

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 70 • NO. 2

FEBRUARY 2018

General Meeting

Thursday, February 15, 2018

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Assembly Room, 7pm

Cuba

Marti Ikehara

Marti Ikehara traveled to Cuba with Victor Emanuel Nature Tours in March 2017 on a birding and cultural tour. She will share stories and photos from her 10-day trip that started in Camaguey, visited both the north and south coasts, and ended in Havana. The tour group looked especially for the 28 endemic species of birds and learned about the history of, and current lifestyles, in Cuba.

Marti Ikehara retired from Federal service in 2013. For half of her 32-year career, she was a ground-water hydrologist with US Geological Survey in Hawaii and then California, where she focused on land subsidence. During the second half of her service, Marti was employed by National Geodetic Survey as the geodetic advisor for California, utilizing and teaching GPS techniques for horizontal positions and elevations obtained in regional or statewide geodetic land surveys. Her birding experience, starting in 1993, spans the globe from Antarctica to Borneo and many places in Latin America.



Marti Ikehara
in Cuba

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Carmichael. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions. To keep up with current happenings follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/Sacramento Audubon](https://facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

*Sally Walters Schmoldt
President and Program Chair*

TAKE PART IN THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT THIS YEAR ON FEBRUARY 16-19

Just to remind you to take part in this year's 21st annual GBBC, coming up February 16-19. Citizens' bird count statistics from all over the world generate much needed information for scientists about bird populations and movements. Last year participants counted over 27 million birds from around the world. The birdcount.org site is also a handy place to go for results if you're wondering where all the irruptions of snowy owls and crossbills are this year. Go to the gbbc.birdcount.org/get-started/ site for further count information with step by step instructions. This page also has a link to help with hard to identify birds. So take part in an easy, exciting and valuable project. If you'd like to join a group counting birds for the GBBC, you can find 4 field trips on page 5.

BIRD AND BREAKFAST EVENTS AT EFFIE YEAW MARCH 17 and 24

Traditional Event – Saturday, March 17 at 8am

Family-Friendly Event – Saturday, March 24 at 8am

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and Sacramento Audubon are once again teaming up to offer two special weekend morning birding trips coupled with wonderful breakfast fare.

This event, held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael, starts with bird walks guided by some of our best local birders. For weeks in advance, these guides scout the Nature Study Area so they will be able to point out nests and local rarities. After the walk, join fellow birders for wonderful food and hot coffee to help raise money for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. No extensive birding experience is necessary—this event caters to all levels.

On March 17 the bird walk will be approximately 90 minutes long, followed by the traditional casserole breakfast buffet provided by some of the best cooks among ARNHA Board members and Nature Center volunteers. Participants can also bid for attractive baskets and experiences in the silent auction.

On March 24 guests can choose to join either a family bird walk, a one hour walk appropriate for children 6 and older, or a longer, 90-minute adult bird walk open to those ages 12 and above. This event features a hot pancake breakfast, cooked and served by the Carmichael Kiwanis Club.

Bird and Breakfast is sponsored by Mendocino-based Out of This World Optics, which will be on-site Saturday, March 17 showcasing a wide range of binoculars and spotting scopes for sale. They feature over 25 styles of binoculars and scopes, made especially for birding, to compare and test. This event is the perfect time to shop for new birding equipment!

Bird and Breakfast often sells out. Reservations are required. Call 916-489-4918 for information, questions and to make reservations, or register online at sacnaturecenter.net/events/bird-breakfast-weekend/.

Field Trip Findings

Laguna Creek Wetlands (1/14) — Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Jane Van Kessel, reported: “On a gray, overcast day, 18 of us walked this Wetlands area. Surprisingly, as this trail is busy with walkers, runners and cyclists, we managed to find almost 40 species. It was notable for the very long, close looks we had at an adult Cooper’s Hawk, a Green Heron, a handful of Wood Ducks and a gorgeous Mandarin cooing up to the female Wood Ducks.”

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (1/13) — Leader John York reported: “Five intrepid birders set out in a fog for Maxwell Cemetery and Sac NWR. Visibility was bad, but we did catch the continuing Vermilion Flycatcher at the cemetery, a lifer for one of our number. The refuge seemed low on ducks, but who knows what was beyond the white curtain. We did see the usual ducks, geese and Red-tailed Hawks. Highlights were seven Bald Eagles, some frame-fillers sitting over the road for the photographers, and two Peregrine Falcons. Last raptor of the day was a Merlin. We were looking hard for the Northern Shrike seen recently there, but only came up with a Loggerhead. Great fun even with limited visibility. We should go again sometime.”

