

Highlights of the CVBC Outing to Butte and Yuba counties -- February 1998

Waterfowl, raptors and Black Rails were the featured stars on the first organized outing of the Central Valley Bird Club. On the extended weekend of February 14-16, 1998, over 35 participants met in Oroville and explored the Feather River Fish Hatchery, Thermalito Forebay and Afterbay, the Richvale rice field country west of Oroville and the marshes of Gray Lodge Wildlife Management Area. On the final morning, we had a successful trip to hear the recently discovered Black Rail colonies at the Spenceville Wildlife Area, nestled in the Sierran foothills.

The weather was stormy, with intermittent rain and wind on Friday and Sunday, but it was sunny on Saturday. The Saturday afternoon lecture presentation series was held at Butte Community College. Thanks to Albin Bills, Chairman of the Biology Department who made available the lecture room at the College. Afternoon lecturers were Jim Snowden (on Trumpeter Swan records from the Chico and Oroville areas); Jerry Tecklin (on Black Rail populations in the Sierran foothills); Leo Edson (on censusing Mountain Plovers); and Joe Silveira (on bird use of vernal pools).

Observational highlights for the weekend included:

Bald Eagle - 20+ (mostly in the rice fields)
Rough-legged Hawk - 1
Ferruginous Hawk - 2
Golden Eagle - 1
Merlin - 1 (a very pale bird, perhaps the prairie race)
Dunlin - large flocks
Blue-winged Teal - 6 (at Gray Lodge)
Falcated Duck (1 male seen briefly by John Trochet and Bruce Webb at Gray Lodge)
Eurasian Wigeon - 2 males at Gray Lodge
Greater Scaup- 1 at the Chico Oxidation Ponds
Black Rail - 5 (heard by dozens of participants in one Spenceville Wildlife Area marsh)

Total species observed: 127

The entire birdlist for the outing can be seen on the CVBC Website at:
<http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/5954/CVBCSpringOuting.htm>

Bruce Webb