

## Plumas Birds Archive

**February 18 to March 5, 2012**

### February 18

Scott and Amber Edwards and I had a terrific day in Plumas. We attempted to relocate the Common Redpoll found almost 2 weeks ago (after 4 failed attempts) and struck paydirt. The COMMON REDPOLL was between the Taylorsville Museum and the bridge over Indian Creek along the main road through Taylorsville. We were able to photograph the bird after I "wished the flock would just land in this tree" - after which the flock magically landed in the tree right in front of us!



We also had 2 white-throated sparrows at almost the same location with a flock of juncos and spotted towhees. Other highlights were a Say's Phoebe on North Valley Rd and a Northern Shrike on Stampfli Rd where it crosses Indian Creek.

Earlier this morning, my wife and I relocated the Harris' Sparrow in Quincy, on Trilogy Lane, which is off of Mill Creek Rd. There are 3 sequoia trees near the storage facility at the end of Trilogy Lane.



Colin Dillingham

### **February 21**

Yesterday while checking feeders on Nelson St, south of Main St in Taylorsville, I saw a male Tricolored Blackbird. After a minute in a tree it flew north with other blackbirds. It was too far away for a photo, but the bright white stripe and deeper red color were obvious, especially in flight. We failed to refind the Common Redpoll, White-thr. Sparrows, Say's Phoebe. A Merlin and a Rough-legged Hawk were the other highlights. Also, earlier in the morning, I photographed the Harris's Sparrow in Quincy. John Sterling

### **February 23**

I got an e-mail from Kristi Jamason in Sierra Valley today saying she saw around 550 sandhill cranes take off from Sierra Valley about 9:30 AM, heading north. Harry Reeves

We have started to see a mourning dove out here near Beckwourth about 3 days ago, and then all of a sudden today we have about 50 of them out under our big feeder. So guess the doves are moving around as well as the Sandhill cranes. Take it others are seeing recent movement also. Yesterday in the early afternoon I could see out in the Valley and hear them also, a large flock of Canada geese heading south also after lifting off. Raymond Gipson

Last Friday we have about 500-600 sandhill cranes flying high over Meadow Valley and I watched a couple return to Forbes meadow across from my cabin on Silver Creek Road. We've always had a breeding pair over there. Michelle Fulton

The Plumas Audubon Society published an article in the last issue of the Feather River Bulletin in the Sports and Recreation section. I have attached the article which is titled "Enjoy the Sounds of Birds" for those who did not see this issue of the Feather River Bulletin. This afternoon a bird landed in a tree at the back of my house. It was there only for a few seconds, I did not have my binoculars and the sun was behind the bird so I only could detect the silhouette not the colors. It might have been a varied thrush. Has anyone else seen one recently in the Quincy area. Tony Hall

### **February 24**

If all you saw was silhouette, then I'd guess American Robin would be far more likely. I have seen varied thrush on two occasions this winter, both times in deep, dark, old growth forest in North facing drainages in riparian zones, where I'd most expect to find one. Varied thrush is certainly a possibility in your neighborhood, but they've been scarce this winter and despite diligent effort, Scott, Amber and I haven't located any near American Valley. Colin Dillingham

Hi Tony, we get Varied Thrush sporadically at our house usually with Robins, (Colin has found them twice this year already – on Blackhawk Rd and down the Feather River that comes out of Lake Almanor – both times not with Robins) I would listen for them – nothing else sounds like them, do you know what they sound like? let us know if you confirm it we would like to see (or hear) one this year. Amber & Scott Edwards

### **February 26**

Scott and Amber Edwards and I had a wonderful day out and about yesterday.

Our highlights.

We relocated the COMMON REDPOLL on Saturday morning at 9:50 AM after a very lucky quick stop as we passed through Taylorsville. The bird was observed in the alder tops feeding with 40 siskins and 1 American goldfinch from the corner of Main Street and Cemetary Rd (the road with the museum on it, for those of you who have already tried for the redpoll). Another viewing location was from behind the historic Dairy building on Main Street, looking E towards the alder riparia.

