



White-tailed Kite

NEWSLETTER OF ALTACAL BIRD ALLIANCE

Dedicated to Preserving and Protecting Birds and Their Habitats. Serving Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties of Northern California

August • September 2026

Altacal Bird Alliance Welcomes Danna Moore as Executive Director

Join us in welcoming our new Executive Director, Danna Moore. Danna joins the AltaCal staff with nearly twenty years of experience in nonprofit management across a range of conservation issues.

Danna is a California native and an extended family member of a regenerative rice farming operation in Richvale, CA. She holds a Master of Arts in International Relations and a Bachelor of Arts in Communications.

"I deeply connect with the work that AltaCal Bird Alliance does and was inspired by the camaraderie and passion that the Board displayed in my interview process. I'm grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the membership and broader community to help preserve and protect native birds and their habitats," Danna said upon joining AltaCal Bird Alliance.



AltaCal Programs

Programs for the general community are normally held on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at 1968 E 8th St, Chico, CA 95928

In December the program is held on the second Monday.

In June, July, and August there are no programs.

September Program

Monday, September 21, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.
at Chico Creek Nature Center & on Zoom

Birding Ohio During the Biggest Week

Presented by Matthew Forster and Friends

Join us to discuss the adventures of four birders visiting Ohio to try to find as many species as they can during the Biggest Week.

From Magee Marsh to the Mohican State Park, and anywhere in between, to find all 36 species of warblers present in Ohio in May, including the elusive Kirtland's Warbler.

We will also touch on the Big Year that Stuart is currently participating. His adventures, travels and where he currently sits on the leader board.





AltaCal Bird Alliance

P.O. Box 3671, Chico, CA 95927-3671

Staff

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Board Meetings

4 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month.

AltaCal Members are welcome to attend.

Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival

AltaCal Bird Alliance (www.altacal.org) in partnership with Friends of Butte Creek (buttecreek.org) are excited to announce a 'Night of a Flock of Films' on Thursday, September 24th, at the Pageant Theater, 351 E. 6th Street, Chico.

This showing is in addition to FBC's 20th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival to be held on Saturday, September 26th at the Paradise Performing Arts Center.

This all-bird film night includes:

Lights Out (Solutions to preventing bird deaths in cities)

The Bees and the Birds (Gardners and small-scale efforts to protect and save these creatures)

The Birds (A stunning film capturing rare bird murmurations off the coast of England.)

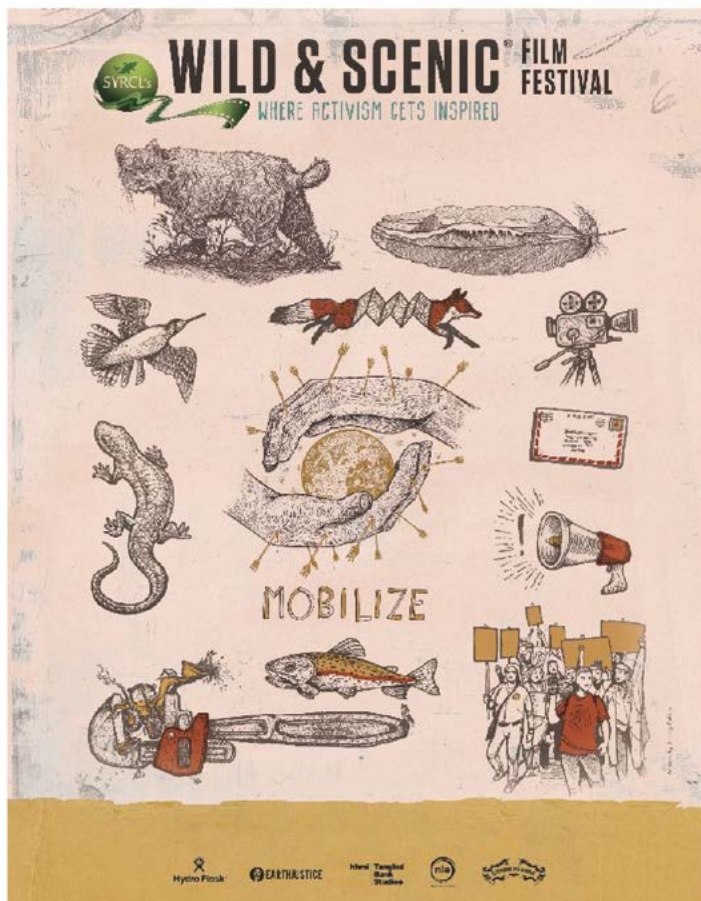
Between Moon and Tides (The attempt to save the sparrows by saving their nests—building simple "arks," so that incoming moon tides lift, rather than drown, the nests.)

