

Announcements

President's Message

Bringing birders together from Redding to Bakersfield with a common goal of facilitating the sharing of data and increasing our knowledge of Central Valley birdlife has always been a principal objective of the CVBC. I have long thought that if we was ever to be truly successful in this pursuit, developing a bird checklist for the region was essential. It's been six years since our inception but now I'm pleased to announce that we've taken our first step towards making a Central Valley checklist a reality.

In January of this year, a subcommittee of CVBC board members met to outline a process for delineating a checklist area and compiling the list. Obviously, the first objective needs to be defining and adopting a checklist area. Although this seems on the surface to be a relatively straightforward assignment, over the years the topic has generated a fair amount of controversy. For some members, it's actually becomes personal as they've lobbied to keep their house (and backyard list) in the checklist area! Perhaps that's an exaggeration but I think it's fair to say that local politics have played a part in stymieing past efforts from getting off the ground. In my opinion, trying to define a checklist area that every Central Valley birder is comfortable with would be nothing more than a pipe dream. Developing a checklist area that the large majority of birders and bird club members find acceptable should be a relatively simple task.

Every birder is use to seeing county checklists and for some it's the only type of checklist that they refer to regularly. From a biological perspective, checklists based solely on county jurisdictional lines don't paint a very clear picture of the birdlife for any given region. For the bird club, developing a checklist based on county lines is not an option for obvious reasons. Luckily, the Central Valley has already been defined in several widely used publications. Adopting a published map of the Central Valley that has been developed by careful consideration of biological and physical factors is crucial if we want to have a checklist that accurately reflects the birdlife of the region. It is my hope that the CVBC will simply adopt one of the outstanding maps available to us as the Central Valley checklist area.

Of course a checklist without obvious boundaries will create some challenges for birders. When birding along the edge of the checklist area, it wouldn't be as easy as looking at a county road map or knowing what side of the river you're on when determining whether or not you're in the checklist area. If a checklist is adopted that is based on physical and biological factors, I would see it as the responsibility of the CVBC to provide maps that minimize confusion over "what's in and what's out." With

recent technological advancement it won't be difficult to have a map with both landmarks and the checklist area accurately depicted. Global Information Systems (GIS) layers are available for all widely used published Central Valley maps. The maps can be combined with county lines, water features, roads, and other commonly used landmarks that birders are use to seeing.

Our goal is to have a checklist and checklist area map published by the end of this summer. We will begin distributing a draft checklist soon. We also intend to post the draft list on our website at CVBirds.org. Your comments and suggestions will be welcomed as we want to provide all CVBC members with the opportunity to participate in this exciting endeavor.

Leo Edson