

Announcements

President's Message

The first half of 2003 was marked by a number of noteworthy occasions and milestones for the Central Valley Bird Club. I would like to reflect on some of our accomplishments in the first six months of the year and point out why I think the future of the CVBC looks brighter than ever.

We entered the year with lots of momentum. Right on the heels of another successful Birding Symposium in November 2002, we added Bev Brock from Fresno and John Fulton from Los Banos to the board and thus significantly expanded the geographic distribution of board members. With Bev and Jon on board, we scheduled our first two major events of the year in the San Joaquin Valley to reinforce our commitment to having a stronger presence in the region. In May, Bev organized a wonderful CVBC outing in Fresno, which was highlighted by an outstanding presentation by Jeff Davis on prehistoric birds of California and an excellent day of birding as we explored many of the various habitats and elevations that can be found in Fresno County. We are now looking forward to our next outing. On 6 September, we converged on Merced County for an outing that featured birding opportunities at some of the beautiful refuges in the area and Saturday afternoon presentations by local natural resources experts. Our final event of 2003 will be the really big one, the 7th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium in November.

While our local outings continue to be very successful, we want to offer something for members looking to expand their birding horizons beyond the Central Valley. Those of you who miss the brightly-colored neotropical birds of spring during those dreary Central Valley winter days, may have already noticed that we've scheduled our first international trip. In January 2004, David Yee and Keith Hansen will be leading a trip to the Yucatan Peninsula and Isla Cozumel. Take a look under announcements in this issue of the Bulletin for more details. There have been a number of inquiries from interested members already and the board is considering adding other trips to the bird club's calendar for 2004. I would like to point out that the primary purpose of the Yucatan trip is to help raise revenue for our scholarship fund.

Speaking of the scholarship fund, a major milestone reached this year was the awarding of our first scholarship. After scrambling to ensure that we had raised the necessary funds and to identify an appropriate birding workshop, David Tinker and David Yee mobilized quickly to identify a deserving candidate. After considering a number of young club members, the scholarship was awarded to Sebastian Lawler of Davis. The 13-year-old avid birder spent an enjoyable and educational week at San Francisco State's Sierra Nevada Field Campus bird banding class. A formal application process for the scholarship is currently being developed and should

be finalized before this year's symposium. You can expect to see more information on the 2004 scholarship process in upcoming issues of the Bulletin.

We've also made progress in developing a Central Valley bird checklist. As noted elsewhere in this issue we now have a checklist area map approved by the CVBC board, and development of the checklist is now underway.

Last but certainly not least, we've reached our highest membership total ever by going over the 500 mark and we continue to receive application forms from new members at a steady clip. To me, this is perhaps the most satisfying of our achievements as it shows that the current membership, through a high rate of renewals, continues to support the direction and goals of the club. It also shows that support for the CVBC is growing as we continue to attract new members.

Leo Edson

Sebastian Lawler receives first CVBC scholarship

At the 5th annual Central Valley Birding Symposium in 2001, the CVBC established a scholarship fund to encourage young birders in the Central Valley. This past summer, the CVBC awarded its first scholarship to 13-year-old Sebastian Lawler of Davis. Sebastian spent a week in July learning how to band birds through a program sponsored by San Francisco State University at their Sierra Nevada field campus north of Lake Tahoe. Sebastian's father, Michael, served as his chaperone. Sebastian was chosen for the scholarship based on his level of interest in birding, local involvement in birding activities, involvement in the CVBC, and recommendations by active birders in the community. Congratulations, Sebastian! We hope he is the first of many who will be awarded deserving scholarships by the CVBC.

The initial seeding of the CVBC Scholarship Fund has been provided in large part by the generosity of Kowa Optimed, the world-renowned optics company based in southern California. During the past two Symposia, Kowa has donated one of their premier spotting scopes for the silent auction, and the result has netted over \$1400 for the fund. Portions of the following sponsors' donations to the CVBS also helped to fund the program: Dr. John Blades, Victor Wykoff, San Joaquin Audubon, Stanislaus Audubon, and Sacramento Audubon. Additional contributions to the fund have been received from the following individuals: Don Conner, Jon Dunn, Dick Erickson, Kenneth Head, Darlene Hecomovich, Michael Lawler, and Steve Stocking. We offer our sincerest thanks to them all on behalf of the CVBC.

*The CVBC Scholarship Committee
(Steve Stocking, David Tinker, David Yee)*