



A Surprise Near the Tule Ranch Barn

Dave Feliz, the former manager of the Wildlife Area, comes up every spring from his current post at the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve to look for reptiles and amphibians (herps) at the Tule Ranch. Dave has been intrigued by herps since he was a young boy.

there and I went to mow that spot behind the barn. I hit the walkway with the mower so I had to investigate. Thinking there was probably a snake under there, I lifted the walkway and there were baby otters in a nest.”

There is a canal about 1,200 feet away from the barn on the Wildlife Area boundary, and

Dave thinks the otters use this waterway even though it's a long way from the nest. He says, “I think the mother stays with the pups, because we usually see something large leave the area.”

Every year, when he goes back to check the cover boards and look for reptiles, he makes a point of looking under the walkway that

is still there near the barn. For the sixth year in a row, he wasn't disappointed. 🐾



Baby otters carefully hidden near the umbrella barn at the Tule ranch.

Years ago a researcher put plywood boards out in the grasslands of the Tule Ranch to survey for herps, as part of a habitat assessment study. For two years they conducted plant, bird, reptile, and small mammal surveys at several sites. Some of the boards are still in place. Dave always comes back to check and see who might be living underneath. In the Summer 2015 issue of the Yolo Flyway he wrote an article about his findings (see YBF website). But reptiles aren't the only creatures Dave has discovered at the ranch. In 2011 he found a precious stash—two baby otters.

Dave reports, “What I think happened is that one of the floods brought in a large wooden walkway and it settled near the umbrella barn, within its fenced area. I first found it when we were hosting a barbecue out



The rare Marsh Sandpiper delighted birders in April.

Wildlife Area News

According to YBWA Manager, Jeff Stoddard, “Rice fields are disked and flood-up has started, food plots of safflower and milo are planted, and Fish and Wildlife staff have started off-season habitat work on dried ponds.” Rice planting was delayed because of the March rains but everything is in full swing now.

The Marsh Sandpiper, found in April, was exciting for birders who came from as far away as the east coast to add it to their life lists. It was only the fourth North American record for the bird.

Now, chicks and ducklings are being spotted throughout the YBWA. Fortunately, the number of brood ponds is back to normal after several reductions due to drought measures in the past few years.

Grasses in most fields are rebounding after the March flood, and cows will be brought down from the mountains to graze at the Wildlife Area.

Jeff reports that staff and volunteers are monitoring 20 Wood Duck boxes along Putah Creek. They're also conducting pheasant crowing counts to learn more about pheasant numbers on the Wildlife Area. And Swainson's Hawk monitoring is being done as part of a statewide effort.

For everyone's viewing pleasure, the bats are back under the Causeway. Interested people may sign up for a Bat Talk & Walk on the Yolo Basin Foundation website.

Finally, the staff has put up new signs throughout area, including parking lots and walking trails. An updated map is now available on the YBF website.

Come out and enjoy your Wildlife Area! 🐾

**Bucks for Ducks
October 21st**

Thank you, Chris!



Chris Bowles, PhD, PE, President and Founder of cbec, inc., eco engineering and Yolo Bypass expert explains how the Fremont Weir functions. Chris donated a Saturday morning to participate in the Yolo Basin Foundation Explorer Series field trip "Water, Weirs, and Wildlife" held on May 7, 2016. Despite the rainy and blustery day, the 20 trip participants eagerly listened to Chris's explanations of how the Fremont and Sacramento Weirs control water moving around Sacramento.

YBF Lending Library

Planning a nature walk and wishing you had a field guide? Looking for new ways to foster curiosity and environmental awareness in your children or students? Or are you wanting to learn about the native people of the central valley? Our lending library may have just what you're looking for.

Over the years, Yolo Basin Foundation staff, volunteers, and supporters have collected over 100 books, pamphlets, and DVDs, all of which are available for check out. Curriculum and activity guides, books on natural history, and field guides make up the bulk of the collection.

