



FALL/WINTER 2021

THE VALLEY OAK

Cosumnes River Preserve's Volunteer Newsletter



A LETTER FROM THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Happy Fall Volunteer Team! As we near the end of fall and welcome winter with open arms, I can't help but reflect on the challenging summer many of us faced. With wildfires, smoke-filled skies, and COVID-19 in our midst, every one of us felt the impact and weight of it all. I can only hope that each of you were able to find solace in one way or another, whether that be through indoor hobbies, spending time with loved ones, or exploring nature in an area not impacted by fires. As we approach 2022, I'm hopeful we'll continue the upward trajectory of bringing more and more of our volunteer programs back as health and safety allows. During the spring and summer, we were able to successfully run the Wood Duck Box Monitoring Team and Swallow Box Monitoring Team. These were our first programs to return in over a year! During the summer, we also reintroduced shifts in the Visitor Center on weekends, guided paddles, and guided hikes. This fall and winter, we are excited to bring back the Waterfowl Survey Team and potentially the Raptor Survey Team. As always, stay safe, healthy, and reach out any time!

Introduction - 1

2021 In Pictures - 2

New Staff at CRP - 3

Festival Highlights - 4

Swallow Box Nesting
Summary - 5

Wood Duck Box Nesting
Summary - 6

Volunteer
Opportunities - 7

Plant Spotlight - 8

A LOOK AT 2021

A monthly photo journal at Cosumnes River Preserve



JANUARY Oak savanna - River Walk Trail



FEBRUARY Horseshoe Lake



MARCH Bridge over Willow Slough



APRIL Valley Oak



MAY Western bluebird chicks



JUNE California Wild rose



JULY River Walk Trail



AUGUST California Buttonbush



SEPTEMBER Cosumnes River



OCTOBER Valley Oak on Wetlands Walk

NEW STAFF AT COSUMNES RIVER PRESERVE

Clint Helms – BLM Wildlife Biologist



"I am excited for this tremendous opportunity and will be looking forward to meeting and coordinating with all the partners that are involved in the operations and management at Cosumnes River Preserve."

Clint has been with the BLM since 2016, initially working as an ecologist for the North Central Montana District, then transitioning to his most recent position as a wildlife biologist at the Ridgecrest Field Office in the California Desert District. Immediately prior to that, he spent three years working out of the USGS Dixon Field Office assisting with research projects examining waterfowl breeding habitat and ecology at Grizzly Island Wildlife Area. Clint has also been lucky enough to work with numerous other taxa throughout much of the west, including various avian research projects—spanning from studying tundra nesting birds near Alaska's Beaufort Sea, to banding golden-cheeked warblers in Texas; and from capturing sage grouse in Montana, to surveying for snowy plovers on the Great Salt Lake. Furthermore, Clint's graduate work focused on the reproductive success of wet meadow breeding birds relative to different grazing regimes within the largest interior marsh in the US, Cheyenne Bottoms.

"I hope that the sum of these experiences will allow me to effectively transition into my new role at Cosumnes River Preserve and better serve the wildlife and public that depend on its resources."

Tim Keldsen – BLM Temporary Preserve Manager

Tim Keldsen is the temporary Preserve Manager on a 120-day detail at Cosumnes River Preserve (August-December). Since 2017, Tim has been the Atwell Island Project Manager with the Bakersfield Field Office. The Atwell Island Project consists of over 8,000 acres of restored upland habitat and nearly 6,000 acres of restored wetland and riparian habitat.

Prior to working at Atwell Island, Tim was the Supervisory Wildlife Biologist for the Bakersfield Field Office, and from 1998-2016 was a Wildlife Biologist at the San Luis National Wildlife Refuge Complex. He has a varied career that includes both research and on-the-ground habitat management, and we're thankful to have him at the Preserve!

Contact Information

Clint Helms: chelms@blm.gov

Tim Keldsen: tkeldsen@blm.gov

Keep in mind that Tim is on a temporary detail and will not be here after December 10th.

LODI SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS



Every year, Cosumnes River Preserve staff and volunteers work with the Lodi Sandhill Crane Association to provide multiple guided tours for the Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival. Due to COVID-19, the 2020 festival was canceled and no tours were offered. However, this year we were able to offer two sunset fly-in tours and a Tall Forest tour to the general public! Visitors were provided access to areas behind locked gates both on-foot and in cars, periodically stopping to view cranes and other waterbirds in the ponds and flying above. For some participants it was their first time exploring the Preserve and seeing sandhill cranes!

If you're interested in helping next year with the Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival, please let us know! If you'd like to help with guiding tours or event outreach, we're always in need of more volunteers. Email the Volunteer Coordinator at whitesa@saccounty.net.

SAVE THE DATE

**2022 Winter
Bird Festival**

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 5, 2022

A WINTER WILDLIFE CELEBRATION YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!

