



# White-tailed Kite

NEWSLETTER OF ALTACAL BIRD ALLIANCE

Chapter of the National Audubon Society serving Butte, Glenn, and Tehama Counties of Northern California

February • March 2026

## AltaCal Programs

Programs for the general community are normally held on the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

In December the program is held on the second Monday and in June, July, and August there are no programs.

## February Program

Monday, February 16, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Chico Creek Nature Center 1968 E 8th St, Chico and on Zoom

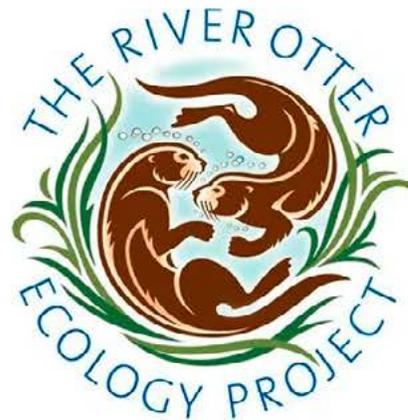
### Otters for Waters

Presented by Wendy Doherty

The River Otter Ecology Project (ROEP) was founded over a decade ago by Megan Isadore. Its mission is to engage the public through education, research, and community science to support watershed conservation and restoration. Otters are an indicator species; by monitoring and studying them, the health of our watersheds can be assessed.

Wendy Doherty will present an overview of the primary activities of the ROEP, including:

- Installation and maintenance of camera traps to collect population data and engage the public
- Train volunteers to oversee camera traps and collect scat samples to identify common prey items and track the presence of bacterial diseases
- Collation of otter population data to create an "Otter Spotter" map to display sightings throughout the Bay Area as well as track the return of the species to their historical habitats
- ROEP liaisons with local schools to engage our youth, leads field trips, publishes research results and regularly schedules community presentations



Wendy Doherty is a retired Chemistry, Biology and Agriculture teacher who recently relocated to Chico from Marin County. During her 40 year-long teaching career, she taught Chemistry, Biology, Animal Behavior and Animal Science to students ranging in age from middle school to UC graduate

students. She earned a BS, a teaching credential, and an MS degree from UC Davis. Upon retirement, she became an official "Otter Spotter" and community educator for the River Otter Ecology Project in Marin County.

#### Join Zoom Meeting

- » <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9227958804?pwd=Fiz5B4XvMuU7gppWBjAW1iGDboeTbO.1&omn=86222917149>
- » Meeting ID 922 795 8804 Passcode 468753

## March Program

Monday, March 16, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.

Chico Creek Nature Center 1968 E 8th St, Chico and on Zoom

### Robert Eddings from California Waterfowl Association (CWA)

More details will be sent via email and will be posted on the Altacal.org website.

#### Join Zoom Meeting

- » <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9227958804?pwd=Fiz5B4XvMuU7gppWBjAW1iGDboeTbO.1&omn=86222917149>
- » Meeting ID 922 795 8804 Passcode 468753





## AltaCal Bird Alliance

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

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**Sanctuary/Lands/Refuge** • OPEN

**Neighborhood Habitat** • Deborah Halfpenny  
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**Newsletter/Publications** • Carla Resnick  
[carlaphoto@gmail.com](mailto:carlaphoto@gmail.com)

## Board Meetings

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

AltaCal Members are welcome to attend.

## What Happens in Peru 2025: From the Pacific Shores to the Peaks of the Andes

by Dawn Garcia



Long-tailed Sylph Photo: Jon Aull

Five adventurous AltaCal members answered the call from former Peace Corps volunteer Stanley Boynton, (Ecoturismo Peru), embarking on a journey that promised the natural wonders of Central Peru. Stanley, a trailblazer for sustainable tourism, had devoted years to uncovering the region's hidden treasures, championing delicious meals at homegrown restaurants, ecolodges that blend into lush landscapes, local drivers who know every twist of the road, and one of the region's most prominent birder and conservationist. Stanley introduced us to expert Alejandro Tello, a guide who has coauthored three bird and wildlife guides of Central Peru.