A Home in the Grass (One conservationist's act of devotion represents hope in a world where natural habitats are disappearing every day.)

The Joy of Parrots (The golden-shouldered parrot holds the dubious honor of being among Australia's most endangered birds; efforts are underway to save them.)

Wingspan (Wildlife and conservation photographer Joshua Asel has climbed the peaks of Pinnacles National Park countless times to document the critically endangered California condor population that calls this stunning mountain range home.)

Night of a Flock of Films & 20th Annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival schedules and ticketing information coming soon.



Bird Trips

Please note our new field trip registration process is now done through Zeffy. Links for each field trip can be found at altacal.org/calendar

- Pre-registration is required for trips and can be completed by following our registration links to Zeffy.
- Signing an AltaCal Liability Waiver is a requirement to attend all field trips. Completed Liability Waivers are valid until June 30, 2027.
- Carpools are encouraged, but are optional and up to the individual. It is always nice to offer compensation to the driver if you ride in a carpool.

AltaCal Bird Alliance's scheduled field trips are a great way to experience a variety of birding areas, with an experienced trip leader.

Occasionally "Pop-up" Birding Field Trips, that aren't listed here, will be posted on the AltaCal Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/altacalaudubon/>) and the AltaCal Bird Alliance webpage (<http://www.altacal.org/calendar>). All field trip registration is done through Zeffy.

Lake Almanor Birding

Wednesday, August 5, 7 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Trip Leaders: Pamela Waldsmith & Karen Smith

Limit: 12 participants

Lake Almanor is a large reservoir in the northeastern corner of California. It is ringed by mountains, including a view of Lassen Peak. Join us for a day trip to Lake Almanor and surrounding areas to see waterfowl and song birds. We will meet at 7 a.m. at Chico Park and Ride and make our way up Highway 32 to the lake. Lake Almanor weather during August is in the low 80s. Birds we may see are Western and Clark's Grebes, Common Merganser, Buffleheads, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Mountain Chickadees, White and Pileated Woodpeckers. Bring water, lunch, insect repellent, binoculars and/or camera and join us for a spectacular day of birding at higher elevations. We plan to be back in Chico by 3 p.m. but please be flexible. Contact Karen at birds4ks@gmail.com for questions. To register for this field trip, please visit altacal.org/calendar and click on the Zeffy link.

Beginning Birding – Genetic Resource Center aka Chico Tree Farm

Saturday, August 8, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Trip Leaders: Karen Smith & Karen White

Limit: 10 participants

Join us for a flat mile-and-a-half stroll through the Genetic Resource Center, a 209-acre site used for plant research and breeding that provides a beautiful habitat for a variety of birds. We hope to see quail, sparrows, flycatchers, woodpeckers, finches, bushtits, raptors, and more. This field trip will be focused on beginning birders but is open to all levels of birding experience. If you need to borrow binoculars, please let the field trip leader know ahead of time. Meet us at 2741 Cramer Lane at 7:30 a.m. Contact Karen for questions at birds4ks@gmail.com. To register for this field trip, please visit altacal.org/calendar and click on the Zeffy link.

Revisiting Paradise Lake and Merlo Park

Thursday, August 13, 7:30 a.m. – 12 noon

Leader: Joyce Bond

Limit: 12 participants

This has been a popular field trip, offering cool birding at higher altitudes and beautiful scenery, so let's return to Paradise Lake in Magalia and Merlo Park in Stirling City in August. We'll meet at 7:30 a.m. at the Chico Park & Ride (end closest to Hwy 99) to carpool. First, we'll go to Paradise Lake, where we'll spend some time birding on the lake trail. Bald Eagles and Osprey are frequent

sightings. Then we'll head to Clotilde Merlo Park, at 3,500 feet in elevation. We may see White-headed Woodpeckers, Red-breasted Nuthatches, and other higher-altitude birds. Contact Joyce Bond at chantedor@gmail.com if any questions. To register for this field trip, go to altacal.org/calendar and click on the Zeffy link.

Beginning Birding – 5-Mile Recreation Area to Hooker Oak Park

Friday, September 25, 7:30 – 9:30 a.m.

Trip Leaders – Karen Smith & Joan Mitchell

Limit: 10 participants

Beginning birders, join us for an easy walk beginning at 5-Mile Recreation Area, and then to the Hooker Oak Park levee and back to 5-Mile. We may see Phainopepla, Northern Yellow Warbler, Western Tanager, Acorn Woodpecker and more. This field trip will be focused on beginning birders but is open to all levels of birding experience. If you need to borrow binoculars, please let the field trip leader know ahead of time. Meet at the parking lot of 5-Mile Recreation Area, 375 Centennial Ave, Chico. Contact Karen for questions at birds4ks@gmail.com. To register for this field trip, please visit altacal.org/calendar and click on the Zeffy link.