Sailor Bar (1/7) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Fifteen people saw fifty species of birds on a very foggy morning along the American River Parkway. Highlights included Sharp-shinned Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Peregrine Falcon, Barrow’s Goldeneye, Spotted Sandpiper and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.”

Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR (1/6) — Leaders Daniel and Pam Thompson reported: “A rainy Friday night resulted in a lovely, wet, but partly cloudy Saturday. We had amazing numbers of birds out feeding all day long. We had remarkable numbers of some species: 4 American

Bitterns, 4 Great-Horned Owls, 4 Green Herons, 2 lovely Golden-crowned Kinglets (not seen on this trip for many years), 4 Eurasian Wigeon, 3 Bald Eagles and Cackling Geese. We had remarkable numbers of Snow and Ross’s Geese and even pulled in a few Blue-winged Teal. We finally called it a day as the light got too dim to spot, pulling in a few final species on Lone Star Road such as Wilson’s Snipe, Dunlin, Black-bellied Plover and Long-billed Dowitcher. All in all, we had 97 species for the day, beating last year’s record!”

New Year’s Day in the Cosumnes/Mokelumne Rivers Area (1/1) — Leader Tim Fitzer reported: “Our group spotted a variety of birds, including several species of ducks as we stopped by the Ducks In Scopes program at the Cosumnes River Preserve. We had good looks at Wilson’s Snipes, and were treated to a great view of White Pelicans overhead. A good time was had by all.”

Sandhill Cranes at Staten Island (12/30 and 12/23) — Leader Mike Savino reported: This was the first scheduled SAS/SOSC crane tour to start at Staten Island. In spite of the somewhat obscure location each day about 16 people showed up. At arrival time there were very few cranes, but by sunset a few hundred flew in for the night. Both days we also had good looks at Tundra Swans and good fly overs of White-fronted Geese. There were also hundreds of Aleutian Cackling Geese in nearby fields as well as big fly overs. People were wowed by the many hundreds of geese at a distance and flying over as much as they were by the clear, close up, scope views of cranes. We were thrilled to have Marilyn and Phil Isenberg join us for the Dec 30 tour.”

Salt Springs Valley (12/30) — Ann Burris, co-leader with Tim Fitzer, reported: “Despite an overcast day 8 birders

made the trip to Salt Springs Valley for a day of fun. The raptors sure were not a disappointment at this beautiful valley. Some of the highlights were: 3 Bald Eagles, 5 Ferruginous Hawks, 3 Prairie Falcons, 2 Merlins, 1 Barn Owl and Lewis Woodpeckers. We all had a very enjoyable day with lots of birds and laughs.”

Colusa NWR (12/19) — Leader John Huls reported: “Six birders made the trip and were awed by the complacency of the waterfowl at the viewing deck. As we watched, the number of Snow Geese increased from a hundred to over a thousand in just three minutes and only 15 yards out from the deck! A lone Eurasian Wigeon, not that uncommon at this site, delighted us with its conspicuous orange pate. The auto tour loop produced the normal mix of wintering waterfowl, including three or four very large rafts of Bufflehead in addition to numerous Red-tails, Harriers, Wilson’s Snipe, White-faced Ibis, Cormorants, Killdeer and a Loggerhead Shrike. Following the tour we regrouped at Granzella’s in Williams for victuals and last minute gift shopping. The taxidermy display evoked emotions of wonder at the great beauty of nature and sadness at what man has wrought.”

Mather Lake (12/16) — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: “Despite chilling winds, seven birders managed 28 species. For the first hour or so, all managed to spot the usual on the NW shore. Highlights were a female Rudy Duck, an American Pipit, 2 rafts of American Coots totaling over 300 and like last month a large number of Mute Swans. Two team members birded the south shore and highlighted Buffleheads, Gadwalls, Wilson’s Snipe and 3 Otters.”

Cathie LaZier

2017-2018 Christmas Count Results by Area

SACRAMENTO, DECEMBER 21

Dan Williams reported: “The Sacramento CBC took place on December 17, 2017. We were 58 strong in 24 parties, and a couple of the groups did a little owling. Our grand species total was 156 (historic high is 169 set just a couple years back in 2015).

“Without question, the most incredible find for this count was California’s first CITRINE WAGTAIL which was found by a visiting birder from Utah at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area two days before the count. Frustratingly, only a very few lucky birders got to see this Central Asian miracle bird the following day, and it could not be

re-found on count day so it will have to go down as the flashiest count week bird we’ve ever had!

