

Outstanding Partnership Story:
The Yosemite Area Audubon Society

The Yosemite Area Audubon Society is a local chapter of the National Audubon Society and Audubon California, covering Mariposa and Eastern Madera Counties. The Audubon mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. They are a team of compassionate, bird loving citizens who are dedicated to the preservation of natural habitats and native species, and to educate and inspire others to help protect those valuable resources.

The "Citizen Scientist" of the Yosemite Area Audubon Society conduct surveys contributing to raptor research, and maintaining an ongoing and expanding nest box program. In early 2012, the Yosemite Area Audubon Society began a long-term program to build, install, and monitor nestboxes in Madera, Mariposa, and Merced Counties, including breathing life into the nest box programs at both Eastman and Hensley Lakes. The first year of the program focused on American Kestrels. During 2013 and well into 2016, the program has expanded to include Barn Owls, Wood Ducks, Western Bluebirds, Tree-Swallows and Ash-Throated Flycatchers, although other species can and do use the nesting boxes on a regular basis. Many nests have shown to be used by multiple species at one time.

One of the big success stories is based on the songbird boxes that are along a section of fence line that borders the Hensley Lake property line. In the Buck Ridge Recreation Area, 12-15 boxes are currently being used by Tree Swallows and Ash-Throated Flycatchers. In addition, several other nest boxes located at the Buck Ridge Group Shelter area include, 58 Tree Swallow nests, of which 57 nests were discovered to accommodate 148 fledging birds. In the same location, 10 Ash-Throated Flycatcher nests are home to 22 fledging young. These numbers are essentially a 90% increase in bird activity within that area.

We look forward to seeing the members of the Yosemite Area Audubon Society out at our parks again this year when winter monitoring begins in January and lasting well into March, which is about the time when the birds have finished their peaceful nesting. We are so proud to have this partnership with such a wonderful group of compassionate, well educated, true nature loving people who share in our vision for conservation and stewardship. The Yosemite Area Audubon Society is dedicated to the preservation of natural habitats and native species, and to educating and inspiring others to help protect our valuable resources.

*by Alyson Strickland
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American Kestrel and babies!

YOSEMITE AREA



AUDUBON SOCIETY



American Kestrel Nest & Eggs



Baby Barn Owl



Baby Tree Swallows: "Pinkies"