Fall Birding at Bucks Lake

Sunday, September 27, 7:15 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Leaders: Diane Brown & Joyce Bond

Limit: 12 participants

Let's head up to beautiful Bucks Lake for some fall birding at 5,200 feet elevation, where the autumn colors may be emerging. We're sure to see and hear a variety of higher-altitude birds, which are plentiful in the forest and meadows and along the lake. The drumming and calls of the five woodpecker species that call Bucks home, including Pileated and Hairy, can be heard in the woods around us. At Haskins Bay, flycatchers hunt from pines lining the lakeshore, Osprey regularly circle overhead, and Common Mergansers and Buffleheads swim in the water. Other likely sightings include Western Wood-Pewees, Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanagers, and Tree Swallows. We'll carpool from Chico at 7:15 a.m., or you can meet us there. Directions and important notes will be sent to those who sign up. Contact Joyce Bond at chantedor@gmail.com if any questions. To register for this field trip, go to altacal.org/calendar and click on the Zeffy sign-up link for this trip.

Bird Trips *continued*

Humboldt County Camp and Bird

October 7–11

Trip Leader: Ken Sobon

Join us for our annual fall camping trip to Humboldt County from October 7 – 11, 2026.

This year, we're excited to explore the diverse birding opportunities and rare bird sightings that Humboldt County has to offer.

This trip replaces our annual trip to Pt.

Reyes. Humboldt County boasts a wealth of birding locations, each with its own unique charm. Here are a few highlights:

- **Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary:** Renowned as a premier birding spot, this sanctuary features a mix of freshwater and saltwater marshes, mudflats, and estuaries that attract shorebirds, waders, and waterfowl throughout the year.
- **Bald Hills Road Area:** Our search for condors will take us to this area, particularly near the Redwood Creek watershed, where these majestic birds are often spotted.
- **Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge:** This refuge serves as a crucial stopover for migratory birds, including thousands of shorebirds and raptors.
- **South Spit & North Jetty (Humboldt Bay):** Ideal for spotting seadwelling birds like wandering tattlers, black turnstones, surf scoters, and grebes.
- **Humboldt Lagoons (Big, Dry, Stone, and Freshwater):** These lagoons provide a vital habitat for loons, herons, and wintering waterfowl.
- **Southern Humboldt Community Park:** This park offers a diverse habitat for land birds, including raptors and migratory songbirds.
- **Eureka Waterfront Trail & Woodley Island:** Conveniently located, these spots provide easy access to viewing bay mudflats.

Accommodations: We will be camping at Elk Country RV Resort. You can find more information here: <https://www.elkcountrysrvresort.com>.

Two to three tent camping sites will be reserved near the lake at Elk Country RV Resort. If you have a trailer or RV, there are many partial and full hookup spaces available. (You will need to reserve your own space.) Ken Sobon, Field Trip Leader, will arrive on Wednesday afternoon, October 7th. Ken plans to spend a full day birding on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Thursday and Friday will be dedicated to pursuing rare birds. You're welcome to join him early or arrive on Friday night. Please let Ken know when you plan to come so he can make the necessary arrangements. If you're not a camper, Trinidad is only 15 minutes south. Trinidad, CA, has many VRBO's, Airbnb's, and inns that you can reserve. For questions, contact Ken at altacalpresident@gmail.com. To register for this field trip, go to altacal.org/calendar and click on the Zeffy link.



California Condor. Photo by Ken Sobon

Local Standouts Awarded AltaCal Bird Alliance Elizabeth I. Brown Scholarships!

We are thrilled to announce the winners of this year's AltaCal Bird Alliance Elizabeth I. Brown High School Scholarships! Three outstanding local students have demonstrated exceptional academic dedication, community involvement, and a passion for their future.

Ashlynn Morris has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. A recent graduate of Pleasant Valley High School, Ashlynn will be attending the University of California, Santa Barbara in the fall to study Ecology and Evolution.

David Hurtado is also a recipient of this year's award, receiving a \$1,000 scholarship. David recently graduated from Pleasant Valley High School and is heading to UCLA to major in Environmental Science with a focus on bees.

Remi Maddox Lefebvre also received a \$1,000 scholarship award. Remi graduated from Chico High School and is heading to the University of California, Santa Cruz this fall to study Environmental Science.

Please join us in congratulating these remarkable students on their hard work and wishing them the best of luck as they begin their college careers!

