

Summer 2000 Sacramento River CVBC Outing Report

Joe Silveira, CVBC member and staff biologist with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provided the following report on the CVBC outing to the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge, June 24-25, 2000:

“We had 14 members attend the Saturday morning sessions at Phelan Island (Glenn County). Only 3 had attended this event last year, so this was very good outreach. Participants ran mist nets and banded birds with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) crew, Stacy Small of PRBO gave a workshop on nest monitoring and nesting behavior—a Spotted Towhee provided a great example of the contact call—and most of us heard and observed 2 adult Western Yellow-billed Cuckoos (State-listed Threatened Species). We also observed a Swainson’s Hawk (State-listed Threatened Species), Black-headed Grosbeak, Blue Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting.

“The afternoon slide presentations and general meeting were attended by 19 members, 5 of whom had attended last year’s summer program, again great outreach. I will not elaborate further, except to say that Tim Manolis, Stacy Small and Jim Snowden gave great presentations — I’m glad that iced espresso mochas were readily available across the street. Please do not forget to acknowledge The Nature Conservancy, Sacramento River Project (Sam Lawson is the Project Director), for making their conference room available to us!

“The evening program at the Flynn Unit of Sacramento River NWR (Tehama County) was attended by 5 members, up from only 2 last year, and none were return visitors. Dr. Tom Griggs (California State University, Chico) and I provided interpretation on topics of riparian forest restoration at the Flynn Unit and associated avian monitoring and diversity. We observed the second largest successful Bank Swallow (State-listed Threatened Species) colony on the Sacramento River since the California Department of Fish and Game Bank Swallow Survey began—the largest was in 1986 at M & T Ranch near Chico Landing, which has subsequently been rip-rapped, therefore the Flynn colony is of supreme importance to the survival of the species. We also observed a family of Western Canada Geese on the sandy point-bar,

“Spotted Sandpiper and Killdeer were working the river’s edge, Common Merganser, Mallard, Great Egret, and Great Blue Heron in the shallows. We saw two adult Osprey fishing in the shallows and then return to the forest across the river. As dusk settled on the river, three Lesser Nighthawks cruised down-steam past our station, directly over the water. As we walked back to our ride, a 4th flew over the new restoration site and into the dark.

“The Sunday field trip to the Llano Seco Unit of Sacramento River NWR and Llano Seco Ranch (Butte County) provided a rare treat to 10 participants. Again, Dr. Tom Griggs and I provided interpretation. We toured a Valley Oak Savanna restoration site at the refuge that is a joint venture between a local restoration nonprofit, Sacramento River Partners (John Carlon is the President), and Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Valley oak plantings dominate the site and soon native grasses will be seeded and plugged so that the open, park-like savanna will provide habitat for avian species dependant on low

elevation California hardwoods, not to mention nesting and foraging habitat for the Swainson's Hawk. We toured the woods along Angel Slough, dominated by majestic, old-growth, heritage-class valley oaks, and observed many cavity nesting species. Along with Golden State Island (M & T Ranch near Chico Landing), Llano Seco Ranch supports the largest remaining stands of Valley Oak Woodland in the Sacramento Valley.

"This was a rare opportunity and CVBC members who attended expressed joy and wonder. The final CVBC attendance results for Sacramento River NWR summer 2000 Field Trip—31 individuals spread over three events with 25 new refuge visitors and 6 returning visitors!"

Our thanks to Joe for organizing a great event.

The CVBC Bulletin – and YOU

Why is this issue of the CVBC Bulletin called the "July issue" if it is being printed in September?

Because, as editor, I still harbor the belief that we can get our publication schedule back on track.

Why did we "leave the track" in the first place?

Frankly, because of the very slow pace of contributed manuscripts, announcements, etc. The CVBC Bulletin doesn't have a staff of writers. Just about everything that appears in these pages is contributed by you, the CVBC membership. The solution to this problem is your involvement.

It has been suggested that, as we have a hard time collecting enough material to fill 16 pages of CVBC Bulletin each quarter, we scale back and print the Bulletin once or twice or year. I think it is important for a fledgling organization to foster communication on a more frequent basis, however. A new organization as far flung geographically and as sparsely distributed within its range as is the CVBC is a hard thing to maintain. We have been able to accomplish this so far primarily as a result of two programs: A quarterly bulletin and frequent outings throughout the Central Valley. We need to keep both of these going if the CVBC is to survive and grow.

So please take the time to look at your CVBC Bulletins, consider what kind of information you get (or would like to get) from it, and think about what you might be able to add to the mix.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Tim Manolis