

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



General Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Webex Meeting 7pm

See details below

Tricolored Blackbirds

Xerónimo Castañeda

How to join the meeting: November's meeting will be held online via Cisco Webex. To receive a link to join the meeting, email meetings@sacramentoaudubon.org. There is no cost to join the meeting and you do not have to be a member to attend. There is a cap of 100 attendees. For more information visit www.sacramento-audubon.org/monthly-speaker.

Xerónimo Castañeda is a Conservation Project Manager with Audubon California.



Tricolored Blackbird
David Bogener

A native of California he has lived and worked from Monterey to Arcata, ventured to the east coast and eventually found his way to Sacramento. His work with Audubon

focuses on habitat restoration and enhancement through multi-benefit management of Central Valley wetlands, agricultural operations, and groundwater recharge projects to benefit birds and people.

In 1990 the Department of Fish and Game of California, based on significant decline in tricolored blackbird population numbers added it to the published list of "Bird Species of Special Concern". Also at this time the tricolored was added to the US Fish and

General Meeting continued on page 2

This Month's Suggested Birding

FEBRUARY 2021 From Sonja Sorbo, ssgasdoc@yahoo.com

February and March are excellent months for birding in the Central Valley. Many wintering birds such as ducks and geese are still in the area as winter transitions into spring. Some of the major wildlife preserves which have been described previously are still worth visiting before the weather warms up too much (Sacramento NWR, Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Cosumnes River Preserve). This time of year still yields good birding at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area and Bridgeway Island Pond (see last month's Observer for details).

Here are some additional suggestions for local birding sites.

LAKE SOLANO/PUTAH CREEK

(Be sure to check availability. See below.) Birders at this site are rewarded with great views of waterfowl such as Common Goldeneye and Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Mergansers, American and Eurasian Wigeon, and Wood Ducks. The woods around the lake offer up species such as Phainopepla, Brown Creeper, Hermit Thrush, Gold- and White-crowned Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Several woodpecker species can be seen, including Pileated and Lewis's. In some years, birders have been able to see a Western Screech Owl in a hole in a tree near the trail. There is an easy walking trail along side the lake which is accessed from the parking

lot. Currently both the day use and campground of Lake Solano County Park (entry fee of around \$6) are closed. This is due to the LNU Lightning Complex fire which tore through the area last year, but also due to Covid 19 restrictions. Their website is solanocounty.com/depts/rm/countyPark/lakesolano.asp for more information. For current status the rangers can be reached at (530) 795-2990. Park Administration can be reached at (707) 784-7905.

From the town of Winters follow CA-128 southwest; turn left (south) on Road 86; after about 4 miles turn left into the parking lot. The address is 8685 Pleasants Valley Road, Winters, CA. Birding will always be available (with careful and safe pullouts) west on CA-128 along Putah Creek.

MATHER LAKE

The lake is a nice surprise, offering great avian diversity. Trips can yield 50 or more species, including waterfowl, raptors, wrens, and sparrows. Located in Mather Regional Park; fee area. The terrain is fairly flat with walking trails.

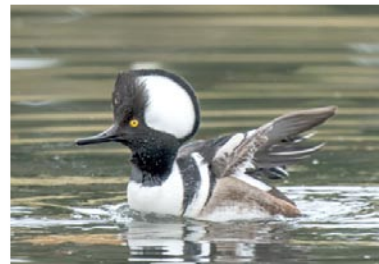
Take Zinfandel Drive east off Hwy 50 in Rancho Cordova for about three miles; the park address is 4051 Zinfandel Drive,

Rancho Cordova.

ARROWHEAD MARSH AND MKL JR REGIONAL SHORELINE

For those of you who don't mind a drive to the east Bay Area (San Leandro Bay), this is a jewel. The habitat includes estuary, mud

February Birding continued on page 2



Hooded Merganser
Dan Brown

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Wildlife Service (USFWS) list of Birds of Conservation Concern.