The library is located in the YBF office and is accessible during our normal business hours. 🌱

New Board Member Linda Leeman



The Yolo Basin Foundation board of directors is happy to welcome its newest member, Linda Leeman. Linda is a wildlife biologist and project manager for Ascent Environmental with over 18 years of professional experience. She specializes in habitat assessments, wildlife impact analyses, restoration and mitigation planning, and endangered species permitting. In addition to her professional experience, Linda is dedicated to conservation of wild places and environmental education. Early in her career, she worked for a small nonprofit in Big Sur, running a research and education center. From that experience she learned about the tremendous power of incorporating people (and especially kids) into conservation efforts so that the work is balanced, sustainable, and makes a lasting impression.

Linda has been a member of Yolo Basin Foundation since 2000 and was a docent for the City of Davis Wetlands, which YBF oversees. When asked why she wanted to join the board, Linda replied, "It has always been important to me to be involved with community organizations, as a way to connect with people, to enrich my understanding of my profession and conservation activities, and give back to the community."

The board and staff of the YBF are so pleased to have Linda join us. Welcome aboard, Linda! 🌱

Thank You!

We'd like to say a BIG Thank You to all who donated to Yolo Basin Foundation on the *Big Day of Giving 2016!* Despite technical difficulties with the *Big Day of Giving* website, making it a challenging day for all involved, we are pleased to announce that overall it was a very successful day.

**BIG
DAY OF
GIVING** **MAY 3+4**

Working together, the Sacramento Region received over \$7 million in financial support for the 570 participating nonprofits on

May 3rd and 4th. And **we are very happy to report that Yolo Basin Foundation received nearly \$15,000 from 167 generous donors!** In addition, we are extremely grateful to our board of directors, who through their generous support made it possible for us to win an additional \$5,000 "100% Board Participation" prize!

We'd also like to thank the Davis Arts Center for hosting the Big Day Midway Carnival. We had fun celebrating the *Big Day of Giving* with seven other local nonprofits, playing carnival games, sharing information about the bats and our other programs, awarding raffle prizes — and even enjoying a wild train ride through the park!

Thank you again to everyone who made the *Big Day of Giving* such a success. Your generous support will have a lasting impact on our programs. 🌱

Welcome Kara Smith



We are pleased to introduce our newest staff member, Kara Smith. She is our new Fund Development Coordinator, replacing Shoshana Zeldner who now works for the Nevada Arts Council and lives in Reno. Kara comes to us with a depth of experience in the development arena, including coordinating fundraising events and donor relations. She has spent the past three years at Women's Empowerment, a Sacramento nonprofit dedicated to educating and empowering homeless women. During her time there Kara played a lead role in orga-

nizing their annual gala, which is similar to YBF's *Bucks for Ducks* and hosts over 600 attendees.

On a personal level Kara has volunteered for the Sierra Club California and the Sacramento Food Bank's *Run to Feed the Hungry*. As an outdoor enthusiast, she's looking forward to learning more about the Yolo Bypass and the wildlife that call it home.

The board and staff of the Foundation are pleased to have Kara join us. Swing by the office to say hello!

Bats of the Bypass

by Corky Quirk, Program Coordinator • Photos: David Rosen / Wildside Photography



Big Brown Bat



Hoary Bat



Silver Haired Bat



California Myotis

Most of us know there are hundreds of thousands of Mexican free-tailed bats living at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, but how many are aware that several other species of bat call the Wildlife Area home? A wide diversity of insects can be found there, and they, in turn, attract a variety of bats. Different species target different insects, hunt with different methods and visit different habitats.

One of the most beautiful bats is the **western red bat** (*Lasiurus blossevillii*) which is completely covered in orange-brown fur. Even the underside of the wings and the tail membrane are furry. Red bats eat moths, beetles, and other insects. They generally live in riparian areas but are also found in urban areas. They live along Putah Creek in the trees where they hang like a dead leaf or a piece of fruit. They are unusual among local bats because they are solitary and they often give birth to two to four pups. Most bats live in colonies and females usually only give birth to one pup per year. Red bats are very susceptible to predation due to their method of roosting. Their populations are in decline due to loss of riparian habitat and controlled burns of leaf litter.