If you are interested in contributing to this fund to help our local students become stewards of the environment, visit the Elizabeth I. Brown Scholarship Fund webpage. <https://www.nvcf.org/funds/Altacal-Audubon-Elizabeth-I.-Brown-Scholarship-Fund>

Altacal Bird Alliance Elizabeth I. Brown Scholarships for Summer Camps 2026

Altacal has provided \$8500 in "campership" funds to help pay camp registration for children and students in need to attend one of six incredible local outdoor camps.

Participating Bird & Nature Summer Camps:

- Forebay Aquatic Center
- Earthbound Skills
- Chico Creek Nature Center
- Glenn County 4-H
- Paradise Recreation & Parks District
- Sierra Nevada Field Station UCSF Camps

Sightings



Black-headed Grosbeak. Photo Karen White



American White Pelican. Photo Joan Robins



Bushtit. Photo Karen White



Common Mergansers. Photo Joan Robins



Great-tailed Grackle. Photo Karen White



Phainopepla. Photo Joan Robins

Trip Reports

Feather River Trail

May 23

Trip Leaders: Karen White and Grant Heath

Report by: Grant Heath

The Feather River Trail is a productive birding area with a variety of habitats. The canopy of trees over the walking path and the vegetation along the river bring in many migrating as well as resident bird species. It was looking to be a bird-filled trip based on previous scouting, and the temperature was not going to get too high this time of year.

As we walked down to the trail, the group got a look at their first few species. **Black Phoebes**, **Tree Swallows**, and Downy Woodpeckers started us off as we watched them foraging for insects, each in their own unique way. Continuing on, a row of **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** was spotted perched on top of a bare twig. They were identified as fledglings, judging by their wide yellow mouths, giving them a grumpy-looking expression on their faces. Looking towards the Feather River, **Common Mergansers** were swimming along, staying in small groups and looking for fish together. The males were in their breeding plumage, giving the group a glimpse of the striking contrast between the bright white of their bodies and the iridescent green of their heads. Looking across the river, we were shocked to see a large gathering of Ardeidae. **Great Egrets** and **Black-crowned Night Herons** were gathered around a fish hatchery, looking to grab an easy meal. The group seemed to be held off by the nets surrounding the structure, but if I were a small fish inside, I would have been filled with dread. **Bald Eagles** are always a special sighting to birders and non-birders alike, and this trip was fortunate enough to spot two soaring high in the sky. These two birds were at least four and a half years old, as their pure white head and tail feathers suggested. They may have even been getting ready to start a nesting attempt along the Feather River.

As the group neared the turnaround point, they stopped at a small inlet shaded by the canopy and providing much calmer waters. This was a tempting place to visit for a hungry bird fishing for small prey items. A **Great-blue Heron** was one such visitor, standing still and knee deep in the water, largely unbothered by us. Shortly after, the group got a good look at the ever-shy **Green Heron** as it walked along. Fortunately, it did not scare as the group shuffled about to get glimpses. As everyone was walking back to the parking lot, a few people investigated a small songbird hopping between the branches of a eucalyptus tree. The bird turned out to be a **Cassin's Vireo**, a bird not often seen in the valley. It was an unexpected surprise that delighted everyone who got to see it. Overall, the trip was full of great bird viewing and beautiful scenery. The Feather River once again proved to be an excellent location for a wide variety of bird species.

Paradise Lake Birds & Plants

May 30

Leaders: Joyce Bond and Noah Berg

On Saturday, May 30, leaders Joyce Bond from AltaCal Bird Alliance and Noah Berg from the California Native Plant Society and 8 participants from the two groups visited Paradise Lake to observe the birds and plants on a joint field trip. Our first bird sighting before we even got to the parking lot was a family of **Bald Eagles** on a nest. We watched as one parent came to the nest carrying food while the other one left the nest—and flew right over our heads. Later, we saw one dive down and steal a fish from a fishing boat. Gotta feed those hungry chicks! Other bird sightings in the woods or over the lake as we walked along the path included **Osprey**, **Belted Kingfisher**, **Western Flycatcher**, **Western Wood-Pewee**, an **Orange-crowned Warbler** adult with several fledglings flitting about in the lakeside foliage, and several **Black-throated Gray**, **Hermit**, and **Nashville Warblers** that we heard but did not see. Some of the plant highlights were a cluster of Phantom Orchids, which everyone was surprised to find growing here, lovely Iris Hartwegii, Jewel Flowers, Thimbleberry and small trees called Tanoaks, which produce acorns but are not true oaks. We also were surprised to see a huge banana slug. It was a beautiful day enjoyed by all—so much so that nobody wanted to head back when we got to my planned turnaround spot and kept walking a little while longer!