Current conservation work Xerónimo will present on this evening are:

- 1) the protection of at-risk Tricolored Blackbird colonies
- 2) development of multi-benefit ground-water recharge projects in target regions to benefit birds and communities
- 3) on-farm habitat enhancement using cover crops and through riparian restoration.

Away from work, Xerónimo spends time backpacking, riding bikes, cooking, and of course birding.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are now held online the third Thursday of the month. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker for further information. To keep up with current happenings follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon.

Anthony Asay, Program Chair

STILL A CHRISTMAS COUNT

I birded Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (which is a large part of Area 7). I have been doing this area of the count for 20 years. As many who know me are aware, I love birding the Yolo Bypass. I have been birding there almost since it's opening, and have been participating in the Christmas Count area that encompasses the Bypass since 2000.

This time around, there would be no official Sacramento Christmas Bird Count. But I went out anyway. I tallied 61 species. By many accounts, this was not a particularly standout day, but who can deny the thrill of discovering an American Bittern, those waders that move so slow and are experts at concealing themselves. Or finding Wilson's Snipe, that can camouflage themselves among the partially flooded rice stubble. All the while, hearing and seeing thousands of wintering Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese overhead, not to mention the majestic Tundra Swans. And of course, the thousands of ducks. The Christmas Count was sorely missed, but it was a good day, nonetheless.

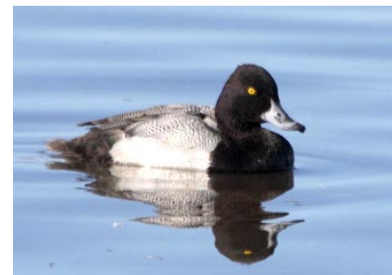
Scott Hoppe

February Birding continued from page 1

flats, salt marsh, grasslands, lawn, small groves of trees. The terrain is flat and the walking is easy on the numerous trails. The highlight for birders is Ridgway's Rail, often in fairly good numbers. Other targets include Greater and Lesser Scaup, Western, Horned, and Eared Grebes, and Surf Scoters. Several duck species are present, including Green-winged Teal, Blue-winged Teal, Pintail, Gadwall, Goldeneye and Bufflehead.

Possible shorebirds to watch for include American Avocet, Black-necked Stilt, Marbled Godwit, Willet, Black-bellied Plover, Black Oystercatcher and Dowitchers. For those who like gulls, a half dozen species are possible, including Mew, Western, Herring, Glaucous-winged, California, and Ring-billed. Forster's Tern usually shows up as well. Trees and open areas near the water can hold various sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Chestnut-backed Chickadees. A spotting scope is quite helpful.

Directions : Arrowhead Marsh points northwest into shallow San Leandro Bay between Oakland International Airport and McAfee (formerly Oakland-Alameda County) Coliseum. From Oakland, take I-880 (Nimitz Frwy.) south to Hegenberger Rd. and turn right. Drive about a mile to Doolittle Dr and turn right. After a third of mile, turn right again onto Swan Way. Then make your first left and follow the road into the wetlands.



Lesser Scaup
Linda Pittman

THE YEAR OF THE NON-CBCS

The thought that there would be no Christmas Bird Counts was so incredible that most of us had a hard time wrapping our minds around this concept. So, for a while, we played around with possible options that might allow us to do this wonderful thing so many of us have participated in for thirty and forty years. But, of course, common sense prevailed and the classic, organized, largely populated CBCs were cancelled.

I decided to bird on the usual day of the Sac count and to enter sightings in eBird reports as in past years. It seemed like the best I could do and would help stave off sadness about the loss of doing it the "regular" way. I firmly believe that the data gleaned from these CBCs is useful to birds in the long haul and did not want to lose all 2020 data.

