

## 2019 Central Valley Birding Symposium Recap

Over 320 people attended this year's Central Valley Birding Symposium, enjoying talks and field trips under cool clear autumn skies. By all accounts, everyone had a good time. Programs revolved around the themes of bird communication and intelligence, both cutting-edge topics in bird research. We thank all of you for making this one of the largest symposiums, and for your comradery, birding skills, and continuing support.

After symposium founder David Yee welcomed everyone, Ed Harper kicked off Thursday night with another beautiful photo essay, *Simply in Awe of Birds*. On Friday night, Nathan Pipelow, the author of *The Peterson Guide to Bird Sounds of Western North America* presented *The Language of Birds*, a systematic approach for describing bird sound, which he and other sound recordists are working to build. Our Saturday night keynote speaker was Jennifer Ackerman, the best-selling author of *The Genius of Birds*. Jennifer spoke about how researchers are asking new questions about animal intelligence and why it matters, and how birds are much more than the maligned bird brains of the past.

At the Friday night dinner, we presented Merced's Steve Simmons with the 2019 Central Valley Bird Club Conservation Award for his work in providing nest boxes for cavity-nesting birds. Steve's efforts have produced over 100,000 fledglings from boxes that he built, installed, maintained over the last 40 years.

Short scientific presentations on Saturday afternoon included bird-friendly management programs on Sacramento Valley rice farms, results of two decades of mist netting at Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, and the ecology and conservation of Sacramento's bridge-nesting Purple Martins. At the Saturday afternoon workshop, Nathan Pipelow presented *A Shared Vocabulary for Bird Sounds*. He outlined how he is defining the components of bird's songs and calls into a uniform system, illustrated with sonograms and the songs themselves.

Fiona Gillogly one of the Club's scholarship recipients, described her experience at Camp Cascade. Fiona was one of eight young birders the Club sent to national bird camps this year, thanks to your generous donations. Most of the recipients also attended this year's symposium.

Joe Morlan and Jon Dunn closed the proceeding on Sunday morning with talks on taxonomy. Joe discussed subspecies and what they mean to birders, and Jon tantalized us with possible species splits and lumps to come.

We thank registration coordinator, Susie Nishio, for implementing the new registration software and for keeping track of everyone's field trips and

meals. Susie truly had the biggest job of all and kept everything running smoothly. Thanks also to Cliff Hawley for his first year as field trip chair; Chris Conard for organizing the vendors and the scientific programs; Dan and Jan Tankersley for ordering and organizing the merchandise; Linda Pittman for publicity; Lily Douglas for audiovisual support; Dan Airola for coordinating the Conservation Award; and, as always, Frances Oliver, the Queen Mother. A big thanks also go to all our field trip leaders, who volunteered their time and expertise in the field, and our exhibitors.

We look forward to seeing you this year, 19-22 November 19 2020 at the Stockton Hilton Hotel. The program will be announced on the Central Valley Bird Club website <http://www.cvbirds.org/> in August. Good birding until we see you then.

*Pat Bacchetti, President*



Swamp Sparrow (*Melospiza georgiana*). 15 November 2019. Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, Yolo Co., California. This bird likely returned to the same site in winter 2019-2020.

*Photo © Kirk Swenson*