Our other highlights of the day included:

VARIED THRUSH up Indian Creek road towards Antelope Lake. We were 1 mile W of the road to Babcock Crossing intersection. BLACK-BACKED WOODPECKER at the SE end of Antelope Lake where Little Indian Creek inflow comes in. There is a pond above a beaver dam visible from the road, and we saw the BBWO directly up the hill in the burned snags.

NORTHERN SHRIKE - along Stampfli road in Indian Valley, 0.5 mile S of the intersection of HWY 89, at the Indian Creek bridge. It was moving around rapidly, and we also saw it closer to Hwy 89 in some willows right next to Stampfli.

Colin Dillingham

I had another great day out birding in Sierra Valley today. I started out looking for the LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE that Scott and Amber had found on Dotta-Guidici Road. I had good luck there, and also found 2 SAY'S PHOEBE. Up at Frenchman Reservoir, I crossed the dam and went up 0.3 miles to a little ridge with Mtn mahogany and scattered pine, adjacent to a closed campground. I called in a Williamson's Sapsucker by imitating a pygmy-owl. What a gorgeous bird! In the early afternoon I went along Harriet Lane, and near the narrow bridges I found an abundance of birds, including 250 white-fronted and 5 Ross' geese. There was a peregrine falcon perched nearby, but didn't seem to be bothering the waterfowl. My most exciting find of the day was an apparent new Peregrine Falcon eyrie. I won't post that location to the list serve to protect the location from potential disturbance. Colin Dillingham

### February 29

Today during a break in the storm we took a drive and found 2 VARIED THRUSH with a group of Robins midway down Carol Lane East off of Chandler Rd in Quincy.

Amber & Scott Edwards

### March 1

#### 2011 American Valley Christmas Bird Count

|                              |                          |     |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| Greater White-fronted Goose  | Anser albifrons          | 1   |
| Snow Goose                   | Chen caerulescens        | 5   |
| Ross's Goose                 | Chen rossii              | 1   |
| Canada Goose                 | Branta canadensis        | 114 |
| Wood Duck                    | Aix sponsa               | 5   |
| Gadwall                      | Anas strepera            | 8   |
| American Wigeon              | Anas americana           | 24  |
| Mallard                      | Anas platyrhynchos       | 188 |
| Northern Shoveler            | Anas clypeata            | 1   |
| American Green-winged Teal   | Anas crecca              | 16  |
| Ring-necked Duck             | Aythya collaris          | 101 |
| Bufflehead                   | Bucephala albeola        | 18  |
| Common Goldeneye             | Bucephala clangula       | 34  |
| Barrow's Goldeneye           | Bucephala islandica      | 1   |
| Hooded Merganser             | Lophodytes cucullatus    | 7   |
| Common Merganser             | Mergus merganser         | 2   |
| Ruddy Duck                   | Oxyura jamaicensis       | 2   |
| Wild Turkey                  | Meleagris gallopavo      | 2   |
| Mountain Quail               | Oreortyx pictus          | 11  |
| California Quail             | Callipepla californica   | 51  |
| Great Blue Heron (Blue form) | Ardea herodias           | 14  |
| Bald Eagle                   | Haliaeetus leucocephalus | 4   |
| Northern Harrier             | Circus cyaneus           | 11  |