“An adult Lesser Black-backed Gull was picked out of a flock of mostly California Gulls at the Yolo County Landfill pond, an overdue first for the count.

“Other highlights included a Hooded Oriole in Capitol Park (6th in count history and the first since 2011), a Swainson’s Hawk over Piedmont Drive in the Pocket area (the first since 2007 for the count), a Bald Eagle at Conaway Ranch, an Osprey near the SAC Bypass, a Band-tailed Pigeon in Area 10, a Townsend’s Warbler

at Natomas Oaks Park, as well as multiple sightings of Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Pacific Wren, Varied Thrush (they've been tough to come by this season), Black-throated Gray Warbler, Western Tanager, and good numbers of Purple Finch and Pine Siskin.

"Overall, numbers of waterfowl were way down including at the Quarry Ponds along the American River Parkway where the typical thousands of Canvasback dwindled to a mere 50, and only 1 each of Redhead and Lesser Scaup could be found in the whole circle. It would seem a lot of the geese and swans had yet to make a final push down into our area as their numbers were well short of last year's totals.

"Misses included Western Grebe, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle, Western Sandpiper, Bonaparte's and Mew Gulls, and White-throated Sparrow which was surprising after that species had a strong showing in our region over the fall.

"Thanks to everyone who participated, to our most excellent area leaders, and I'm already looking forward to next year!"

FOLSOM, DECEMBER 31

Chris Conard reported: "We ran the 40th iteration of the Folsom CBC on December 31, 2017, on a cool, largely overcast day. There were 68 counters in 29 parties, and a couple of areas did a little owling. The species total was 140, within an historic range of 123 to 146. There were relatively few surprising misses or unexpected finds this year. Three Greater White-fronted Geese saved us from missing all geese except for Canada, but we did miss Tundra Swans. Invasive Mute Swan numbers are growing with 25 this year. Ducks were mixed, with misses of Canvasback and Lesser Scaup, while three Redheads on Folsom Lake were a nice surprise (they are much harder to find in the past two decades). Also notable were 42 Barrow's Goldeneye and 38 Hooded Mergansers, and we had a conservative count of 12 Common Loons. We missed Ring-necked Pheasant and both American Bittern and Black-crowned Night-Heron.

"We found one Osprey and five Bald Eagles (way down from last year's 14), plus eight Ferruginous Hawks, and two Rough-legged Hawks were a nice surprise. We missed Golden Eagle as we often do nowadays. Sticking with birds of prey, we found ten Merlins, five Prairie Falcons, and two Peregrine Falcons. Four Barn Owls was good for a species sometimes missed, and we found three Burrowing Owls, but missed Western Screech-Owl.

"On a count with typically low shore-bird diversity, we missed Long-billed Dowitcher, but four Dunlin were a nice addition on this CBC. Among 40,000+ gulls, a Glaucous Gull was an excellent find, though the Lesser Black-backed Gull reported the day before was not found on count day. Thirty-five Band-tailed Pigeons were a nice surprise, and one Lewis's Woodpecker found near Carson Creek and Scott Rd saved us from missing this count favorite. A single Hairy Woodpecker was found in the Peninsula section of Folsom Lake SRA and three Loggerhead Shrikes held steady from last year.

"Two Steller's Jays were a nice find for this non-invasion year, and 40 Yellow-billed Magpies was an improvement over last year's low of 13. Common Ravens



Maverick Jones, Marielle Jones, and Kiersten Jones on the Teen CBC 2018

continued strong at 28. We found three Brown Creepers, and other sometimes-missed species included two Red-breasted Nuthatches, ten Golden-crowned Kinglets, and five Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. We did miss Mountain Bluebird and Varied Thrush. A sampling of additional numbers include 252 Black Phoebes, 511 Oak Titmouses, 795 Western Bluebirds, six California Thrashers, 57 Phainopeplas (barely half of last year's total), four Orange-crowned Warblers, only one Common Yellowthroat, and a most impressive nine Chipping Sparrows. Two of 860 Dark-eyed Juncos were Slate-colored. Savannah Sparrow numbers were up from last year's paltry 63 to a more respectable 283. Tricolored Blackbirds were up from last year's 12 to 177, although some of their foraging and breeding habitat is currently being converted to houses south of Folsom. Fair numbers of finches were about, with 58 Purple Finches and 55 Pine Siskins reported.

"Thanks to all who participated and especially to the area leaders who do a lot of extra work organizing their teams.

