

October 15, 2007

Yesterday Bob Battagin, David Arsenault and I birded around Lake Almanor for the day. We saw 64 species and the highlights were: 1 merlin, 2 common tern (a new county bird for all three of us – that brings my Plumas County list to 246), 6 bonaparte's gulls and 1 eurasian wigeon.

Colin Dillingham

October 15, 2007

Hi Plumas Birders,

I spent a good part of last Friday and Saturday birding around American Valley and vicinity. I ran into 66 bird species including seven species of diurnal raptors and nine species of sparrows. Here are a few of the more unusual sightings:

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL, one along Spanish Creek Road and another along Greenhorn Creek south of Highway 70.

MERLIN, QCSO oxidation ponds.

WESTERN KINGBIRD, QCSO oxidation ponds, kind of late for this bird to be around.

ROCK WREN, first one I've seen in American Valley, along Chandler Road about 1/4 mile south of Quincy Junction Road.

LAWRENCE'S GOLDFINCH about one mile west of Quincy on Buck's Lake Road, with Lesser and American Goldfinches.

No matter where I've been in the state lately, almost every Jay has had an acorn in its beak....must be getting close to winter!

Good birding,
Bob Battagin

October 22, 2007

Holy smokes, if I had known that I would've put effort into getting a photo! Drat.

I saw the bird right along Caribou Road: As you go up Caribou Road towards the Afterbay Dam, you'll go over a bridge that has wood slats as a surface. Then there's another bridge further down the road that is regular ol' concrete. The bird was between these two bridges, I saw it near a big huge mass of wild cucumber (or maybe it's wild grape? Not sure-- the vine that has yellow leaves right now and is taking over all the

vegetation around there). Where I saw it had a nearby camping spot with a fire ring tucked away under oaks on the north side of the road. Approximate (and I mean approximate) UTM's are 653300 4435500. Heard it first, then saw it, both in flight and perched nearby.

Good luck chasing it! I really hope some more eyes get on this bird.

Claire V. Gallagher

October 31, 2007

On Sunday October 28 my son Henry and I saw 2 surf scoters on Lake Almanor (Plumas County) between the causeway and the mouth of the North Fork of the Feather River.

The two birds were both in 1st winter plumage and were seen flying over our canoe twice. I could clearly see that they lacked any coloration in the wings (entirely dark with no speculum) and on their second pass at 20 yards I had my binoculars ready and could study the facial pattern – blotchy white patches on dark head, the two white patches separated by a post-orbicular diffuse dark vertical stripe. The body plumage was all dark, with the exception of the paler belly.

Colin Dillingham

November 13, 2007

Hi Plumas Birders,

I birded American and Indian Valleys over the weekend.

In American Valley it was nice to see the raptor population adjusting to the cooler weather. I found winter birds Northern Harrier, Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin, and Prairie Falcon along Quincy Junction Road. I ran into three people who asked me about the "big hawk" they had seen west of Highway 70 across from the airport - a Ferruginous Hawk patrolling for squirrels and harassing an intruding Cooper's Hawk. Along the old railroad grade, now bike path, there was a late Chipping Sparrow foraging with Crowned Sparrows and Dark-eyed Juncos. Of the 51 Dark-eyed Juncos I observed around the Valley, two were of the Slate-colored subspecies. There were three Greater-fronted Geese around, two in the field behind the Chevron station and one at the pond near Quincy Junction.

Indian Valley had quite a few raptors, also. I counted 26 Red-tailed Hawks driving from Crescent Mills to North Arm via Stampfli Lane Road. Just west of where Stampfli crosses the railroad tracks I found a Yellow-billed Magpie in with a flock of 30 Black-billed Magpies. This is likely the bird Colin Dillingham reported earlier this year. I was at a large distance from the bird, but the bill appeared to be yellow-green. Did you notice the same Colin?

