out there now.

Darla DeRuiter