December 26th was what most would call a nice day, that is, no rain or fog, fairly chilly but mostly sunny with some clouds overhead. Discovery Park at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers, was still fine for birding and continues to be one of the best sites in Sacramento for large numbers of Yellow-billed Magpies. However, the rest of this west end of the Parkway is no longer a place where walking alone feels entirely comfortable due to the substantial presence of homeless campers. These have also affected the area near the archery range and eastward which produced sparrows, but not the Fox Sparrows that are usually present or any quail or turkeys which used to be abundant in this area.

Heading east into North Sacramento, several areas are no longer birdable due to the solid tail-to-nose presence of vehicles and RVs, all surrounded by a huge complement of trash and junk. Access to the levee west of the Costco area was really not possible.

All in all, at this time, with the exception of the Quarry Pond, Area 3 of the Sac CBC is mostly unsuitable for serious birding.

The next non-CBC I participated in was Folsom. Area 4 covers El Dorado Hills, the Bass Lake area and part of Cameron Park. This area does not have large numbers of homeless campers but has a different, equally serious problem: wide-spread, on-going development. Bass Lake is almost unrecognizable compared to just a few years ago, and one feels as though one is behaving in a risky fashion just trying to park safely in order to bird the lake. However, some sites in Area 4 continue to be excellent birding sites, most of which were not birded on January 3 this year.

I continue to believe that these bird counts are important and entertain fond hopes that next year dedicated CBC-ers who have participated in these counts for so many years will be back at work again.

Maureen Geiger

IN PRAISE OF FOLSOM POINT

Recent reports of White-winged Scoters and Pacific Loons on Folsom Lake at Folsom Point reinforce what a great local birding spot it is. Folsom Point juts into the southeastern lobe of Folsom Lake, providing excellent views and access to all of the Sacramento County portion of the lake and surrounding habitat. It is easily accessed from E Natoma St in Folsom, just west of its intersection with Blue Ravine Rd. Common Loons are fairly regular, and it's not uncommon to find five species of grebes. A scope is very helpful. Occasionally, loons will forage near the shoreline, but it helps to have a scope to cover more area and pick out Clark's from Western and Horned from Eared grebes. This area is most productive from September through early spring. Day-use fees are \$12 and if you plan to visit State Parks multiple times, I highly recommend getting an annual Golden Poppy Pass (it supports the parks and lessens the hassle of filling out pay stubs or using cranky touch screen machines).



Pacific Loon (L) and Common Loon
Chris Conard

For over 20 years, I had mostly just driven to the outer picnic area and scanned the lake, but I've found (ever since Andrew Lee reported a Palm Warbler there in October 2018) what has turned out to be one of my favorite local walks—if you don't mind a little bit of up and down and somewhat rocky terrain. Starting from the parking area by the boat ramp, nearer the main entrance, you can head out close to the shoreline (these swales have hosted Mountain Bluebird, Brewer's Sparrow, and Clay-colored Sparrow in the past year), going about 2/3s of the way to the dam, and then return along the forest to the west, giving a nice diversity of possible species in a loop of about two miles. You'll likely get Rock Wren and can find Phainopepla and other woodland species on the return loop. A Merlin is often in the area.



Rock Wren
Chris Conard

If the idea of walking the rocky areas seems daunting, you can take a trail from the western edge of the large parking area that meets a gravel road and then follow that as it winds north. Often the loons are in the cove near the dam, and large rafts of grebes are scattered about the lake. Other times loons are elsewhere, and they cover impressive distances as they forage, so it usually pays to also drive to the outer picnic area for a quick scan. Any given visit, at least in terms of waterbirds on the lake, can be a bit of a bust, but repeated trips are bound to produce interesting results.

In these COVID times, I've appreciated this open area to escape people along single-track trails in the Parkway and other public spaces. Even on weekends, at least the first half of the day, the crowding has not been bad and I can mostly escape what I've begun to think of as the tyranny of dogs—while there are a fair number of dog walkers and running dogs, with the water as low as it is, there's enough space to get away unscathed.