Our journey: sixteen days, with fourteen spent trekking the earth in search of adventure, thriving on the thrill of discovery all on a shoestring budget. The intrepid crew, Mary Muchowski, Lisa Winslow, Jon Aull, Skip Augur, and me, set off from Los Angeles aboard a comfortable Latam Air red-eye and landed in Lima, each with a carry-on and one shared bag packed with gifts for our hosts. In Lima, we spotted our expedition leader, tall, slim, Stanley who arranged the Quick Llama shuttle to the pleasant Hotel Señorial in Miraflores. This would be our base camp for the first two and final nights. For our comfort and discovery of new places, Stanley arranged two nights at most stops.

Settled into our cozy rooms, we wasted no time, grabbing binoculars and hitting the courtyard and local parks. One had a well-cared for feral cat colony with a cat hotel and someone delivering food. The diversity in the parks was low but we had all new species including the zippy *Amazilia* hummer, Peru's fancier Long-tailed Mockingbird, and the sooty version of Vermilion Flycatcher, plumed in smokey brown, flashing hints of vermilion.

Our journey continued east toward the Andes where we stayed and acclimated in incredible lodges and coffee fincas, explored different habitats adding birds to our eBird checklists and plants to our iNaturalist app, experiencing different climates, while creating lifelong memories along the way. We have compiled a Peru2025 eBird trip report that can be accessed here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/433772>. It shows our stops via hotspots, documenting the entire trip and some fabulous photos of the final tally of 316 species!

### Following are two highlights of the trip by Dawn and Mary.

**Dawn Garcia:** Our adventure soared to new heights as we continued our climb along the well-paved Central Highway 22, crossing over one of the world's highest passes at Ticlio, a breathtaking 15,807 feet. We prepped like the locals, chewing our coca leaves and drinking coca tea. At the pass, we exited our van

## What Happens in Peru 2025 continued



Photo: Dawn Garcia

and were immediately met by two locals in the iconic vivid alpaca sweaters, offering roasted and candied beans which Mary and I purchased for 5 soles. Here we climbed trails to a monument that was resembled a Spanish friar with one sheep and a second, headless animal. Scrambling upslope in the subalpine air, we built tiny apachetas, adding our tribute to Pachamama (Mother Earth), giving thanks for the staggering beauty around us.

At our next stop, Paso Marcopampacocha, we were transported to a mountain cirque, a massive bowl in the Andes, with a 360° view of lush green slopes rolling into jagged peaks, the air alive with the songs of Gray-breasted Seedeater we could hear but never spot. Bright Andean Geese and camouflaged Andean Lapwings foraged along the verdant slopes, Glacier and Bright-rumped Finches perched on small rocks and boulders and Olivaceous Thornbills nectared on the tiniest delicate red flowers dotting the soggy meadows. Then, as if conjured by our awe, the enigmatic Diademed Sandpiper-Plover emerged, nature's crowned jewel. On the descent we stopped to wonder at a llama who had just given birth, the cria up in minutes to climb the steep slopes beside mom. Alejandro then called out "Andean Condor!" and soaring over the ridge behind us, provided our solo sighting of the massive vulture.

**Mary Muchowski:** The torrent ducks on the Tarma River were my favorite birds of the trip (although it was difficult to pick a favorite). Watching them rock hop and dive into and swim up the swift currents was a special treat. The male is a gorgeous duck

with bright white and black stripes on his head, black streaking on the chest, and a red bill. The female looks completely different and is still a handsome duck sporting a rusty belly and grayish head and back.

With never-ending highlights (and a handful below), we are happy to share the itinerary on request. The true magic of our expedition lay in Stanley and Alejandro's meticulous planning and the chemistry of our group: openhearted, endlessly curious, and ready for anything. Together, we shared laughter, discoveries, and awe-inspiring moments that will be lifelong memories.

- Pacific Ocean: Humboldt Penguins boat adventure around Pucasana Island
- Laguna El Oconal: Rufous-sided Crake discovery
- Bosque De Churumazu ecolodge: Long-tailed Slyph and forest hike
- Ulcamano Ecolodge: Cloud Forest Screech Owl night hike
- Hacienda Amorique: Round-tailed Mannikin dance at 100 year-old coffee finca. Road trip and hike with Blue Morpho and other butterflies highlighting the forest.
- Hotel Normandie: Giant Hummingbird and agriculture walk with famous artist Gustavo
- Junin Lake: Chilean Flamingos and wild Cuy
- Lomas de Asia: Peruvian Thick-knees in dry desert dunes and conservation area

## 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](http://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, 2026.
- 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.