|                        |                                |     |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|
| Sharp-shinned Hawk     | <i>Accipiter striatus</i>      | 1   |
| Northern Goshawk       | <i>Accipiter gentilis</i>      | 1   |
| Red-tailed Hawk        | <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>       | 37  |
| Ferruginous Hawk       | <i>Buteo regalis</i>           | 3   |
| Rough-legged Hawk      | <i>Buteo lagopus</i>           | 4   |
| Golden Eagle           | <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>       | 1   |
| American Kestrel       | <i>Falco sparverius</i>        | 7   |
| Merlin                 | <i>Falco columbarius</i>       | 3   |
| American Coot          | <i>Fulica americana</i>        | 323 |
| Killdeer               | <i>Charadrius vociferus</i>    | 1   |
| Wilson's Snipe         | <i>Gallinago delicata</i>      | 3   |
| Rock Pigeon            | <i>Columba livia</i>           | 17  |
| Eurasian Collared-Dove | <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>   | 18  |
| Mourning Dove          | <i>Zenaida macroura</i>        | 62  |
| Barn Owl               | <i>Tyto alba</i>               | 2   |
| Great Horned Owl       | <i>Bubo virginianus</i>        | 2   |
| Northern Pygmy-Owl     | <i>Glaucidium gnoma</i>        | 1   |
| Anna's Hummingbird     | <i>Calypte anna</i>            | 1   |
| Belted Kingfisher      | <i>Ceryle alcyon</i>           | 6   |
| Acorn Woodpecker       | <i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i> | 14  |
| Williamson's Sapsucker | <i>Sphyrapicus thyroideus</i>  | 1   |
| Red-breasted Sapsucker | <i>Sphyrapicus ruber</i>       | 1   |
| Downy Woodpecker       | <i>Picoides pubescens</i>      | 9   |
| Hairy Woodpecker       | <i>Picoides villosus</i>       | 4   |
| Northern Flicker       | <i>Colaptes auratus</i>        | 61  |
| Black Phoebe           | <i>Sayornis nigricans</i>      | 20  |
| Loggerhead Shrike      | <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>     | 1   |
| Steller's Jay          | <i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>     | 104 |
| Western Scrub-Jay      | <i>Aphelocoma californica</i>  | 3   |
| Black-billed Magpie    | <i>Pica hudsonia</i>           | 72  |
| American Crow          | <i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>   | 26  |
| Common Raven           | <i>Corvus corax</i>            | 62  |
| Mountain Chickadee     | <i>Poecile gambeli</i>         | 70  |
| Bushtit                | <i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>    | 25  |
| Red-breasted Nuthatch  | <i>Sitta canadensis</i>        | 25  |
| Pygmy Nuthatch         | <i>Sitta pygmaea</i>           | 54  |
| Brown Creeper          | <i>Certhia americana</i>       | 11  |
| Bewick's Wren          | <i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>     | 11  |
| Winter Wren            | <i>Troglodytes hiemalis</i>    | 1   |
| Marsh Wren             | <i>Cistothorus palustris</i>   | 8   |
| American Dipper        | <i>Cinclus mexicanus</i>       | 7   |
| Golden-crowned Kinglet | <i>Regulus satrapa</i>         | 27  |
| Ruby-crowned Kinglet   | <i>Regulus calendula</i>       | 30  |

|                                 |                                |     |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|
| Western Bluebird                | <i>Sialia mexicana</i>         | 8   |
| Townsend's Solitaire            | <i>Myadestes townsendi</i>     | 2   |
| Hermit Thrush                   | <i>Catharus guttatus</i>       | 3   |
| American Robin                  | <i>Turdus migratorius</i>      | 108 |
| Wrentit                         | <i>Chamaea fasciata</i>        | 1   |
| European Starling               | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>        | 344 |
| American Pipit                  | <i>Anthus rubescens</i>        | 1   |
| Yellow-rumped Warbler           | <i>Dendroica coronata</i>      | 8   |
| Spotted Towhee                  | <i>Pipilo maculatus</i>        | 33  |
| Fox Sparrow                     | <i>Passerella iliaca</i>       | 6   |
| Song Sparrow                    | <i>Melospiza melodia</i>       | 33  |
| Lincoln's Sparrow               | <i>Melospiza lincolni</i>      | 4   |
| White-crowned Sparrow           | <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>  | 25  |
| Golden-crowned Sparrow          | <i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i> | 56  |
| Dark-eyed (Oregon) Junco        | <i>Junco hyemalis</i>          | 345 |
| Dark-eyed (Slate-colored) Junco | <i>Junco hyemalis</i>          | 3   |
| Red-winged Blackbird            | <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>     | 2   |
| Western Meadowlark              | <i>Sturnella neglecta</i>      | 6   |
| Brewer's Blackbird              | <i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>  | 108 |
| Purple Finch                    | <i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>    | 5   |
| House Finch                     | <i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>    | 23  |
| Pine Siskin                     | <i>Spinus pinus</i>            | 56  |
| Lesser Goldfinch                | <i>Spinus psaltria</i>         | 130 |
| American Goldfinch              | <i>Spinus tristis</i>          | 6   |
| House Sparrow                   | <i>Passer domesticus</i>       | 35  |

Darrel Jury

### March 3

Sorry this report is so late, but the Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count website has not been working properly this year. It's been up for a little while, but I've been having too much fun birding lately to go back and enter old data. :)

I've attached the Sierra Valley Christmas Bird Count results. We had one new species (Burrowing Owl) for the all time count list. We had new High Count records for many species .