Lassen Volcanic National Park Birds & Plants

July 26 – 28

Leaders: Jennifer Patten, Hilary Locke, John Kelly

The Lassen VNP group campout was, as always, a terrific field trip, even with the rain. This year, AltaCal birders joined botanists from the Mt. Lassen Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Traditionally, Saturday morning is the day we bird around Manzanita Lake, and a great group of Shasta Bird Society members met us there at 8:30 a.m. We found many of the target birds: **Vaux's Swift**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, **White-headed Woodpecker**, **Western Warbling Vireo**, **Mountain Chickadee**, **Brown Creeper**, **American Dipper**, **Hermit Warbler**, **Yellow Warbler**, **Western Tanager**, **Buffleheads**, and **Osprey**. But when birders and botanists get together, exploration of nature is where looking up meets looking down. John Kelly and botanist friends had us looking down a lot. The wildflowers and plants in Lassen VNP were spectacular: snowplants and pinedrops were common sights throughout our hikes. At Kings Creek Picnic Area and on a hike to Cold Boiling and Crumbaugh Lakes, where wildflowers and native plants were abundant, we saw Lassen paintbrush (*Castilleja lasseensis*), a rare endemic to the park, as well as Spotted Coralroot, Satin Lupine, Leopard Lily, Purple Mountain-Heath, and more. Looking up, we saw **Rufous Hummingbird**, **Pine Siskins**, **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, **Lincoln's** and **Chipping Sparrows**, **Clark's Nutcracker**, **Mountain Bluebirds**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, **Cassin's Finch**, and **Townsend's Solitaire**. Nothing beats the feeling of a successful weekend outdoors with fellow nature lovers.

Local Chapter Membership Form

Please join us!

Your membership will help AltaCal Bird Alliance continue its important work.

AltaCal Bird Alliance dedicated to Preserving and Protecting Birds and Their Habitats. AltaCal is a non-profit organization with a local chapter membership. 100% of membership dues goes to support local projects and activities.

We offer regularly scheduled **field trips** that focus on birds and bird habitats; membership **programs** with media presentations on birds and related topics; a bi-monthly **newsletter**, the **White-tailed Kite**; **website** www.AltaCal.org; and **advocacy** to protect and conserve local habitats as well as special programs.

Leave a legacy for your grandchildren by writing AltaCal into your will or trust.

White-tailed Kite Submissions

Articles, reports, sightings, and photos for publication should be sent by email to: Carla Resnick at carlaphoto@gmail.com, on the first of the month, prior to the next issue. For best results please send images as high resolution attachments.



AltaCal Programs & Projects

Major sponsor, participant and fiscal agent for the annual **Snow Goose Festival**

Founder of the **Chico Creek Nature Center**

Sponsor of the City of Chico **Oxidation Ponds Wildlife Sanctuary**

Leading annual Christmas Bird Counts **in Chico and Oroville for more than 65 years**

Focusing on our Youth through **Scholarships and Environmental Education**

Advocating for Birds & Wildlife **when they are threatened**

Conducting surveys and participating in **Avian Research Projects**

Promoting bird-friendly yards through the **Neighborhood Habitat Certification Program**

AltaCal Bird Alliance Membership Form

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Goldfinch \$5 / month or \$60 / year | ☐ Falcon \$20 /month for \$240 /year |
| ☐ Quail \$7 / month or \$84 / year | ☐ Great-horned Owl \$25 /month or \$300 / year |
| ☐ Bluebird \$10 / month or \$120 / year | ☐ Robin Low income\Student \$2-\$3 /month \$24-\$36 /year |
| ☐ Woodpecker \$15 / month or \$180 / year | ☐ Soar Higher \$ _____
with Additional Donation |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ email _____

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☐ Renewal

☐ Gift

☐ email me *AltaCal in Action* Alerts

☐ I would be interested in volunteering to help

Please make check payable to AltaCal Bird Alliance, P.O. Box 3671, Chico, CA 95927

To pay using credit card or PayPal, please go to: AltaCal.org and click on **Join/Donate**

IMPORTANT: Membership in AltaCal Bird Alliance does not include membership in the National Audubon Society. We encourage you to also support National Audubon in their important education and lobbying efforts. To join the National Audubon Society, visit their website www.audubon.org

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CURRENT RESIDENT

White-tailed Kite Submission Deadlines

Issue	Due Date
Oct/Nov	Sept 1
Dec/Jan	Nov 1
Feb/Mar	Jan 1
April/May	Mar 1
June/July	May 1
August/Sept	July 1

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