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### First Saturday at Yahi Trail Upper Bidwell Park

*Saturday, February 7, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.*

**Leader: Ken Sobon**

Join us for the first Saturday field trip to the Yahi Trail in Upper Bidwell Park. We will meet at Horseshoe Lake Parking Lot E in Upper Bidwell Park. We may see Ruby-crowned Kinglet, House Wren, Common Merganser, Belted Kingfisher, Golden Crowned Sparrow and Yellow-rumped Warbler. The trail may be muddy if there is a recent rain. Plan accordingly and wear shoes appropriate for rocky, uneven trails. Bring snacks, water and binoculars.

For questions, contact Ken Sobon [altacalpresident@gmail.com](mailto:altacalpresident@gmail.com). To register for this field trip, go to [Altacal.org/calendar](http://Altacal.org/calendar) and click on the Zeffy sign-up link.

### Young Adults Field Trip to the Yahi Trail

*Sunday, February 15, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.*

**Leader: Grant Heath**

Join us at Upper Bidwell Park for a walk along the Yahi Trail. We will meet at Horseshoe Lake Parking Lot E in Upper Bidwell Park. We may see Yellow-rumped Warbler, Hermit Thrush, and Belted Kingfisher. Be prepared to walk along uneven ground.

For more information, contact Grant Heath at [grantcheath01@gmail.com](mailto:grantcheath01@gmail.com). To register for this field trip, go to [Altacal.org/calendar](http://Altacal.org/calendar) and click on the Zeffy sign-up link.

### Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

*Saturday, February 21, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.*

**Leader: Skip Augur**

Join us for a fun-filled day of looking for winter migrants. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 10 a.m. (closest to Hwy 99). We'll carpool to the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, located just south of Willows. The refuge has an auto tour loop and an observation deck that offer great views of huge numbers of ducks and geese, including Pintails, Northern Shovelers, Ring-Necked Ducks, Buffleheads, and Snow Geese, as well as grebes, herons, and other waterbirds. All birders and nature lovers are welcome, especially those just learning about birds or wanting to learn about the birds of the Pacific Flyway. There is a \$6 per vehicle fee, free with a National Parks pass or federal duck stamp. Bring binoculars, lunch, water, and a snack.

For questions, contact Skip Augur at [wba@acm.org](mailto:wba@acm.org). To register for this field trip, go to [Altacal.org/calendar](http://Altacal.org/calendar) and click on the Zeffy sign-up link.

### First Saturday at Indian Fisheries Day Use Area

*Saturday, March 7, 8:30-10:30 a.m.*

**Leader: Ken Sobon**

Join us at Indian Fishery Day Use Area located on River Rd and West Sacramento Ave. We will meet at the parking lot and bird the "loop" to look for Wood Ducks, Nuttall's Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch and other year-round residents. Please bring water, snacks, and binoculars.

For questions, contact Ken Sobon [altacalpresident@gmail.com](mailto:altacalpresident@gmail.com). To register for this field trip, go to [Altacal.org/calendar](http://Altacal.org/calendar) and click on the Zeffy sign-up link.

### Yahi Trail in Upper Bidwell Park

*Wednesday, March 11, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m.*

**Leaders: Karen White and Karen Smith**

Limit 10 participants.

Join us for a leisurely stroll along the Yahi Trail in Upper Bidwell Park. This trail winds along Big Chico Creek and attracts quite a variety of bird species. We will meet at the newly paved parking lot by the Gun Range. Wear shoes appropriate for rocky, uneven trails and bring hiking poles if needed. Bring snacks, water and binoculars and/or a camera. The trails can be muddy if there has been a lot of rain. We hope to see Sparrows, Woodpeckers, Hawks, Warblers, Flickers, Thrush and more. Rain or windy conditions will cancel.

For questions, contact Karen White, [kwhite36912@yahoo.com](mailto:kwhite36912@yahoo.com). To register for this field trip, go to [Altacal.org/calendar](http://Altacal.org/calendar) and click on the Zeffy sign-up link.