Some highlights:

51 harriers (68 is highest count)

229 red-tailed hawks (201 previous high)

10 prairie falcon tied prev high

5 short-eared owl new high  
35 eurasian collared dove (rapidly increasing population in past 4 years,  
when it was first recorded. Last year we had 19.)  
19 Downy woodpecker (7 previous high)  
11 white-headed woodpecker (tied prev high)  
87 pygmy nuthatch (81 prev high)  
Fun Fact - Townsend's solitaire has never been missed on a Sierra Valley  
CBC - 21 out of 21 years - highest ever was 81 in 1993.  
354 common raven - 284 prev high  
2 purple finch, second count ever  
124 American goldfinch - 90 prev high  
54 house finch - 40 prev high  
102 Cassin's finch - 83 prev high  
1 fox sparrow - 2nd count ever  
Colin Dillingham

While I happened to spot 2 American Robins last Saturday at FRC and 1 in Boyle's Ravine on Wednesday, the bulk of them arrived in Quincy this afternoon. Shortly before 2pm, I saw a couple fly by the front room window, then 2 more, then 6, etc. I went outside to find them feasting on the small red berries of a neighbor's tree here in Boyle's Ravine. At anyone moment there was a minimum of 20 in the tree, a dozen on the ground, and 20-30 in the adjacent trees with more arriving every second. Within fifteen minutes they had eaten every berry. The entire area is filled with them, where there were none this morning. Maybe not as majestic as the Sandhills, but certainly remarkable. Tom Heaney

This afternoon we checked a few spots around Quincy and found a MERLIN in the top of a tree at the east end of Lee Rd. The HARRIS'S SPARROW is still at the end of Trilogy Lane off Mill Cr Rd and there were 4 MOUNTAIN BLUEBIRDS and 6 WESTERN BLUEBIRDS near the corner of Mill Cr & Trilogy. At 4:45 pm we saw a flock of 250 or so SANDHILL CRANES flying east very high up. Amber & Scott Edwards

#### **March 4**

I heard, then watched this same group of Sandhill Cranes flying over Indian Creek 2 miles east of Taylorsville. Wonderful. Dave Lind

I saw the many, many robins too. Brilliant red chest but surprised at dark stripes or bars on their wings. Haven't seen or heard them again. Only passing through? What kind of bird seed do they like? How can I induce them to our bird feeder? BTW I saw three Grosbeaks at our feeder this

past Monday. Maybe the snow chased them away. Haven't seen them again. Isn't it early for Grosbeaks? Mary-Louise Ruth

**March 5**

30-35 Evening Grosbeaks in Meadow Valley. One attached in flight.



Michael Beatley

Saturday we had a Western Meadowlark on the fence post across from the Meadow Valley Social Club nee old Meadow Valley post office/gas station. Quite a display, we were able to watch up close and personal for 5-10 minutes. Saw a swallow circling the place this morning but not able to get an ID on which one. Blue Heron working the ponds in Meadow Valley between Forbes land and Herdon's Spirit of the Sun Ranch pond. What a beautiful spring weekend huh gang?!?  
Michelle Fulton

Speaking of swallows, we saw half a dozen VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOWS about 3/4 mile outside of Greenville on North Valley Rd. Always fun to see them return! On a short walk into Indian Valley 4 miles out of Greenville, we found a WESTERN MEADOW LARK, 2 KILLDEERS, MERLIN, BARN OWL, BALD EAGLE, SAY'S PHOEBE, BLACK PHOEBE, WHITE CROWNED SPARROW, many SONG SPARROWS, tons of SANDHILL CRANES, hundreds of ducks including NORTHERN SHOVELERS, PINTAILS, MALLARDS, along with COOTS and a TURKEY VULTURE. There were also the BREWERS and RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS, JUNCOS, and of course, way too many STARLINGS. Fun times ahead!  
Brad and Gay Bentz