KIDS-PRETEEN, JANUARY 6

Maureen Geiger reported: "Saturday, January 6th was the 6th Annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count. Each KCBC has been wonderful, but for some reason, this one seemed to me to be the best ever. A joint effort between SAS and the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, the 22 children aged 5 to 11 divided into 4 teams with experienced birders leading each team, and set off at the Nature Center in Carmichael to walk the trails and to find nearly 50 species of birds.

"Returning after 2 hours in the field, families ate lunch, shared stories of the morning walks, and maybe best of all, children were able to choose from a rich variety of nature-related raffle gifts to take home with them. Many also explored the Nature

Center and were treated to demonstrations by Effie Yeaw staff of live residents such as a Great Horned Owl and a Swainson's Hawk.

"A first-time volunteer summed it up very well. She was touched by the joy and enthusiasm she saw in each child as they arrived and throughout the morning and thought,

"This is where it all starts – the planting of a single seed to spark an interest in nature." Sacramento Audubon and Effie Yeaw Nature Center seem to do this very well indeed!"

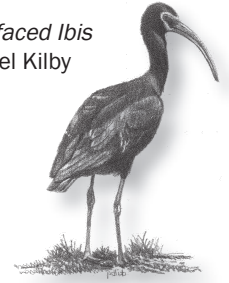
KIDS-TEENS, JANUARY 7

Wendy Money reported: "On a cool, foggy morning, fifteen teens and parents joined six leaders to survey four areas in the William Pond Park area. We emphasized spotting and auditory skills, finding birds quickly with binoculars, noting prominent features on birds, and using habitat as clues to types of birds who potentially could be there. We had a notably focused, engaged and motivated group of birders who, after birding 2.5 hours, gathered for lunch at a Mexican Restaurant to socialize, share highlights of the count, and compile totals. We recorded 59 species. Highlights shared were: a perched Peregrine Falcon, American Kestrel, three Spotted Sandpipers together, several Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers, two Hooded Mergansers, and large flocks of both Lark Sparrows and American Pipits.

"So many of our registered teens wanted to attend but were stricken with the epidemic flu and we wish them a speedy recovery."

Field Trips

White-faced Ibis
Daniel Kilby



Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, for trips through January 11, 2018, contact the scheduler Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net, 916-502-2699. For trips from January 12 through February 11, 2018, contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, offleash56@yahoo.com, 916-761-1124.

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ridesharing/carpools. Participants are, however, encouraged to voluntarily share rides. Any carpool arrangements are private agreements between the driver and the passengers. Drivers must carry adequate insurance coverage. Please be courteous and share gas expenses with the driver. FRS radios can be helpful on all trips. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader. In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER contact the trip leader for trip status.

NOTE: Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place.

Friday, February 2, 8am

Sailor Bar

Leader: Mark Sawyer, 916-968-1661
Marksawyer3383@yahoo.com

Join Mark for a morning walk checking out the resident and wintering birds. This is a good trip for beginners and experienced birders too. Meet at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, February 3, 8am

Bobelaine Sanctuary

Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 916-281-6652, mkgeiger@comcast.net
Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277
kenpoe@sbcglobal.net

Join Maureen and Ken for a 3 mile walk along the trails of this 430-acre National Audubon Sanctuary on the Feather River, managed by Sacramento Audubon. They will be looking for resident and wintering birds such as Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow, crowned sparrows, both towhees and various raptors. If there has been rain, the trails may be wet and muddy. This trip will end by noon. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd; go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Road, and then turn right into the parking area. Meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. To meet at Bobelaine, from Sacramento take Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City and about 2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. The group will probably arrive there about 8:30am.

Saturday, February 3, 4:30pm

Family Friendly Trip

Owling in the Auburn Canyons

Leaders: Sandra Steurer
916-580-8398, sasteurer@yahoo.com
Wendy Money, 916-205-3194
wendydougmsn.com

Bring flashlights and listening ears. We will walk down by the canyons of Auburn on a wide paved road looking and listening for Owls. Great horned, Western Screech-owls, and Barn Owls have been seen and heard here. Meet on Pacific Street across from the Railhead Park (175 Pacific Street, Auburn), near the canal. Call or text Sandra or Wendy with questions.

