

# YOLO FLYWAY

Volume 23, Issue 2, Summer 2014

A Publication of the Yolo Basin Foundation

## Yolo Basin Foundation's Conservation Work

by Robin Kulakow, Executive Director

If you don't see Robin Kulakow, YBF Executive Director, at her desk she is probably attending a meeting related to either the Yolo Bypass Working Group, the Yolo Bypass Fish Enhancement Planning Team (a working group of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan), the Yolo Bypass Salmonid Habitat Restoration and Fish Passage Implementation Plan, the Central Valley Flood Protection Plan Regional Implementation Group for Lower Sacramento River, the Lower Putah Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project (Toe Drain to Putah Diversion Dam), the Yolo County Water Resources Association Technical Advisory Committee, the Delta Projects Coalition, or the Delta Conservancy.

Yolo Basin Foundation is playing a very important role in the multiple state and federal agency planning efforts related to improving salmon habitat in the Yolo Bypass. We also are participating in regional flood protection plans for the Yolo Bypass. It is important that all of these efforts recognize the values of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area and protect the long-term value of the wetlands ecosystem we have so carefully ad-

vocated for. Public use is another value that needs to be protected for the long term.

Yolo Basin Foundation is collaborating with Yolo County in numerous ways. This includes participating on the project team for several important studies of the Yolo Bypass (*see below*) with the goal of providing accurate technical information for planners. In order to find mutually beneficial solutions that recognize the flood protection, agriculture, wetland ecosystem, and public use values, it is essential that everyone know as much as possible about what is on the ground now.

The *Yolo Bypass Agriculture Impact Analysis* created a unique model based on historic Sacramento River flows, actual agriculture harvest data and other economic factors affecting the Yolo Bypass. Yolo County, UC Davis, Yolo Basin Foundation and Yolo Bypass farmers participated in this study.

The *Yolo Bypass Waterfowl Impacts Analysis*, completed by Ducks Unlimited is based on the waterfowl energetics models that were used to establish the Central Valley Joint Venture habitat goals for the Yolo

—continued on p. 2

## Drought Update

by Ann Brice, Co-Executive Director

The Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area is complying with the Governor's request for a 20% reduction in overall water use in this time of drought, and visitors will notice more dewatered wetlands than usual. The staff has made an effort to disperse the remaining ponds throughout the entire 16,000 acres in order to spread out the concentrations of resident water birds with the idea to avoid disease outbreaks, like botulism.

When you drive over the Yolo Causeway, however, you'll see lots of water in the rice fields, and you may wonder why there is so much irrigation water available. The answer is that the Wildlife Area has senior water rights that haven't been curtailed. And, also, Fish and Wildlife wants to honor its contract with the rice farmer, Jack DeWit.

Jack has also made a voluntary 10% cut in his rice planting this year in the spirit of water conservation, so you'll see some fields that have been worked but are not being planted. Jack points out the importance of the rice fields and water for birds, "The birds arrive the minute we start putting the water on. Also, people should know we will be flooding

—continued on p. 2



Photo credit: Mike Reinhart

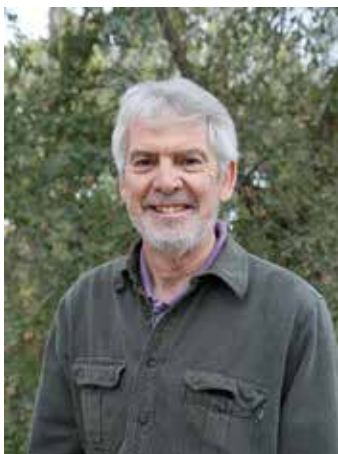
Common Gallinule mother with her three chicks at the Demonstration Wetlands.

# Welcome New Board Members



## Randy Beaton

“Stewardship of wildlife and education is what I am all about,” explains Randy Beaton. As Director of Finance and Operations of Sacramento’s Discovery Museum, it is clear how excited and committed Randy is when it comes to science education. “Science is the future. We, as a community, nation, and even world depend upon more kids becoming interested and involved in science. Yolo Basin Foundation and the Discovery Museum serve an important need by engaging young children in science.” As an environmentalist and conservationist Randy is dedicated to taking care of her local environment and the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area.



## Don Morrill

Before joining Yolo Basin Foundation as a board member, Don Morrill served as Yolo Basin Foundation’s Development Director for seven years. After retiring, Don realized he missed being involved with Yolo Basin Foundation and decided to join the board. He explains, “I missed the people. I missed the energy, commitment, and dedication of the staff members for a very important cause. As Development Director, I learned first-hand how committed and effective the staff is.” Don made great strides as Development Director and as a Board Member in expanding our network of supporters by sharing his passion for the organization. “I feel very honored to be able to help in this effort as a board member and to continue my involvement at a new level. I know that this is a sound investment in the future.”