A small brown and white bird is perched on a tall, thin plant against a clear blue sky. The plant has small, light-colored flowers or seed heads. The overall scene is bright and clear.

For the past 15 years, the City of Galt has welcomed local and surrounding communities to celebrate nature and winter wildlife! This annual festival includes an in-person experience, multiple talks and lectures, guided tours and nature hikes, art contests, and so much more!

If you'd like to help with a guided hike, host the outreach table, or help in any way, please reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator (whitesa@saccounty.net)!

2021 SWALLOW NESTING BOX SURVEYING RESULTS

Spring of 2021 brought us the return of our first volunteer opportunity after an entire year without programming. Our Tree Swallow Box Monitoring Team and Wood Duck Box Monitoring Team reunited to survey various nesting box routes throughout the Preserve. To all the volunteers that were able to help, THANK YOU! Preserve interns Taylor Morris and Denisse Anaya were able to compile reports based off the results submitted by each monitoring team. Below you'll find a snapshot compilation of the results from the Swallow Box Team. On the following page you'll find results from the Wood Duck Team.

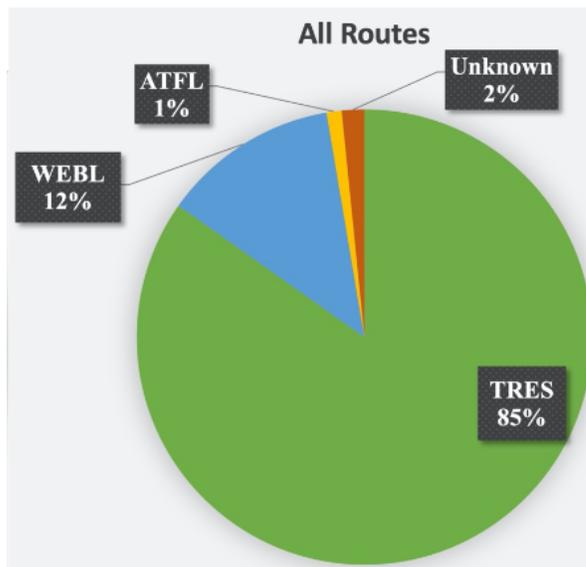
Summary of All Routes (TRES)

Routes	Eggs	Chicks	Fledged	Maybe Fledged*	Chicks Missing/Unknown	Dead Eggs	Eggs Missing/Unknown	Dead Chicks	Predator
Uplands	69	49	23	4	2	8	8	15	0
Floodplains East	94	70	45	11	14	6	10	3	5
Seasonal Wetlands	161	116	50	27	18	11	31	13	12
Total*	324	235	118	42	34	25	49	31	17



* From notes written by volunteers and the ages of chicks in recent data entries, it is probable these chicks fledged. However, the statistics in this summary only reflect chicks that have been confirmed to fledge since it would be inappropriate to assume their status.

1. Uplands has an unusually high number of dead chicks considering that it has the fewest number of eggs. Uplands has 42% of the total eggs present in Seasonal Wetlands, yet the same amount of dead chicks as Seasonal Wetlands.



TRES: Tree swallow
WEBL: Western bluebird
ATFL: Ash-throated flycatcher

Survival Rates (TRES)

Route	Hatch Rate	Chick to Fledge	Egg to Fledge
Uplands	74.60%	44.68%	33.33%
Floodplains East	74.47%	64.29%	47.88%
Seasonal Wetlands	72.05%	43.10%	31.06%
Averages of All Routes	73.27%	49.79%	36.48%

1. Floodplains East has significantly higher survival rates following hatching.

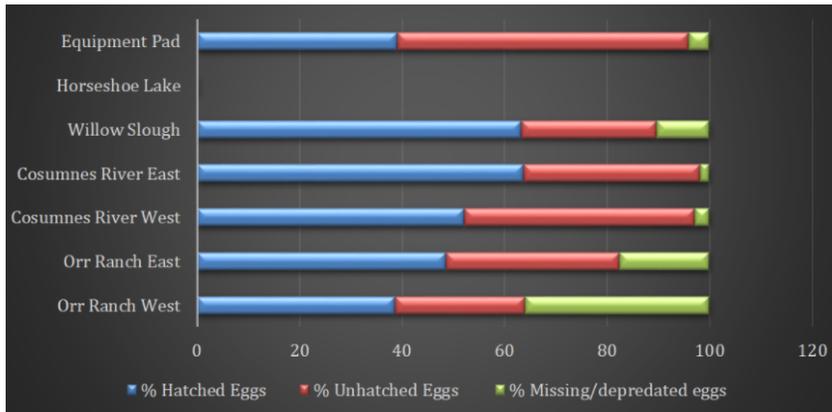
2021 WOOD DUCK BOX NESTING SURVEY RESULTS