Good birding,
Bob Battagin

November 17, 2007

Hi all -

David Arsenault left a phone message last night and said he found a Vermilion flycatcher at the sewage treatment ponds. I'm on my way out there right now with my wife Angie in an attempt to relocate the bird.

Hope some of you can make it out to look for it. Colin

Colin Dillingham

November 18, 2007

For those of you who haven't heard - the bird was still present yesterday. While I watched the bird for 3 hours, it was seen by at least 19 people yesterday morning. A beautiful immature male, with substantial red in the body plumage and on the crown - unmistakable! David Arsenault was able to get photographs yesterday.

It can be seen from outside the sewage treatment ponds. As you approach the locked gate you will see some hay bales covered by a gray tarp covered structure. Park there and look towards the sewage ponds across the field. The flycatcher has been hanging out on the barbed wire fence surrounding the sewage treatment facilities and also in the birch trees at the back edge of the aeration ponds.

A group of us are meeting again at 8:00 this morning. Bring a spotting scope if you have one, the bird is 100 - 200 yards away and it is difficult to see well with binoculars.

Colin Dillingham

November 18, 2007

We relocated the bird again this morning and last saw it about 10 minutes ago 9:35 AM. Also with me were Kyle Merriam, Larry and Peggy Gustafson, Kristy Hoffman and Pat (Evans?).

Here is a photo I took this morning.

Colin Dillingham

November 24, 2007

Hi Birders,

I saw a very large magnificent bobcat today at 3pm, which for me is an unusual time to see one. It was in a small grass field bounded on the left by the road entering Graeagle and on the far side by the road going to Johnsville. It was hunting small critters and I saw it catch and eat two of them. They were small and black, could they have been either voles or shrews? It was unconcerned that I was on the side of the field watching it with my binoculars. Since its success in foraging was so good it might return and provide a very good photo opportunity for someone with a lense having at least 8x magnification.

Tony Hall

November 26, 2007

Hi Birders,

I went out to the sewage ponds on Saturday morning with the family curious to see if the flycatcher was still around. Surprisingly, even with the cold nights lately, the bird was still out there in the same location; the large cottonwood next to the fence on the entrance side of the ponds. Kudos to Colin for taking such an excellent photo and getting it on the front page of the paper and for getting so many people out to see the bird!

David

November 29, 2007

Hi Birders,

I saw a Red-naped Sapsucker at 3 this afternoon in an oak tree that it appears to favor because it returned their later. To see the oak tree drive from town on Quincy Junction Road, turn right on to Clear Creek Road and stop at the junction of Brinkman Road. Walk up Brinkman about 20 yards, the oak tree is on the left. It is my understanding that Red-naped Sapsuckers only visit Plumas County during migration and are rarely seen. Call me at 283 3052 if you would like my help in locating this bird.

Tony Hall

November 30, 2007

Hi Birders,

At 11:30 am today I got close looks at the sapsucker. It has a bright red cap then a black band and a paler red patch on the nape so it is a Red-naped not a Yellow-bellied and definitely not a Red-breasted. It has extensive red on the throat with no white which makes it a male. The oak tree bark has many chisel marks typical of sapsuckers but quite large and while some are new many are old. As I mentioned in my last email the oak

tree is on the left about 40 yards up Brinkman Road off Clear Creek Road in the Galeppi Ranch area which is off Quincy Junction Road.

Tony Hall

November 30, 2007

I just saw the Vermilion Flycatcher again at the Quincy Sewage Treatment ponds during my lunch break (at 1:30 PM Friday Nov 30).

The best place to observe the bird is before you enter the gated property (so it is accessible on the weekend when the sewage treatment facility is closed). From Hwy 70, just after you cross Spanish Creek, turn onto Airport Rd and go almost to the end (about 1/4 mile) before you enter the sewage treatment ponds. Park opposite the pile of hay bales (covered with a large gray dome) and look on the barbed wire fence surrounding the treatment ponds, about 100 yards across the grass field. It is an immature male, with plenty of red to make identification obvious.

Colin Dillingham