## Lindsay Weston

Born and raised in the San Joaquin Delta, wetlands and agriculture are home to board member Lindsay Weston. Lindsay reminisces, “My father loved the beauty of the Delta and thus, so did I.” Lindsay, a criminal defense attorney, began volunteering with the *Discover the Flyway* program in 2001 and has enjoyed every minute of her time here. She especially finds joy in “seeing kids and parents *light up* when they learn that most of the amazing wildlife and nature we are exploring is right around them and not in some far off place.” As a board member, Lindsay “wants to support Yolo Basin Foundation’s wonderful programs and help the public utilize the amazing, important, and fragile resource we have right in our back yard.”

## Conservation Work *continued from p. 1*

Bypass. The model provides a way of assessing the effects of different flooding scenarios on managed wetlands and rice production in the Yolo Bypass based on calories available to migrating waterfowl.


Yolo County released the *Yolo Bypass Drainage and Water Infrastructure Improvement Study* in April. Yolo Basin Foundation participated on the study team coordinating stakeholder contacts, prioritizing proposed projects and reviewing the draft study document. The study was coordinated by cbec ecoengineers. It proposes 12 projects that could be done to improve water supply and drainage operations for farmers and wetland managers in the Yolo Bypass.

Want to learn more? These studies are posted on the Yolo County Delta e-library website <http://www.yolocounty.org/general-government/general-government-departments/county-administrator/county-administrator-divisions/intergovernmental-affairs/delta-elibrary>. 

## Drought *continued from p. 1*

up two fallowed fields for shorebird habitat—one in July and one in August.”

Any tail water from the rice fields is recycled through the wetlands so that nothing goes to waste. At this point, the Wildlife Area will have water to aid the rice decomposition in the fall and provide wintering habitat for the migratory birds. The plan now is that the winter wetlands will still be decreased by 20%.

Keep your fingers crossed for early and plentiful precipitation! 



# Coyotes benefit Yolo Bypass

by Corky Quirk, Program Coordinator

This past spring many visitors were excited to view a lone coyote in the drying ponds at the Wildlife Area between Parking Lots B and C. It is rare to view a mammal predator during the day and increased the questions about the role of the “song dog” *Canis latrans* at the Wildlife Area.

The coyote’s range and behavior has changed much over the last 200 years. At the time the first Europeans arrived in North America, coyotes occupied grasslands and prairies of Southwest Canada, the Central US and North Central Mexico. They often hunted in packs dominated by an alpha pair.



Coyotes seen south of Parking Lot A in mid-June.

A pack could take down large and medium prey such as deer, elk, raccoons and badgers. They also consumed high numbers of rodents, rabbits and other small prey. Being omnivorous, coyotes also ate fruit, berries and nuts.

Since that time coyotes have expanded their range almost threefold. They followed gold miners and their trash into the Yukon, Nevada, California and as far south as Panama. As wolves were eliminated coyotes filled the niches to the Great Lakes and New England. Humans actually transported coyotes into the Southeastern states.

Today most North America coyote populations are highly affected by humans, causing them to change their traditional habits. Many live as individuals or small family groups, rather than packs, and mostly hunt small rodents and eat plant material.

In the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area the coyotes’ behavior is closer to their ancestors’. According to Jeff Stoddard, Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Manager, there are three known denning pairs on the 25 square miles of land. They den along islands in dry ponds where they form burrows. A coyote pair and its family members are territorial; occupying and defending about



four square miles on average and up to 40 square miles when food is scarce.

In stable populations in general an alpha pair will give birth to 4-6 pups with about a 30% survival rate. If a subordinate female gives birth, generally none

of her pups survive the first year. Coyotes become sexually mature at the age of 2 ½ to 3 ½ years. If a member of the alpha pair is killed, often other pairs will reproduce until there is a new dominant pair, which then become the sole breeders.

Top carnivores play an important role in the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. Raccoons, skunks, foxes and feral cats are consumers of ground-nesting and scrub-nesting birds, songbirds and waterfowl. Even though coyotes occasionally eat birds, they exclude or directly kill the numerous smaller predators thereby decreasing bird depredation overall. They also cull the sick, diseased and weak, strengthening the gene pool of the remaining animals.

Research has shown that in areas of high depredation, coyotes become sexually mature at a much younger age and the number of

pups born is often doubled. Those pups have a higher survival rate because there is more food available since there are fewer coyotes.