Chris Conard

Chris Conard is a Natural Resource Specialist at the SRWTP Bufferlands, having worked there since 1997 with a committed team to improve the habitat for Burrowing Owls and other wildlife. For more information on the Bufferlands, visit www.bufferlands.com.

THE GBBC 2021

FEBRUARY 12-15, 2021

While we polish our binoculars or fill our bird feeders in anticipation of this 4-day event, we invite you to share your enthusiasm with family, friends, neighbors, and community groups. Watching and counting birds is one of the safest and most rewarding activities you can do from the comfort of your home or neighborhood.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Participating is easy, fun to do alone, or with others, and can be done anywhere you find birds.

All you need is a free Cornell Lab account to participate. This account is shared with Merlin, eBird, Project FeederWatch and other projects at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

COUNTING INSTRUCTIONS

- Count birds anywhere you like for at LEAST 15 minutes—or for as long as you wish. Keep track of the kinds of birds you see and how long you watched.
- Make your best estimate of how many birds you saw of each species.



White-throated Sparrow
Cindy Sedlachek,
GBBC

- For example, 5 Northern Cardinals, 3 American Crows. Huge flocks may be a challenge, but your best guess is still valuable.
- Enter your list(s) online

Put in a new checklist:

- for each new day, for each different location and for the same location, same day, if you counted at a different time of day

THREE WAYS TO ENTER DATA:

- Merlin Bird ID app
- eBird Mobile app
- eBird web page (desktops and laptop)

IT'S THAT EASY!

Submit one or more lists over the four days of counting and you become a contributing citizen scientist (community scientist). All eBird entries and saved Merlin Bird IDs over the four days contribute to the Great Backyard Bird Count.

Complete instructions for registering, counting and submitting your data plus lots of wonderful photos can be found at bird-count.org. Once at the site just click on the Participate tab. Have fun counting!

NEW LIFE, NEW BIRDS IN BAJA CALIFORNIA

One of our favorite trip leaders, Gary Fregien has taken off and moved at least for fall, winter and spring, to Baja California, near the Sea of Cortez. He was kind enough to send us this report:

Hi all. Instead of, or rather in addition to, California, Ring-billed and Herring Gulls, the Yellow-footed Gull is quite abundant here. Brown Booby is about as common as the gulls. So far, shorebirds are those familiar to us, including Black-bellied Plover, Willet and Spotted Sandpiper. Osprey are very common both over the water and perching on cactus, usually with fish. Moving inland, and speaking of cactus, the always entertaining antics and chatter of the Cactus Wren is regular here, sharing space with the Bewick's Wren. Besides Mourning Dove, we have White-winged Dove. Rather than Nuttall's and Acorn Woodpecker, we have Ladder-backed and Gila Woodpecker. Say's is more common than Black Phoebe. There are Ash-throated Flycatcher and Loggerhead Shrike, too. Phainopepla is common here, as is Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. I've only seen a single warbler sp.; you guessed it, Yellow-rumped (Audubon's). Our only corvid to date is the Common Raven, and the vulture is Turkey Vulture. Rather than crowned sparrows we have Black-throated Sparrow. Rather than Bushtit we have Verdin. We have large coveys of California Quail and a few Red-tailed Hawks and Kestrels. So far, I've only seen Anna's Hummingbird, but I'm expecting Costa's any day now. Oh, and I don't want to slight our Greater Roadrunner, officially making it on the yard list this afternoon.

Now for the Coup de gras. We have Northern Mockingbird, and its' cousin, Gray Thrasher, a Baja endemic! Having only NA field guides for birds, when I first tried to identify this species I was toying with Curve-billed Thrasher, but the only thing fitting its distinguishing field marks was Bendire's Thrasher, but that species is also out of range here. I shared my photo with a few birding buddies and one sharp-eyed respondent suggested Gray Thrasher. I had heard they are endemic only to Baja Sur, not here at this latitude. Nonetheless I consulted E-bird and lo and behold a population shows up precisely on top of us. So I'll take it! My tally is up to 44 species, and just getting started!

