

## CenCal TanagerHawks 2023 Raptorthon

On Saturday, April 8, the CenCal TanagerHawks conducted our Spring Raptorthon. We counted birds from 6:30 AM until 6:00 PM. We visited six locations between Fresno and Madera, and tallied 89 different species!

The first stop of the day was Friant Cove, located in the town of Friant, right along the swiftly-flowing San Joaquin River. The raptors at this location were quite few, but the place was alive with various songbirds. Our first species of the day was a singing Bewick's Wren. We also had a singing and calling Black-headed Grosbeak, a calling Hermit Thrush, a flyover male Hooded Oriole, and at least a dozen Phainopepla!



10 Phainopepla!



The crew checking out habitat by the San Joaquin River at Friant Cove.

The second stop of the day was the Friant Interactive Nature Site. While at this site, the group caught sight of two Greater White-fronted Geese flying over, a female Hooded Oriole, four Nuttall's Woodpeckers, and two Downy Woodpeckers.

The third stop of the day was the River Center, just north of Fresno. At this location, the raptors were not shy about making their presence known! We found nesting American Kestrels and Cooper's Hawks! We also observed two Sharp-shinned Hawks, six Red-tailed Hawks, one Bald Eagle, one Red-shouldered Hawk, and a dark morph Swainson's Hawk! Also at this location, we found numerous active nests, including Tree Swallows, Bushtits, and Black Phoebe.



Bushtit nest out at the River Center!

The fourth stop of the day was the Madera County side of Millerton Lake State Recreation Area, where we sat down for a pleasant picnic lunch under the shade of an oak tree. Highlights at this location were many! The crew watched as a young Bald Eagle chased an Osprey, causing it to drop the fish it had caught. An adult Golden Eagle soared directly overhead. More Turkey Vultures than we could shake a stick at soared above the grassy bluffs. An Ash-throated Flycatcher was heard and seen (this was the first of the year for many in attendance). Rufous-crowned Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Canyon Wrens, and Rock Wrens sang away. A Red-tailed Hawk was observed bringing a prey item to its nest.

The fifth stop of the day was Road 210 in Madera County, where highlights included two calling Lawrence's Goldfinches and gorgeous foothill scenery.

The final stop of the day was Road 208 between Road 211 and Highway 41. Highlights along this stretch of road included an immature Golden Eagle soaring very high above, a light morph Swainson's Hawk, several singing Lark Sparrows, and a gorgeous Vesper Sparrow.

In total, the CenCal TanagerHawks tallied 89 species, including 10 raptors! See the complete trip report at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/118455>

Thanks to your donations, the CenCal TanagerHawks raised \$515 for HMANA's raptor conservation efforts and for Fresno Audubon's bird education classes, trips, and programs!



The crew watching from afar as a young Bald Eagle chases an Osprey at Millerton Lake State Recreation Area.