

The Audubon Endeavor
Newsletter of Mt. Shasta Area Audubon
Summer/Fall 2016

President's Message

At our fall board meeting of 2015 it was suggested that we try an invasive weeds program in Mt. Shasta, building on our successful "Weeds to Native Plants" school program. I contacted the City Manager, Paul Eckert, and he was interested in what we had to offer. Rebeca Franco, our education director, recommended that we wait until Spring to do a program, as that was the best time to pull the weeds. So, early in 2016 I again contacted both Paul and city council member Geoff Harkness about a one-day event. We had a first meeting in February. Much to my surprise, it was attended by representatives not only from city but also from the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, Gateway Community, and the Ecology Center, all who wanted to help with the event. After several more meetings we settled on a date in mid-April for the event and it was a very successful day of invasive weed removal. You may have seen it reported in the local papers. All the parties are interested in making this a yearly event so look for it next spring.

In August, we offered another geology and natural history field trip. We explored the Medicine Lake Highlands, where we visited areas not covered in last year's trip. It was again led by Peter Van Susteren and we were able to cover quite a bit more ground than last year. Some of the highlights of the trip were Little Glass Mountain, Little Mt. Hoffman, (for one of the best views in Northern California), Glass Mountain (from the South side), and Jot Dean Ice Caves. We even got to see the location of the Telephone Flat geothermal project, which I had never seen before. Look for another field trip in September to the headwaters of the McCloud featuring a 3000 acre wetland and some very large trees.

Eleanor and I find ourselves traveling through the Hat Creek valley once or twice a year. If you want to get an idea of what our forests are going to look like in the future you should go over and take a look.

Nature Day Celebration

On September 24 the Siskiyou Land Trust and Raven Tree Wild Bird and Nature Shop will join forces for a Nature Day Celebration in Sisson Meadow. Activities will include a bird walk and a bird house making contest. MSAA will provide support, and members will be on hand to provide information about our activities. More details are available at <https://www.facebook.com/raventreeshop/>



Birding Field Trips A Report by Joey Russell

This year Mt. Shasta Area Audubon Society held 4 field trips with an emphasis on birding. I led one of those trips and participated in all 4, mostly because I love to bird either alone or in small groups of friends, and secondly to support our local chapter and to show that, yes, there are active birdwatchers in our rural community!

I led the McCloud trip this year to Fowler Falls and Lakin Dam. The day was really cool which allowed all sorts of warblers to make their presence known. Our first stop was Snowman's Hill. It's a great way to start the day. We saw Calliope Hummingbird, Nashville and Yellow Warbler, Dusky Flycatcher, and heard Cassin's Vireo to name a few. Some of the great birds of the day were American Dipper along with Bank Swallows and MacGillivray's Warblers. Because of the cooler morning we had a wonderful view of a pair of Hermit Warblers in a mid air dance. Green-tail Towhees, Swainson's and Hermit Thrushes, and Thick-Billed Fox Sparrow are some other species we encountered on our trip.

The other trips this year were Klamath River with Bob Claypole who, with his intimate knowledge of the Klamath River corridor, knows the best places to stop for Canyon Wrens, Peregrine Falcon, Rufous and/or Allen's Hummingbird and Willow Flycatchers and the Dona Creek Bald Eagle nest! That day also included Hutton's Vireo, Warbling Vireo, Red-Shouldered Hawk and Black-throated Gray Warbler.

Jim Flett's and Dr. Steve Nelson's trip over Willow Mountain to Meiss Lake Wildlife Area was also a wonderful trip packed with a variety of species some of which don't occur on either of the other trips. Our bird of the day for this trip was a Pileated Woodpecker at Martin's Dairy along with Pacific-Slope Flycatcher, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood Pewee, Lazuli Bunting, and much more. Just the journey over Willow Mountain shows the great geographical diversity that Siskiyou County offers.

Migratory Bird Day tops off the year's adventure. Led by Sam Cuenca and joined by representatives of Klamath Bird Observatory, it is a great way to see the local birds of the Shasta Wildlife Area. A Common Loon graced our count this year as well as a Great-tailed Grackle, American Bittern, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and so many others.

All in all a pretty busy year for local birdwatchers and it's not over yet! We have the Audubon Christmas Bird counts right around the corner. I will be the compiler for 2 of them this year, Mt. Shasta and Yreka. Mike Taylor compiles the CBC in Etna. So if you didn't get to participate in any of the summer adventures there will be some opportunity to bird with us this winter as well. The CBC starts the third week in December and runs for 2 weeks. I have not determined the exact count dates as of yet but we're not too far off. I will be in touch!

If you would like to participate in any CBC this winter you can contact me, Joey Russell at rjrusell@cot.net or by phone at [\(530\)459-5190](tel:5304595190).

Invasive Plants Day--Mt. Shasta City



Volunteers display the largest Scotch Broom pulled during the event

A seed planted by MSAA found fertile ground last spring and grew into the first annual invasive plants removal day. When Kerry Mauro approached the city council with a proposal for a community weed-pulling event, the response was enthusiastic and soon the city of Mt. Shasta, Mt. Shasta Rotary, Mt. Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center, Mt. Shasta Chamber of Commerce, Gateway Neighborhood Association, Fire Safe Council, U.S. Forest Service, and Mt. Shasta Area Newspapers all stepped up to help support the effort. On April 16 dozens of volunteers, including members of the above groups, MSAA, Boy Scouts, and the COS Science club joined to pull **enormous** piles of Scotch Broom at several locations in the city. Our organization supplied tools, and Rebeca Franco, director of our "Weeds to Native Plants" program did a great job organizing and coordinating the volunteers. We're looking forward to another successful collaboration next year.

Photo from the Medicine Lake Highlands Field Trip
by John Aviani



Book Reviews

Ackerman, Jennifer. **The Genius of Birds**. Penguin Press, 2016

Among the amazing bird skills documented in this enjoyable book are those involved in migration, adaptation, nest building, problem solving, tool use and bird song. This book is recommended for those with an interest in natural history, behavior, and ecotravel.

Couzens, Dominic. **Tales of Remarkable Birds**. Bloomsbury, 2015.

In this engaging book, Couzens describes a wide variety of avian lifestyles of birds on all seven continents. He also describes behaviors such as bigamy, communal foraging, and duetting, and includes 120 color photographs of the birds he has chosen to highlight.

Goff, Christine. **A Parliament of Owls: A Birdwatcher's Mystery**. Astor & Blue, 2016.

Birders and fans of outdoors mysteries will enjoy this story of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife agent who sets out to solve a murder in the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Refuge Complex. This is the sixth title in this avian series.

Participation

We welcome your input and suggestions. If you would like to attend the fall board meeting, please contact us by phone (530 926-2093) or email: mtshastaaudubon@gmail.com

Mt. Shasta Area Audubon has been a certified chapter of National Audubon Society since 1976. National Audubon is a world-wide mainstream birding and conservation organization which promotes both birding activities and the conservation of natural systems which are essential to the survival of robust bird populations. Please encourage your friends and neighbors to join National Audubon or this chapter to promote and sustain these vital efforts.