WINTER ACROBATICS

An entertaining bird event is the regular taking by wintering predators—merlins and peregrines—of white-throated swifts. The aerial acrobatics—vertical and horizontal swirls occur 20-40 feet in the air and are quiet! Two areas to observe this are the Hazel Ave Bridge from the fish hatchery and the pedestrian bridge near William B Pond or Rob Beaudry Drive.

Why does this behavior occur near bridges? White-throated swifts, a resident Sacramento bird, winter and nest under concrete bridges in “weep holes”—a term for the holes in the bottom of bridges that allows condensed moisture inside the concrete boxes to drain. The birds fly up to the hole and at the last second fold their wings to project themselves up into the holes. Swifts are not the only bird to take advantage of the artificially constructed cavities: Weep hole nesters include the starling, the rough-winged swallow, and the few remaining, unique to Sacramento, purple martins.

Sally M Walters

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK



facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon

You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

WOOD DUCKS

Laura Hinrichs, an 86 year old birder, lives on a small lake in north Eugene, Oregon and loves Wood Ducks. She wrote this poem and it catches their love-liness.

WOOD DUCKS

The wood ducks have come up from the River,

Looking for an easy meal.

She, saved from plainness by her huge tear drop eye,

And he, a painted duck upon a sea of grass.

No Donald is this duck, brassy and loud.

They are shy, waiting for any movement At the window to spur flight.

We three stay frozen in the earliest of light

Until released to the ordinary day.



*Wood Duck
Dan Brown*

SALMONELLA AMONG PINE SISKINS

The importance of cleaning our bird feeders and watching for disease among our feathered visitors is especially relevant in this irruptive finch year when denser populations often lead to an increase in disease. There have been reports of sluggish and dead Pine Siskins from the San Francisco Peninsula and the Northern Coast. While results are not yet conclusive, it is believed that Salmonella is causing many of these deaths. Salmonella is thought to pass from bird to bird at bird feeders.

What you can do to help?

According to Portland Audubon:

The best advice if you observe sick birds is to take down feeders to help the birds “social distance”. By taking feeders down for 14 days, we help the birds disperse and limit their exposure to concentrated feeding. Remember that the very best way to support birds in our yards and neighborhoods is with native plants and leaving leaf litter alone because natural foraging behavior doesn't create the same high disease transmission risk that bird feeders do.

Additionally, cleaning your bird feeders regularly will help prevent the spread of disease. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology you should clean your feeders about once every two weeks, and more often during times of heavy use or wet weather or if there have been reports of salmonella in your area or you have seen sick birds in your yard.

To learn more about this issue and how you can help, read Portland Audubon's blog post at audubonportland.org/blog/help-pine-siskins-by-practicing-safe-bird-feeding/. Learn more about maintaining safe and clean bird feeders at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology site, allaboutbirds.org/news/browse/topic/feeding-birds/. There are several helpful articles about cleaning your feeders but also others to help you get the most out of feeding birds safely.

SAS HAS A NEW BIRDABILITY COMMITTEE

You may have read or heard a new word popping up in the birding world lexicon, “birdability”.

This term refers to a new movement working to identify and create accessible birding locations. The founder of the movement is Virginia Rose, and her organization is aptly named

Birdability. Her mission is to help organize volunteers at a local level to identify accessible locations where birders with mobility or special needs issues can be fully involved with birding.

As stated on her website: Birdability focuses on removing barriers to access for birders with mobility challenges, blindness or low vision, intellectual or developmental disabilities (including autism), mental illness, being deaf or hard of hearing and other health concerns. Accessibility challenges are the difficulties someone experiences while interacting with the physical or social environment when engaging in a meaningful activity... in this case, birding!

