

Plumas Birds Archive

November 7 to December 31, 2011

November 7

Hi Birders, Today while birding around Quincy we found a NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD in an Apple tree/shrub across from Hansen's Pond at the end of the New England Ranch wall. Along Quincy Junction Road there was a PRAIRIE FALCON near the junction with Bell Lane. And at the Sewage Ponds 3 SNOW GEESE, 1 adult and 2 juveniles, were in the pond behind the main pond.

Good birding on this beautiful day, Amber & Scott Edwards

November 8

Hi Birders, the Northern Mockingbird is still in the same spot as yesterday, deep inside the shrubby apple tree, it seemed to work best to stand on the pond side of the road near the pump house directly opposite the apple bush and scan through all the twigs, it might take some patience. Amber & Scott Edwards

This morning, at 8:15 AM, I saw the mocker fly from the New England Ranch across the road and land in the trees adjacent to the house closest to Hansen's Pond. It was feeding in the tree with the red berries. Good luck if you go on a mocker search! There was a rough-legged hawk in the meadow as well. On Sunday afternoon, I saw a flock of 120 American pipits, 8 Mtn Bluebirds and 7 Western Bluebirds in Thompson Valley.
Colin Dillingham

November 9

A White-throated Sparrow just flew past my office window and is foraging in my native garden. He is with an interesting mixed species flock of chickadees, American goldfinch, yellow-rumped warblers, ruby crowned kinglets, juncos, and song sparrows. I will throw some seed out and feel free to stop by if you want to try and see him.

Ryan Burnett

November 11

At my computer a few minutes ago someone threw a rock against my large kitchen window. Or at least that was my immediate thought. Turned out to be group of mountain quail flying from across the creek, one of whom (now deceased) mistook my window reflection for a good flyway.

Of possible interest; weight 7.1 oz, 201 grams

wingspan 16 inches

distance between forward and rear claw when extended 21/4

inches (!)

These beautiful birds are one my very favorite's....and of course grace the newsletter first page. Dave Lind

November 21

A good morning out my office window today:

White throated Sparrow and **Slate-colored Fox Sparrow** continue at the feeder

A rather late *lutescens* race of **Orange-crowned Warbler** flitted by

An adult Cooper's Hawk made a visit by the feeder followed by a Northern Harrier soaring overhead

A likely **Northern Shrike** was chasing a junco or finch up high over the railroad track.

Very long tail, undulating flight, and time of year all lead me away from Loggerhead. I am going to go take a look out there now to confirm – this would be the first Northern Shrike I have seen here in 3 years and first for the all important yard list!

I also got a report from a novice birder on the west shore of an almost entirely white crow to raven sized raptor with a buffish colored head with some black markings on the wings. That sounds interesting. Might have to go check that out. Ryan Burnett

Bretta and I went to the Gray Lodge Wildlife Area near Gridley today (Monday Nov 21). We had a great time birding, there were lots of wildfowl and other bird species. I recommend a visit to Gray Lodge at this time. The two walks out of parking lot 14 including the two blinds and the viewing platform were very productive especially when using a scope. I have avoided going to Gray Lodge on Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays because I heard that people hunt in this area on these days of the week and I thought that it might have a negative impact on the birding experience. It takes a little over two hours to drive from Quincy to Gray Lodge when the road is clear.
Tony Hall

November 22

This morning there was a nice flock of Ross, Snow and White-fronted Geese along Quincy Junction road. There were some by Bell Lane (2) and the rest were opposite Lee Road Junction.

American Valley--Quincy Junction Rd. at Bell Ln., Plumas, US-CA
Nov 22, 2011 7:50 AM - 8:20 AM
Protocol: Traveling
2.0 mile(s)
Comments: Bike ride to work
18 species

Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*) 4
Snow Goose (*Chen caerulescens*) 3
Ross's Goose (*Chen rossii*) 10
Northern Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*) 1
Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) 1

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) 1
Eurasian Collared-Dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*) 1
Northern Flicker (Red-shafted) (*Colaptes auratus* [cafer Group]) 1
Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) 2
Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) 2
American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) 2
Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) 5
Mountain Chickadee (*Poecile gambeli*) 1
American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) 15
European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) 10
Brewer's Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) 55
Brown-headed Cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) 11
House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) 12

This report was generated automatically by eBird v3 (<http://ebird.org>)

Tony mentions that Gray Lodge Wildlife Area might not be as good on hunt days (Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday). I think the opposite - the hunters hunt the private rice fields and huntable portions of the wildlife refuges during the day, forcing the birds to go to the closed areas on the wildlife refuge. The Gray Lodge Automobile Tour Loop goes through the closed area, where tens of thousands of birds hide during the day. If you have never experienced the "flyoff" on during the waterfowl hunting season, it is a "must do" for all birders. I'm considering a trip down there tomorrow to take my Australian Exchange Student.
Colin Dillingham