© Pamela Waldsmith  
Spotted Towhee. Photo by Pamela Waldsmith

### Slacker Saturday at Pine Creek Unit

Saturday, March 14, 10 a.m. – noon

**Trip Leader: Skip Augur**

Enjoy your morning coffee and join us for a walk to see what's around. Meet at the Pine Creek Unit off Highway 32 on the way to Hamilton City. This is NOT Pine Creek Access. We may see Osprey, Nuttall's Woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Bewick's and House Wrens, and more.

Contact Skip Augur [wba@acm.org](mailto:wba@acm.org), 530-519-4724 for questions. To register for this field trip, please visit [altacal.org/calendar](http://altacal.org/calendar) and click on the Zeffy link.

### Beginner Birding at Verbena Fields

Wednesday, March 18, 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

**Leaders: Karen Smith and Joan Mitchell**

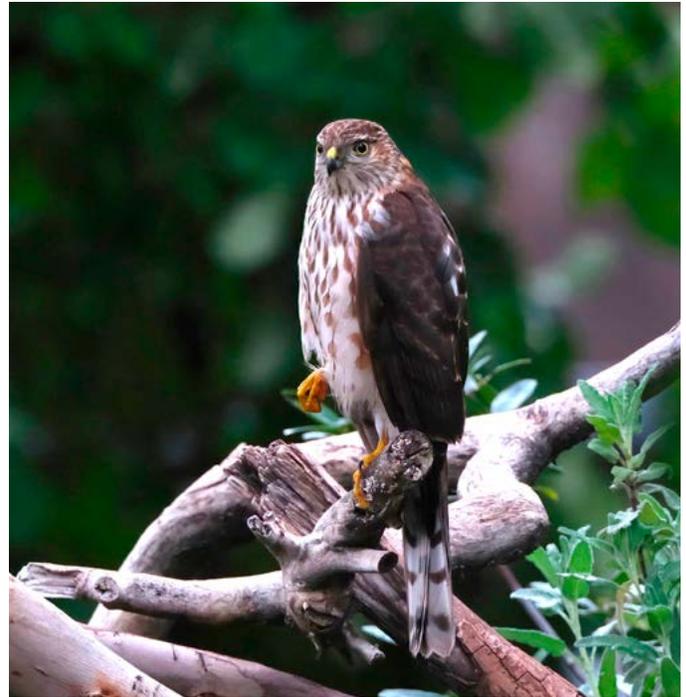
Limit: 10 participants.

Let's take a leisurely stroll through one of Chico's best kept secrets—Verbena Fields—where we may see Northern Flicker, Yellow-rumped Warbler, American Goldfinch and Red-shouldered Hawks and other raptors. This field trip is limited to 10 participants and is focused on beginning birders but is open to all levels of birding experience. Binoculars are available for loan. Please let the field trip leader know ahead of time to reserve a pair. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the kiosk at Verbena Fields at the corner of East 1st Avenue and Verbena Lane.

For questions, contact Karen Smith, [birds4ks@gmail.com](mailto:birds4ks@gmail.com). To register for this field trip, go to [Altacal.org/calendar](http://Altacal.org/calendar) and click on the Zeffy sign-up link.