There is a very long and wonderful history of various organizations, including Audubon, working hard to ensure that the majesty of our natural world is accessible to everyone. State and national standards have been developed to guarantee that chosen locations are built to accommodate all visitors. The birdability movement focuses on identifying these locations and assisting new and seasoned handicapped birders in enjoying our wonderful birds. It also allows them to be more fully involved with other birders, and critical citizen science activities.

The new SAS Birdability Committee will initially focus on identifying existing bird-

ing sites that best meet the needs of all birders. In addition, future outreach and educational programs will be developed to foster inclusion of all birders regardless of their physical difficulties.

An example of a birding site that meets the definition of birdability is Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge. The overall refuge is 6,550 acres, however the majority of the preserve

has very limited public access due to the presence of sensitive plant and animal species. When the land was acquired approximately five acres contained a vineyard and residence. The buildings were turned into an office for refuge

management and the vineyards were removed. As this portion of the preserve had already been disturbed it was chosen for improvements.

With the help from multiple agencies and private organizations the refuge designed,

funded, and built the Blue Heron Trails facility. An accessible paved trail consisting of a mile loop around managed wetlands, hosts various migrants such as hawks, shorebirds, Sandhill Cranes, and waterfowl. Onsite parking includes handicapped spaces along with a well designed school bus area. Rounding out the features are large accessible restrooms. All of these accessibility aspects define what makes a site truly useable for all birders, and why it is the definition of birdability.

Directions: Going south on I-5, take the Hood Franklin Exit from the highway and go West. The Refuge will be on your left with signage that's easy to see.

Upcoming birdability write-ups will include Cosumnes River Preserve and Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. Each of these amazing destinations have accessible trails. In addition, an accessibility rating scale will be presented to assist mobility impaired birders in choosing locations to visit, that meet their specific needs. If you are interested in getting involved and becoming a member of the committee, please contact Paul Miller (paul@pjmilller.com).



Stone Lakes Birdability Site



Accessible Restrooms at Stone Lakes



Stone Lakes Trail and Markers

SAS PROPOSED BYLAWS CHANGES

The SAS Board has proposed changes to our Chapter's bylaws. SAS members will be voting on the changes electronically on the SAS website starting 3/18/21.

A marked copy and revised copy of the bylaws are available at www.sacramento-audubon.org/bylaws for SAS members to review. The voting ballot will be posted on the website on 3/18/21; with voting to continue until 3/31/21.

Most of the changes are minor clarifications. The main change is to allow voting electronically for: Board transaction of business; annual election of officers, and bylaws amendments.

2020-2021 DUCK STAMP

It's not too late to treat yourself to a 2020-2021 Duck Stamp which will help support this vital federal program and also allow you free admission to any national wildlife refuge .

The program is an essential tool in purchasing refuge lands for consumptive and non-consumptive habitat conservation. Locally, Sacramento NWR, Stone Lakes NWR, and Merced NWR were 100% purchased with Duck Stamp funds. While waterfowlers are required to buy a stamp to hunt, birders who visit refuges should



consider purchasing this annual stamp in support of conservation. A onetime \$25 purchase of the Duck Stamp now is valid until June 30, 2021.

The Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp is for sale at refuges, sporting goods stores and US Postal Offices. Or, you can go online to order your stamps: www.fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp/buy-duck-stamp.php

Hunters willingly purchase this stamp. It would be terrific if birders (and non-birders) would purchase Duck Stamps annually too. By increasing the base support of this program, the number of acres of wetland, grassland and other habitats conserved each year only increases. The funds are used to support the expansion of refuges system-wide in all 50 states and are used for non-consumptive, closed zones as well.

SAS EDUCATION CHAIR NEEDED

The Education Chair is a volunteer position that coordinates the efforts of lead volunteers on the Education Committee. The chair and lead volunteers are responsible for a variety of activities focused on reaching out to both adults and children. Examples of these activities include community outreach, beginning birder activities, and family friendly and youth activities. This committee has been operating with great success for several years and contacts and volunteers are already in place.