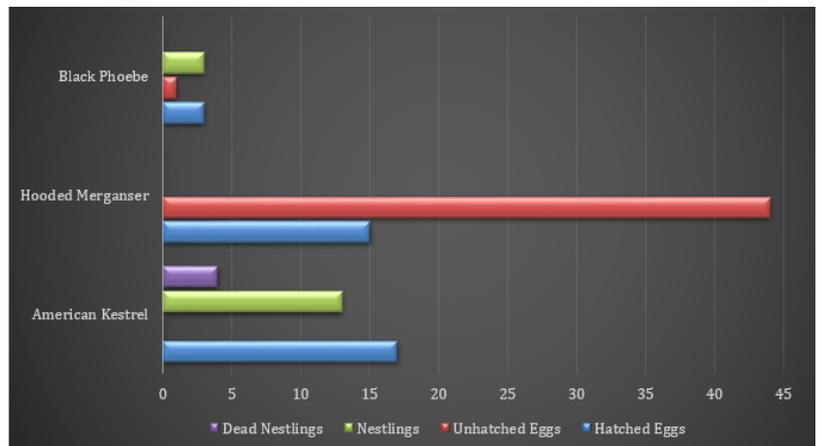
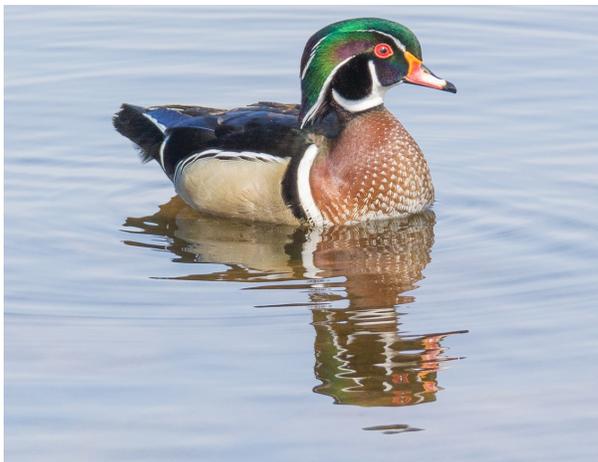
Nest and Egg Totals Per Route

Routes	Nests Present	Nests Abandoned	Hatched Eggs	Unhatched eggs	Missing/depredated	Dead ducklings	Total Eggs
Orr Ranch West	13	1	59	39	55	1	153
Orr Ranch East	17	4	86	60	31	6	177
Cosumnes River West	6	3	36	31	2	0	69
Cosumnes River East	12	3	100	54	3	0	157
Willow Slough	19	3	171	71	28	3	270
Horseshoe Lake	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Equipment Pad	23	7	106	154	11	8	271
Totals	90	21	558	409	130	18	1097

Egg Status Percentages Per Route



Nest Status For Other Species



CURRENT AND UPCOMING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

VOLUNTEER NATURALISTS

Your help is needed in the Visitor Center!

We are trying to reopen the Visitor Center regularly on the weekends with COVID-19 protocols put in place.

If you can help, please reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator at: whitesa@saccounty.net

Volunteer shifts for 2022 are now live in Volgistics!



RAPTOR SURVEYS

Bureau of Land Management staff are currently working on a plan to bring back the Raptor Survey team.

Are you interested in helping? Please reach out to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Details:

When - March through September, 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of every month, 9am-1pm

Face masks required in vehicles.

Need more details? Email whitesa@saccounty.net

VOLUNTEER NATURALIST TRAINING

We are scheduling a NEW Volunteer Naturalist training in February! This will be a hybrid in-person and virtual training. Interested in becoming a Volunteer Naturalist? Email whitesa@saccounty.net

What do naturalist do?

- Volunteer on weekends in the Visitor Center, helping visitors and sharing about the Preserve.

- Help host tables at outreach events.

- Help lead guided hikes.

The training is free and fun! Email for details.

VERNAL POOL GUIDED HIKE DOCENTS

During late winter and early spring CRP volunteers guide hikes along the Howard Ranch Trail in Rancho Seco, teaching guests about the amazing vernal pools!

No experience is required to help guide these hikes! Interested in learning more? Email whitesa@saccounty.net

PLANT SPOTLIGHT



Box Elder

(Acer negundo)

Box Elder is in the same genus as all the other maples, including the one in eastern North America that is tapped for its sap to make maple syrup! However, it is not called a maple because it has compound leaves (like an elder tree), instead of simple leaves like the other maples. Each leaflet, however, looks like a little maple leaf! You will find the Box Elder in the wooded areas near the river and sloughs at the Preserve. If you have a stream or wooded area in your yard, this tree could be a great fit for your garden!

HOW CAN I VOLUNTEER FROM HOME?

While we do have some in-person volunteer opportunities, there are ways you can volunteer from the safety of your own home!



Research a subject and write an article to share on our website!

Share your photography to be posted on the website, social media, and used for reference in educational articles!



Share your nature art and creativity to inspire others!