The unintended result of depredation programs is often an actual increase in the coyote population.

Currently there are no issues between the coyotes and those who ranch at the Wildlife Area. The coyotes are not killing calves or lambs. By leaving the coyotes undis-

turbed, it is thought that the alpha pair will teach their offspring hunting methods that focus on wildlife rather than livestock.

The best chance for coyote viewing is normally early or late in the day although there are pups now, so the parents have been seen hunting throughout the day. Wildlife Area staff encourage visitors to respect the coyotes’ need for space and enjoy them at a distance. 🌐

## Thanks to our Volunteers!

### Volunteer Hours for June 2013 – May 2014

Discover the Flyway School Program	1977 hours
Tours: YBWA/Bats/Davis Wetlands/GoG	1042 hours
Administration	212 hours
Bucks for Ducks	378 hours
YBF Board and Committees	800 hours
Duck Days	258 hours
<b>Total</b>	<b>4667 hours</b>

# Shorebirds of the Yolo

Photographer: Jim Dunn



Long-billed Curlew  $L=23''$



Long-billed Dowitcher  $L=11.5''$



Greater Yellowlegs  $L=14''$



Wilson's Snipe  $L=10.5''$



Least Sandpiper  $L=6''$



Western Sandpiper  $L=6.5''$

# Bypass Wildlife Area

Location: Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area



Black-necked Stilt *L=14"*



American Avocet *L=18"*



Dunlin *L=8.5"*



Black-bellied Plover *L=11.5"*



Killdeer *L=10.5"*



Semipalmated Plover *L=7.25"*

# Calling All Artists and Photographers

It's time to put your creative talents to work for Yolo Basin Foundation by contributing to Bucks for Ducks 2014. The combined art and photography show has become an integral part of our gala fundraising event, which this year will be held on October 17<sup>th</sup>. The title of the show is "Art and Photography of the Bypass and Beyond: A Celebration of Central Valley Nature and Agriculture."



*Philippe Gandiol*

All photographs must have been taken somewhere in the Central Valley. The categories are plants, animals, landscape, and open. Entries should be emailed to [ybf.photos@gmail.com](mailto:ybf.photos@gmail.com) in a high resolution jpeg format.

## Sustain our environment for future generations:

### Create a legacy with Yolo Basin Foundation

Yolo Basin Foundation aspires to foster future stewards of the environment. If you are committed to outdoor education and wetlands conservation, consider including Yolo Basin Foundation in your will or estate plan. A Legacy Gift is an opportunity to share your philanthropic values with future generations. By remembering Yolo Basin Foundation in a will or estate plan, you help to carry on important work to sustain the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area and educate people throughout the region about the importance of wetlands conservation. A Legacy Gift can be made in a variety of ways including as a percentage or dollar amount of an estate plan, securities, personal property or assets, or the gift of a retirement or life insurance plan. For more information or questions about how to make a Legacy Gift contact Fund Development Coordinator, Shoshana Zeldner 530-757-4842 or [shoshana@yolobasin.org](mailto:shoshana@yolobasin.org).

The photographs will be judged by a three-person panel, and photographers whose works are selected will be asked to deliver their prints in a finished size of no more than 80 square inches to Yolo Basin Foundation or have the Foundation print the image for \$5. More than one photo may be submitted for consideration. The deadline for submission is August 29<sup>th</sup>.

Artists may submit work in any medium except photography. Previously, in addition to paintings, we have had ceramic pieces, tiles, mosaics, and blown glass. All works created for the exhibit must be inspired by the Central Valley, and we want to remind the artists that agriculture is an important component of the area. Rice, various row crops, cattle, and farm equipment are all great subjects for the exhibit. The only stipulation is that the finished piece be an 8x8-inch square or be attached to one. The Foundation has 8x8x3/4-

inch birch-covered plywood squares available for artists who would like to use them. The deadline for submission is September 26<sup>th</sup>.



*Rick Melnicoe*

The call for entries for each exhibit is on the Foundation website, [www.yolobasin.org](http://www.yolobasin.org). If you have any questions, please contact Ann Brice at [abrice@yolobasin.org](mailto:abrice@yolobasin.org) or 530-758-0530.

