

President's Message

As I reflect on the last nine years that I have been President of this club, I feel honored to have served with wonderful, hard working members of the board, the editorial board, and the symposium committee as the club has matured into the vital organization that it is today. We have published important papers in the club's bulletin that not only serve to promote birding in the region but also add to the scientific understanding of bird distribution and conservation issues that is sorely needed. We have joined several coalitions of scientific and conservation organizations including the Rangeland Conservation Coalition, the Tricolored Blackbird Working Group, and the Wildlife and Rice Coalition. We have resurrected the Youth Birding Scholarship and have sent an average of four kids per year to birding camps. We have had club field trips including two weekend trips in Redding as well as single day trips to the Tejon Ranch, the Tulare Basin, the swan wintering areas, the Yolo Basin and elsewhere. We have published a printed checklist of birds in the Central Valley and have formally identified the boundary of this region.

Our website is up and running and we have been working on improving our Facebook page and exploring other social media. The website now has the previous Bulletin articles online. We administered the important Winter Raptor Survey program that Ed Pandolfino and Zach Smith spearheaded (they raised the funds and directed the surveys). We now have the Waldo Holt Bird Conservation Fund that has about \$25,000 to support important club activities that will increase our collective knowledge of birds and their conservation in the Central Valley. We have a special club member benefit of a reduced subscription rate to the online "Birds of North America" administered by the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. At the last symposium, we gathered and sent three large boxes full of field guides, binoculars, spotting scopes and tripods for donation to the American Birding Association's Birders' Exchange program. And speaking of the symposium, we have maintained a high quality event as well as a high attendance despite the recent recession.

Oscar Johnson and I will be working on a Youth Initiative to bring more kids into birding via the club, and we look forward to partnering with various Audubon chapters and other organizations in identifying and mentoring young birders throughout the state. We have embarked on a new series of field trips aimed at "birding with a purpose" by identifying geographic and/or seasonal gaps in the eBird database and planning trips to help fill those gaps while introducing participants to the important function of the eBird program. Oscar Johnson and I will lead this new program with assistance from one of Cornell's eBird gurus, Brian Sullivan.

There is much more that the club can do, and I hope that club members who have ideas and energy will step up and help us implement new projects. We also need more members to submit articles for the Bulletin. We'd like to not only include "scientific" articles but also more articles in the "popular" style that discuss birds and/or birding in the Central Valley. I forecast an exciting future for the club and as such I am pleased to announce that we will have a new President with Chris Conard stepping into the position. I am grateful to Chris for accepting this new role as I greatly admire his skills that I am certain will benefit him in leading the club. I will remain on the board as Vice President and will focus my energy on the Bulletin, the Youth Initiative and on field trips, especially the eBirding trips.

John Sterling

CVBC Past-President



Figure 1. Pine Siskin (*Spinus pinus*) 27 October 2012. South of Buttonwillow, Kern County, California.

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