

Obituary



Scott Crosbie

1978-2012

We were extremely saddened to learn of Scott Crosbie's passing on Dec 2, 2012. To us he embodied all that was good in a humble yet expert birder, bird bander, teacher, researcher, colleague, and friend.

Scott began his formal biology and natural history career at California State University, Sacramento (CSUS), graduating summa cum laude in 2002. He went immediately into CSUS' graduate program in Biology and obtained the MS degree in less than two years. In that short time he formulated, planned, and implemented what would be his first major effort with the Yellow-billed Magpie—studying its urban communal roosting behavior. His thesis quickly resulted in a peer-reviewed publication (no small feat for an MS student!), and set the stage for documenting the substantial effect of West Nile virus on the Yellow-billed Magpie population a few years later. While at CSUS, Scott excelled in coursework, fieldwork, and teaching assistant duties.

While engaged in this endeavor he began another—running a Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) station in the Sierra Nevada Mountains with a co-student he befriended while at CSUS, Walter Clevenger. The fact that Walter was nearly 30 years his senior belied Scott's ability to engage any and all who shared his love of birds and the outdoors.

Scott was a member of the UC Davis research lab from 2006-2009 during which time earned his PhD in Animal Biology. His focus was the ecology and habitat needs of the Yellow-billed Magpie and Western Scrub-Jay. Scott was a brilliant ecologist with exceptional focus and great quantitative skills; these

talents allowed him to finish his PhD within three years—an amazing feat. He published several journal papers focused on his beloved magpies, and his work was recently cited by a Nobel Laureate (Scott was tickled about that!). His last Yellow-billed Magpie paper is expected to be published later this year in *Western Birds*.

Scott was gentle, kind, patient, and considerate, and those working with him learned from his field biology skills. He mentored and worked closely with other students, including one undergraduate who has gone on to a leadership position in a wildlife agency. The students Scott worked with admired and learned from him on the magpie field project.

Scott was an expert bird bander and natural historian—those of us who accompanied him to his Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survivorship (MAPS) station or other field sites benefited so much from his patient, kind, and expert way of teaching those skills. Scott maintained his MAPS site as the University of California's Sagehen Creek Field Station in the Sierra Nevada for over 10 years. Scott went on to become a Senior Ecologist at the environmental consulting firm Cardo-Entrix, with a continental focus on bird work (including the Gulf oil spill), and then more recently began teaching near Stockton.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Annlee Dolan; his parents, Heidi and Dan Crosbie; and his grandparents, Bob and Pat Crosbie and Wayne and Julie Matthews; as well as his many aunts, uncles and cousins.

We are saddened by this loss to us and to the California avian ecology community.

Doug Bell, *East Bay Regional Park District (Scott's MS professor)*

Holly Ernest, *UC Davis (Scott's PhD professor)*

Scott Crosbie's Publications:

Crosbie, S.P., D.A. Bell, and G.B. Bolen. 2006. Vegetative and thermal aspects of roost-site selection in urban Yellow-billed Magpies. *Wilson Journal of Ornithology* 118:532-536

S.P. Crosbie, W.D. Koenig, W.K. Reisen, V.L. Kramer, L. Marcus, R. Carney, E. Pandolfino, G.M. Bolen, L.R. Crosbie, D.A. Bell, and H.B. Ernest. 2008. Early impact of West Nile Virus on the Yellow-billed Magpie (*Pica nuttalli*). *Auk* 125:542–550.

Crosbie, S., L.E. Souza, and H.B. Ernest. 2011. Estimating Western Scrub-Jay density in California using multiple covariate distance sampling. *Condor* 113:843-852.

Crosbie, S.P., H.B. Ernest, and L. Souza. (in review). Abundance and distribution of the Yellow-billed Magpie. *Submitted to: Western Birds*



Yellow-billed Magpie (*Pica nutalli*). 9 February 2011. North Sacramento, Sacramento Co. Photo by Dan Brown ©