## U.S. Bank supports *Discover the Flyway*

Thank You U.S. Bank! During the 2013-14 school year, U.S. Bank sponsored four full days of the Discover the Flyway program including bus transportation for four schools visiting from low income communities. With this grant U.S. Bank made it possible for approximately 140 students to visit the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. These students would not otherwise have had this opportunity. It is important to Yolo Basin Foundation to engage underserved communities in wetlands and science education. With sponsors like U.S. Bank and others, we were able to offer bus mini-grants to 48 classes from Title 1 schools during the 2013-14 school year. U.S. Bank has been a supporter of our Discover the Flyway program since 2011. We are grateful to the local U.S. Bank staff for their encouragement and steady support!



## Featured Volunteer: John Huls

by Michael Herrera, Volunteer Coordinator

One very common thread among volunteers is the desire to continue learning and to pass along the knowledge gained. This is the foundation of our volunteer docent programs. Some volunteers start their journey with Yolo Basin Foundation. Others have brought their wealth of knowledge and skills with them. John Huls is one who brought his wisdom to us.

Starting while he was in middle school, John's family moved just about every year. His father worked in tunnel construction so they moved for every new project. John was born in Oroville, but has lived in Oregon, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Wyoming, New Mexico, and several places in California. "They're all beautiful places and that has led to my love of nature and the outdoors." John goes on to say, "As a kid, I was a quiet introvert. The outdoors was my escape from social and family pressures." John grew up with two older sisters and a younger brother.

John studied English at Humboldt State where he enjoyed attending ranger-led hikes. Their ability to name plants and animals impressed him and inspired him to be able to do the same. His training as a naturalist has included: Natural Resource classes at American River College; self learning; Jepson and Friends of Chico State Herbarium workshops; and walks, classes, and workshops taught by Ed Harper, Jack Hiehle, and San Francisco Bay Area botanist Glenn Keator.

John and his wife moved to Sacramento in 1987. They met while working at a Waldorf school in Nevada City. He was a kindergarten teacher, and his wife, Ellen, was a Eurythmy instructor for the school. John is now retired, and Ellen is a ceramicist and English instructor for *I Speak, U Speak* (ISUS). They have been married for 34 years and have three children.



*John enjoying his garden*

An avid reader, John has a library that contains "an embarrassing amount of books." He elaborates, "While learning the names of birds, it became apparent many are named after people. I wanted to know more about these early naturalists. So this has led to a large collection of old field guides and biographies."

John is docent for tours of the Davis Wetlands and the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. He became a YBF volunteer after seeing a newspaper announcement for our *Discover the Flyway* program, and he's been a volunteer for five years. "I believe in a strong environmental ethic and the more people know, the more likely they will support conservation efforts."

In addition to being a tour docent for YBF, John volunteers for several other local organizations. He's a docent at Consumnes River Preserve and is part of their Raptor

Survey Team. "I've been on many guided tours and now have the opportunity to share what I've learned." He also leads walks a few times a year for Sacramento Audubon and the California Native Plant Society and co-leads walks at the Sandhill Crane and the Winter Bird Festivals. "I really enjoy waterfowl and crane season due to the miracle of migration. I did my first Christmas Bird Count with Mary Schiedt about 15 years ago." In addition to his volunteering, John is creating a native plant garden in his yard and has recently taken up woodcarving.

John Huls exemplifies the importance of mentorship and of lifelong learning in being a successful volunteer. Thanks to John and other docents, our tours of the Davis Wetlands and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area bring guests back time and time again and continue to increase in the number of attendees. 🌱

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*The Yolo Basin Foundation is a non-profit public benefit corporation dedicated to the appreciation and stewardship of wetlands and wildlife through education and innovative partnerships.*

To become a member of Yolo Basin Foundation, go to:  
[www.yolobasin.org](http://www.yolobasin.org) and select "Join/Donate Now"



# Bats! Bats! Bats!

### Bat Talks and Walks

Join Yolo Basin Foundation on a bat tour at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area this summer. If you're a member, there are special dates just for you. Go to [www.yolobasin.org](http://www.yolobasin.org) to learn more and pick an evening. Tours will continue through the end of August. If you have questions, contact Corky Quirk at 530-902-1918 or [cquirk@yolobasin.org](mailto:cquirk@yolobasin.org).

### The new bat t-shirts have arrived

The lovely scene of the bat flyout on our new t-shirt was done by Pam Rhodes. If you're not coming on a trip and would like to buy a shirt (\$12 for members, \$15 for non-members) contact Lori Hewitt at 530-757-3780 or [lori@yolobasin.org](mailto:lori@yolobasin.org)



## Bucks for Ducks 2014

a benefit for yolo basin foundation

**Save the Date! Please join us for Yolo Basin Foundation's annual fundraising gala.**

Friday, October 17, 2014 • 5:30 - 9:00 pm  
The ARC Pavilion, UC Davis Campus, Davis, CA