Small bats eat little insects, and the Yolo Bypass has plenty of tiny insects so several bats in the genus myotis come here to hunt. The **California Myotis** (*Myotis californicus*), **Yuma bat** (*Myotis yumanensis*) and **little brown bat** (*Myotis lucifugus*) have all been identified acoustically. All three species are very small: four to eight grams and all feed near water. California myotis live under the bark of trees, rock outcroppings and tree hollows. The Yuma myotis is found in bridges and tree bark. And the little brown bat lives in rock crevices, bridges and buildings in addition to caves. The little brown bat, aka “Lucy” has been hit very hard by White Nose Syndrome in the eastern United States, and it is the species that was recently found with the fungus in Washington State.

During the spring and fall, **hoary bats** (*Lasiurus cinereus*) migrate through the valley. They are large, strong bats that migrate in flocks but roost separately. Hoary bats are multi-colored tan, brown, black and white with a hoar frost appearance. They roost at the end of branches in old deciduous trees

and pines. Jays and crows prey on these bats and can knock them from a tree. When the hoary bat lands on the ground it will flip to its back, flail its wings and hiss. During a mist netting opportunity at the demonstration wetlands, a hoary bat was caught. It is one of the largest bats identified in California, weighing about 28 grams (about 1 oz).

Big brown bats (*Eptesicus fuscus*) can be seen living among the Mexican free-tailed bats in the Yolo Causeway expansion joints. They consume many agricultural pests including moths and beetles. Often they eat the equivalent of their body weight in insects each night. In Yolo and Sacramento Counties they are frequently seen roosting in barns and palm trees. They have wide black wings and uniformly brown fur with black ears. Big brown bats have large, strong teeth which are needed for crunching beetles.

Although the **silver-haired bat** (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*) is mostly a forest bat, its calls have been recorded several times in the Wildlife Area. It typically roosts in tree hollows or loose bark but is also found in wood piles and fence posts. It hunts both over water and above tree tops. This slow flying bat has been caught by anglers when the bat attempts to catch the bait. Silver-haired bats are California’s only black furred bat. The tips of the fur have silver highlights and the wings are black. Their diet includes moths, true bugs and termites.

Next time you are out in the Wildlife Area viewing the bats remember that so many species benefit from the diverse habitats. They are the number one natural nighttime insect control, protecting crops by eating bothersome pests. To learn more about the bats of the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area join us on one of our summer *Bat Talk and Walk* events. [🦇](#)



Little Brown Bat

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Bat Talk and Walk 2016 and Special Bat Events

Join us on one of our traditional programs (see schedule online) or consider one of our new Special Bat Events.

Bat House Building Workshop • Sunday, August 28 • 2 – 4pm • \$30/bat house •

Bats and Crafts • Saturday, September 10 • 10am – noon • \$7.00/child

Please see www.yolobasin.org for registration dates and details.



SUMMERTIME IS DISCOVER TIME!

Yolo Basin Foundation's education staff and docents are excited to offer three ways for children to discover the flyway this summer. Based on the popular *Discover the Flyway* school program, all events will take place at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Demonstration Wetlands, behind the Wildlife Area Headquarters. To register: go to www.yolobasin.org, and click on "Summer Education Programs."

Summer Discover Series Evening Programs

For students entering first or second grade in the fall

Session Times: 6 – 8pm

Session Dates and Titles: • June 13: Wetland Pond Study • June 20: Sinking into Soil • June 27: Feathered Friends • July 11: Wetlands After Dark • July 18: Animal Tracks, Scat & Signs

Discover the Wetlands Kids Camp

One-week camp for students entering third or fourth grade in the fall

Session Times: 9am – noon

Session Dates: July 25 – 29

Summer Discover the Flyway field trips

K – 12th grade classes; limited to 40 students per field trip

In addition to our other summer education programs, *Discover the Flyway* field trips are now available during the summer on a limited basis. Teachers and Camp Leaders can choose from 3 – 4 science-based activities for up to 40 students in K-12th grade. If you are interested in scheduling a Summer DTF program for your class, camp or group, contact Heidi Satter at hsatter@yolobasin.org or (530) 757-4828.



Bucks for Ducks 2016

a benefit for yolo basin foundation

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

Friday, October 21, 2016 • 5:30 - 9:00 pm
The ARC Pavilion, UC Davis Campus, Davis, CA