The Education Chair also serves as the primary contact to the general public, fielding inquiries and passing them on to the appropriate committee member. If you are interested in this position and helping Sacramento Audubon fulfill one of its primary missions, please contact Bill Bianco: president@sacramentoaudubon.org.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Bill Bianco, Charles Binder, Lucy Boehm, Bruce Bostick, Karen Brookhyser, Sue & Kenn Bucholz, Robert & Maureen Burness, Liz Chasse-Crouse, Dale Claypoole, Steven Coughran, Carol Edwards, Kim Erickson, Ellen Evans, Marcia Ferkovich, Taylor Florence, Mary Forrestal, Susan Goodrich, Kathryn M Griffin, Bruce Hester, Larry Hickey, James & Nancy Joye, Susan Just, Alice Krumenacher, Dolores Maher, Myra McPherson, Thomas & Carol Murphey, Joseph Piette, Noreen R Rademacher, Roberts & Robin Rogerson, Beverly Sales, Sonia Santa Anna, Sonja Sorbo, Jennifer Schmidt, Swaminathan Vasudevan, and Marsha Wilson made donations to the **General Fund**.

Carla R Barbaro, Bill Bianco, Lucy Boehm, Karen Brookhyser, Carol Edwards, Callista Rooks, Erin O Rose, Beverly Sales, and Craig Swolgaard made donations to the **Education and Conservation Fund**.

Katharine & David Ang, Patricia Ayres, Carla R Barbaro, Bill Bianco, Karen Brookhyser, Carol Edwards, Taylor Florence, Vickie J Griffin, Martha Lennihan, Fred Lopez, Beverly Moon, and Rita Thompson made donations to the **Bobelaine Sanctuary**.

Many thanks to all of you for your continued support of Sacramento Audubon and its work in the community. Donations to the Bobelaine Sanctuary are encouraged to help defray the cost of management.

Field Trip Information

Due to the continuing coronavirus threat, SAS is not offering field trips for the month of January. Suggested places to bird according to the month can be found on page 1.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON'S ACTION ALERT

Join our Action Alert subscriber list and receive monthly alerts on important local issues affecting birds, wildlife and habitat. www.sacramentoaudubon.org/conservation-alerts. Speak up for those who cannot speak!



SACRAMENTO AUDUBON'S NEW BOOKSHELF

Need an idea for the bird and book lover in your life or yourself? Check out the SAS Bookshelf, recommended reading from Sacramento Audubon Society members. On the SAS Bookshelf, you'll find suggestions for informative and interesting books perfect for birders and bird enthusiasts. All the books listed have been enjoyed and recommended by SAS members. Go to www.sacramentoaudubon.org/sas-bookshelf for the complete list. If you wish to purchase a book, remember that by using Amazon Smile and selecting the Sacramento Audubon as your charity of choice, 0.5% of eligible purchases will be donated to Sacramento Audubon Society.



Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

- Promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds;
- Promote the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach;
- Provide, encourage and support environmental educational opportunities; and
- Provide proactive leadership in the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

Seasonal Sightings

December 1 to December 31 Rare and Unusual Bird Reports www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

Despite the Covid pandemic leading to the cancellation of many local CBCs, there was good quantity and quality of bird reports throughout the region. Very dry conditions have characterized most of the fall and winter, but where the wetlands had water, bird numbers were good. Waterfowl highlights included a male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** on 12/15 at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) and the returning hybrid **Blue-winged Teal x Northern Shoveler** at the Lost Slough Wetlands of Cosumnes River Preserve. A **Greater Scaup** along the American River Parkway (ARP) upstream of the Mayhew Drain from 12/25 into January was unusual for the region away from the Delta. A **Surf Scoter** was reported off Sherman Island on 12/12, and **Red-breasted Merganser** reports included one off Beals Pt at Folsom Lake for most of the

month, another off Tyler Island on 12/23, and multiples at the Amador County portion of Lake Camanche along with two **Red-necked Grebes** on 12/22.

