

December 2007 – January 2008 Plumas Bird List postings:

December 2, 2007

I finally relocated the red-naped sapsucker yesterday afternoon (2:05 pm) after 4 attempts to find it. Although the bird is clearly coming in to the oak tree about 40 yards up Brinkman Rd from the Clear Creek Rd junction (left side of rd as you face up hill), it is not coming in for long periods. After nearly 4 hours of watching the tree, the bird finally came in for about 25 seconds before flying away. It fed at the holes it made on the tree bole quickly, and then flew off.

Maintain your distance, Tony says the bird is fairly wary. I watched the tree from the Clear Creek Rd junction.

Also, I saw 2 ferruginous hawks and 2 rough-legged hawks along Quincy Junction Rd in American Valley.

Colin Dillingham

December 2, 2007

Hi Birders,

I went to see the sapsucker on Friday (~3pm) and parked at the corner of Clear Creek Road and Brinkham Rd and got out of my car and flushed the sapsucker when I approached the oak tree. It didn't return for the next half hour. I returned this morning (Sunday ~10am) and parked at the corner and just watched the tree from my car. The sapsucker was in the tree, but wasn't very observable so I drove up next to the tree and was able to watch it clearly from my car for about 15 minutes until Lilly (my daughter) was adamant enough about going back to Quincy Junction Rd to see the horses.

The sapsucker is an immature male (first fall) that has mostly developed its adult plumage except on the breast. Interestingly, it also hasn't developed the white wing patches apparent in all North American sapsuckers. The sap holes in the oak are pretty extensive so the bird has been around a while and perhaps plans to stay for the winter, which is unusual since they generally overwinter in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts. Perhaps it will depart once the snow comes. Does anyone know if the sap hole pattern is unique among sapsucker species. I believe that only Red-naped make a complete ring of holes around the trunk, like those seen on the oak on Brinkham Rd, but I'm not sure if this is unique to Red-naped.

On another note, I have been archiving messages posted to this e-mail list at: http://www.aviancenter.com/Plumas_Audubon.htm. I also post Audubon events including local Christmas Bird Counts there. I am working on creating a Plumas Audubon website (plumasaudubon.org) and will post the archives there once the site is up and running, I will keep you informed.

Best,

David Arsenault

December 28, 2007

Hi Birders,

Yesterday, in Thompson Valley there was a Red-breasted Sapsucker at the corner of Hwy 70 and LaPorte Road, and a large flock of Mountain Bluebirds and unknown Shrike at the Thompson Valley Ranch stock pond. In American Valley, there was a Hermit Thrush along Greenhorn Creek at Hwy 70 and a Merlin at the corner of Chandler and Quincy Junction in one of the large trees at the entrance to the New England Ranch. Other raptors included 15+ Red-tailed Hawks, 5 Rough-legged Hawks, 2 Red-shouldered Hawks, 2 American Kestrels, 1 Ferruginous Hawk, 1 Northern Harrier, and 1 Bald Eagle.

There will be a lot of raptors for the Sierra Valley Christmas Bird Count tomorrow (Saturday Dec 29). Meet at Casa Carmelita in Portola for breakfast and count coordination at 6 am.

Good birding,

David Arsenault

January 2, 2008

This morning I went looking for the shrike that David Arsenault found on Dec 28 by the ponds in Thompson Valley. I did not find the shrike, but there were 120 Canada geese, 6 cackling geese and 1 greater white-fronted goose. Also a gadwall, 2 hooded merganser and 3 American wigeon in the pond. Please let me know if anybody finds the shrike.

Colin Dillingham

January 2, 2008

Sorry didn't get these notes posted earlier -

In Loyalton - Bob Battagin found a white-throated sparrow (I think he said 801 Main Street). In Sierraville - I found a Harris' sparrow (at the end of N Batelle St next to a red metal gate) and a black phoebe adjacent to Hwy 49 at the south end of Sierraville. Also found were Golden-crowned sparrow and White-crowned sparrow - this means we found all 4 species of North American sparrows in the genus Zonotrichia! That is quite an accomplishment.

David Arsenault found a Northern Shrike on the A-23, about 1 mile north of the Marble Hot Springs road junction.

We found 56 species during the count, which is about average for Sierra Valley CBC. We only had 4 teams - we often have 5 teams. If Paul Hardy had made it we surely would have found 60 species for the count. Better luck next year! We had about 2500 total birds, about average for the count. Birds not seen that were surprises include Ferruginous Hawk and red-breasted nuthatch. Colin

Colin Dillingham

January 21, 2008

Hi Birders

Yesterday I saw a nice flock of Golden-crowned Sparrows on the north end of the bridge on Quincy Junction Road that crosses Greenhorn Creek. The Field Guides I have looked at do not comprehensively describe this species. The ones I saw had a broad yellow band along the top of the head like a 'mohawk' that in some cases had tinges of green in it and a definite white eye-ring, especially in the immatures. Some had extensive black on their heads most did not. Is it possible to distinguish males from females of this species.

Sorry I missed the Christmas bird counts but I had an emergency that kept me out of town much of December and through the New Year.

Happy New Year

Tony Hall

January 25, 2008

Just ran across this posting regarding Bohemian Waxwings in Chilcoot on Calbirds.

Bob Battagin

87 BOHEMIAN WAXWINGS were seen in Chilcoot, Plumas CO on 01.18.08. The birds were observed around 2:30pm in a tree on a private residence on the west side of Frenchman Lake Road, about 1/2 mile north of the intersection of Hwy 70. We revisited the location the next morning but could not relocate the flock despite an extensive search of the area.

Joining me were Jim White and Roger Hensaw from Marin County.

Terry Colborn
Davis, CA