December 9

Darla & I just saw a 1st fall Horned Grebe on pond #2 at the FRC Hatchery. Zach Parks, the Hatchery Director, called to let us know there was a grebe on the pond. Lo and behold it is a Horned Grebe with a whitish tip on the bill and white feathers between the bill and eye. It is easy to get close to and observe how the gape extends to the lores.
We'll see if it hangs around until the American Valley CBC – next Saturday 12/17. Meet at Dunn's Coffee at 7:15 am. See you there! Darrel Jury

December 12

Great observation, Scott and Amber. Although I generally like the new David Lukas "Sierra Nevada Birds" book, I'm finding that it is inaccurate for a number of species, including Hooded Mergansers, which Lukas indicates do not breed in the Sierra. The book is also inaccurate re: the location and number of breeding Sandhill Cranes and Willow Flycatchers; the Western Grebe, Short-eared Owl, Swainson's Thrush, Yellow-breasted Chat accounts also appear to be inaccurate. Perhaps a well-referenced commentary letter to the Lukas, generated by someone in this group, is in order? Ryan

and/or David would be best. :-) Paul Hardy Note this email referred to the following June 9, 2011 email.

Hi Birders, Yesterday we went up to the Antelope Lake area and over to Clark's Creek. Along road 172 or 28N03 at the end of Antelope Lake there is a marsh where Little Antelope Creek flows in. We were excited to find four HOODED MERGANSERS with female plumage. Then we saw three babies following a female, one was small enough to ride on the mother's back! A couple of the adult sized ones, with female plumage seemed kind of funny looking and maybe a bit smaller. Could they also be juveniles from an earlier brood? In the same area there were BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKERS AND MT. BLUEBIRDS. There was a male WILLIAMSON'S SAPSUCKER on the road down to Janesville and COMMON POORWILLS were calling at Clark's Creek after sunset. Good birding, Amber & Scott Edwards

December 14

I saw my first Golden Crowned Kinglet this morning in the tree out front, what a sweet little bird. Just females though, didn't spot any males in the bunch. Enjoy, Sharon Adams



December 19

Hi Birders, About every three months the Feather River Bulletin publishes an article on birding in their Sports and Recreation section that is prepared by the Plumas Audubon Society. From talking to people I got the impression that some of you may not have seen the last article on "Fall Berries and Fruit Attract Birds", which was published on November 16. I would appreciate feedback from anyone who has used the birding method in the article describing the plant species that were attractive and the bird species they attracted. Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a happy new year.

Tony Hall

Tony, That is a superb article. I have been watching berry bushes since I was a kid growing up in Oakland. We had a row of hawthorns along the street in front of our house and every fall robins and waxwings would gorge on those fruits. I think the reason they wait on the berries is that they develop a fairly high alcohol content late in the season and the birds get a bit of a buzz during the holidays, just like people. Enjoy your holiday and Merry Christmas. Harry Reeves

A first year Merlin (one of the darker races) zipped by my office window this afternoon and landed in the same tree I have seen the other two merlins from my yard in. It is interesting how different individuals of the same species are drawn to the same perch like that. It is the tallest cottonwood around with open branches at the top. We had our Christmas bird count on Lake Almanor last Wednesday – a very chilly morning but by afternoon it was one of the warmest and most snow free any of us could remember. Unofficially I believe we had 86 species. Highlights included:

Unusual Species

- 1 Golden Eagle (6th count)
- 1 - Peregrine Falcon (5th count)
- 2 - Dunlin (8th count)
- 1 - Barn Owl (I forgot to mention that one at the wrap up; 2nd count)
- 1 - Virginia Rail (3rd count)
- 2 – Cedar Waxwing (4th count)
- 1 – Savannah Sparrow (2nd count)
- 1 – Marsh Wren (5th count)

Record High Counts:

- 404 Green-winged Teal (previous high 275)
- 28 Herring Gull (previous high 18)
- 13 Common Loon (previous high 12)
- 61 Eurasian Collared Dove (20 previous high – 1st record was in 2008)
- 15 Yellow-rumped Warblers (2nd highest count).
- 274 Evening Grosbeaks (2nd highest count)

Also of interest we had 907 Western Grebes (many young of the year). The last time we had high numbers like this was 2006 the last really high water year on Almanor. The

young probably stay on the lake longer and thus it might be interesting to compare water levels in the lake with grebe numbers on Christmas bird counts for the last 30 years.

Also last week the day before “count week” started Alden and I saw 6 cackling geese and a dowitcher (presumed long-billed) just north of the river mouth. Ryan Burnett

December 23

Hi birders, Yesterday afternoon we found a WHITE-THROATED SPARROW along Carol Lane West in Quincy. It was in the willows with Golden-crowned Sparrows just past house number 840. Scott & Amber Edwards

December 26

Hi birders, about 1:00 PM today we saw a SHORT-EARED OWL fly by near the bridge that crosses Spanish Creek on Chandler Road. It flew from the Oakland Camp direction and then out into the middle of the valley. Is this the first sighting in the American Valley??? or at least in recent history? Scott and Amber Edwards

Cool- I just saw one at dusk flying out from hwy 89 over the Mt. Hough golf course towards Indian creek about 1/3 of a mile north of Taylorsville. Ryan Burnett