The **American Golden-Plover** found at the Woodland WTP continued through at least 12/19, which is extremely late in the season for this species. A lingering **Semipalmated Plover** was at the YBWA on 12/5 and the Woodland WTP through 12/15. A little south of the area typically covered here, a **Black-headed Gull** found at the Stockton WTP from 12/5 into January deserves mentioning, along with a **Franklin's Gull** at the same site from 12/4-15. An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found near the Nimbus Hatchery from 12/1-2, and a second-cycle bird was found in the same area on 12/22-27. An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was near the Yolo Landfill from 12/7-28. A striking first-cycle **Glaucous Gull** caused a stir downstream of the Nimbus Hatchery

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members.

Sue & Kenn Bucholz	Michelle James
Maggie Coulter	Jeff Hendy
Velma & Glenn Gambles	Joseph Piette
Angela Hanson	Kathi Seilheimer
Muesse & Henry Muesse	Susan Titus
	John Walton

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Please contact President, Bill Bianco, at biancowm@yahoo.com; or 916-372-3318 to find out how the Board Meeting is being held.

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is February 23 and would normally be held at 7pm at Turley Associates, 2431 Capital Ave, Sacramento, CA 95816.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/board-minutes.

Observations continued

from 12/14 into January; a second-cycle bird was near the Yolo County Landfill on 12/27. A **Pacific Loon** was first found off Brown's Ravine at Folsom Lake on 12/5, and one to two continued off Folsom Point and/or Beals Point into the new year; one to two **Pacific Loons** were in Amador County waters of Lake Camanche on 12/22.

A calling **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was reported downstream of the Gristmill access to the ARP on 12/5. A **Long-eared Owl** was found at Mississippi Bar from 12/10-11, and up to four **Short-eared Owls** were seen at Sherman Island during the first half of the month. An **American Dipper** was reported along Sweetwater Creek just upstream of Folsom Lake on 12/4, and the returning dipper continued along Putah Creek near the Hwy 128 bridge downstream of Lake Berryessa. A **Sage Thrasher** was found on private land from 12/21-23 off Central Ave in Yolo County where it meets the Deep Water Ship Channel. A **Townsend's**

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Solitaire was a nice surprise on 12/20 at Sailor Bar. **Evening Grosbeak** reports included one in Davis on 12/1 and two over Elk Slough in Yolo County on 12/24. One to two **Cassin's Finches** were found and photographed in Davis from 12/3-7, and a **Red Crossbill** was reported over Rosemont on 12/14. A **Black-throated Sparrow** continued on private property near Lake Solano and a **Lark Bunting** was found and photographed at the YBWA on 12/30. Unlike recent winters, no unusual wintering warblers were reported this month.

The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000-foot contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club listserve (cvbirds.org) and in eBird (ebird.org).

To view photos of some of the highlights, visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/bird-sightings. Once on the page, click on the highlighted eBird reports to view the photos.

It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Steve Abbott, Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Jonathan Eisen, Elias Elias, Andy Engilis, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Jim Holmes, Brad Holtz, Scott Hoppe, Emmett Iverson, Jeri Langham, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Lindsey Mitchell, Frances Oliver, Adam Panto, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Ron Pozzi, Jim Rowth, Steve Scott, Sean Smith, Gaven Stacey, Kirk Swenson, Cameron Tescher, John Trochet, Zeke VanZante, Ed Whisler, Lynette Williams, and David Yee.

Thanks to everyone for their reports--without them, this column would not be possible.

Chris Conard

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White Tailed Kite Dan Brown

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ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

7pm, February 18, 2021

Xerónimo Castañeda,
Tricolored Blackbirds

February's meeting will be held online via Cisco Webex. To receive a link to join the meeting, email meetings@sacramentoaudubon.org.