## Sightings

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Photos by Karen White

Top left: Mountain Bluebird

Bottom left: Northern Mockingbird

Top right: Sharp-shinned hawk

Bottom right: Sandhill Cranes

# Trip Report

## Hooker Oak Park

December 13, 2025

Trip Leaders: Pamela Waldsmith and Grant Heath

Report by: Grant Heath, photos courtesy of Pamela Waldsmith

As the morning light shone dimly through the overcast sky, we prepared to set out and explore the impressive abundance of species in Hooker Oak Park. A **Brown Creeper** was one of the first birds spotted that day as it hopped along the base of a large tree near the disc golf course. It was surprising to see the elusive bird right at the start of the day, and it was a sign of good things to come. We walked along the oak trees, bustling with activity from **Acorn Woodpeckers** and **Ruby-crowned Kinglets**. A burst of activity presented itself a short while into the trip. A higher than usual amount of **Spotted** and **California Towhees** foraged among the fallen leaves, and the squawking of **California Scrub-Jays** was plentiful. **Lesser Goldfinches** were seen eating the dried seeds of the plants growing along our path. Birders were in awe of the vibrant yellow colors dashing to and fro just in front of them. One birder pointed to an interesting shape in a faraway tree behind us. Upon investigation, the bird turned out to be an adult **Red-shouldered Hawk**, a regular sight in Hooker Oak Park, with its bright coat of feathers and iconic call. A short while later, **Cooper's Hawks** were an exciting addition to the day's bird trip. The group got to see one in action, swooping on top of a faraway light post. Later, another **Cooper's Hawk** was seen on top of a chain link fence, giving everyone a better view as it stood much closer. One brave **Nuttall's Woodpecker** decided to provide the group with a good view of itself, hopping around a bare shrub along the path. It was the first time that day we got to see the bird that was calling all through the park. At the end of the trip, when everyone was saying their goodbyes, one last bit of excitement presented itself. In a Pistache tree along the softball fields, there were several species of birds sharing the fruit. An **Oak Titmouse** hopped along the branches, the first **Hermit Thrush** of the day perched to eat, and an unobstructed viewing of **Northern Flickers**, **American Robins**, and **Yellow-rumped Warblers** gave a wonderful end to the trip. It was another day of excitement at Hooker Oak Park, with discovery along every step of the path.



© Pamela Waldsmith

↑Nuttall's Woodpecker

↓Cooper's Hawk



© Pamela Waldsmith

## Great Backyard Bird Count

Share your birds counted February 13-16 and be a part of this global event. Spend time in your favorite places watching birds—then submit your bird list! In as little as 15 minutes notice the birds around you. Identify them, count them, and submit your counts to help scientists better understand and protect birds around the world. If you already use eBird or Merlin, your submissions over the 4 days count toward GBBC.

<https://www.birdcount.org/>

## How to Participate

Participating is easy, fun to do alone or with others, and can be done anywhere you find birds.

Step 1: Decide where you will watch birds.

Step 2: Watch birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days, February 13–16, 2026.

Step 3: Identify all the birds you see or hear within your planned time/location and use the best tool for sharing your bird sightings by using eBird or the Merlin App

## Local Chapter Membership Form

*Please join us!*

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

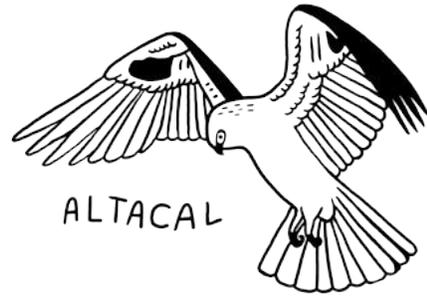
**AltaCal Bird Alliance** is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. AltaCal is a separately incorporated non-profit organization with a local chapter membership. 100% of membership dues goes to support local projects and activities.

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](http://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. Reach out to [director@altacal.org](mailto:director@altacal.org) for more information on how this can be set up.

### White-tailed Kite Submissions

Articles, reports, sightings, and photos for publication should be sent by email to: Carla Resnick at [carlaphoto@gmail.com](mailto: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

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |                                     |                                  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Save Paper! Send me an email only             | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> Gift |
| <input type="checkbox"/> email me <i>AltaCal in Action</i> Alerts      |                                     |                                  |                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I would be interested in volunteering to help |                                     |                                  |                               |

Please make check payable to AltaCal Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3671, Chico, CA 95927  
To pay using credit card or PayPal, please go to: [AltaCal.org](http://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](http://www.audubon.org)

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CURRENT RESIDENT

#### White-tailed Kite Submission Deadlines

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

## February Program

Monday, February 16 at 6:30 p.m.  
*Chico Creek Nature Center 1968 E 8th St,  
Chico and on Zoom*

### Otters for Waters

Presented by Wendy Doherty

## March Program

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*Chico Creek Nature Center 1968 E 8th St, Chico and on Zoom*  
**Robert Eddings from California Waterfowl  
Association (CWA)**



**How many  
birds can  
you find?**

**29th Annual Great  
Backyard Bird Count**  
February 13–16, 2026  
[birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org)

Peregrine Falcon / *Falco peregrinus*  
Photo: Janaina Souza / Macaulay Library