Sunday, February 4, 7:30am

Mather Lake

Leader: Wayne Blunk, 916-876-0457
Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations, and he usually turns up quite a list of bird species. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron and Common Yellowthroat. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Thursday, February 8, 9am

Western Yolo County

Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 916-947-7573
burris.nellieann@gmail.com

Tim and Ann will be birding rural roads of Western Yolo County looking for Ferruginous Hawks, falcons, eagles and other wintering birds. Meet at the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot in Woodland. From Sacramento take I-5 north to Road 102 (Exit 536); turn north on 102 and take the next right turn onto East Main Street, and turn right into the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot. This trip will last into the afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and layered clothing. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

Saturday, February 10, 8am

Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley

Leader: Craig Swolgaard
530-334-3023
cswol@sbcglobal.net

A published study found that California's Central Valley is one of the richest wintering areas for raptors in the country. The trip will include the whole length of Meiss Road in Sacramento County, plus a good portion of Michigan Bar Road. Many species of raptors have been found along this productive drive during the winter months, including Golden Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, White-tailed Kite, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and Burrowing Owl. This is also a good area to find Mountain Bluebirds in winter and has potential for other vagrants. Meet at the small public parking lot on Highway 16 and Sunrise Blvd at 8am. We will try to car pool to keep the car numbers down, as some of the route uses pullouts on a busy highway. Bring a spotting scope if possible. Trip may go into early afternoon so water and food may be a good idea.

Sunday, February 11

Merced County wetlands and refuges

Leader: Dan Brown, 916-704-0951

naturestoc@aol.com

Co-leader: Dale Azevedo

Join Dan and Dale for a full day of birding a few of the many wetlands in the Merced County area. We will start Sunday morning birding Dale's private duck club property. We plan on birding the private area until early afternoon, then spend the rest of the day birding the National Wildlife areas nearby, ending the day at Merced National Wildlife Refuge to enjoy the cranes and geese at sunset. We will be taking several short hikes during the day, so wear appropriate shoes. Also bring lunch, liquids and snacks, as lunch will be in the field. This trip will be limited to 15 participants. Please contact Dan Brown for information on meeting place and time in Merced County on Sunday morning.

Thursday, February 15, 8am

Lincoln WWTP and Placer County Roads

Leader: Sonja Sorbo, 916-390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com

On this morning trip we will start by birding the Lincoln water treatment plant. There are several large ponds which can hold a variety of ducks. From the plant, we will drive some nearby backroads of Placer county, searching flooded fields for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. We will search a small riparian area for sparrows, woodpeckers, and other resident species. Several open dry fields may provide hunting grounds for raptors. Meet at the parking lot of Dry Creek Community Park at 9235 Walerga Road in Roseville at 8am. FRS radios will be helpful.

GBBC, February 16 through 19

Great Backyard Bird Count

www.birdsource.org/gbbc

Count birds for 15 minutes or more in your backyard or other favorite birding locale; then post your results online and see what's happening in your area and across the country. It's fun for all ages and skill levels. Check the website for more information, or join one of the field trips and the leader will input the group's checklist.

Saturday, February 17, 10:30am

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk and a GBBC walk

This family friendly nature walk will be at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers and Wild Turkeys are abundant, but sharp eyes and ears may find Spotted Towhees or Bushtits as well. Reservations are not needed; fami-

lies can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists from the nature center and birding leaders Craig DeMartini and Maureen Geiger from Audubon. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, February 17, 8am

Family Friendly Trip, A GBBC trip Sailor Bar, American River Parkway
Leader: Ben Graber, 916-844-8682
Bgrab984@gmail.com

Join Ben for a morning walk checking out the resident and wintering birds. Possible birds include Phainopepla, California Quail, mergansers and goldeneyes. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders. Meet at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, February 18, 8am

Lake Solano, A GBBC trip

Leader: Lily Douglas, 916-524-9340
ldouglas14@gmail.com

Lake Solano is a great place to bird with the potential to find Phainopepla, Pileated Woodpecker, Lewis' Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Barrow's Goldeneye and many other late wintering birds. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Avenue exit, turn left at the light, and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. (There is a \$6 per car fee at Lake Solano Park.)

Monday, February 19, 7:30am

Lynch Canyon, Solano County, A GBBC trip

Leaders: Maureen Geiger

916-281-6652

mkgeiger@comcast.net

Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277

kenpoe@sbcglobal.net

This 1,039-acre park just off I-80 in Solano County consists of rolling hills with stands of native oak, buckeye and bay trees, small riparian corridors, panoramic vistas and a pond for wintering ducks, grebes and possible shorebirds. Other wintering and resident birds may include golden eagles plus harriers, hawks, kites and woodpeckers, Hermit Thrush and quail. This trip involves about a two mile walk on an easy trail and will end mid-day with an optional picnic lunch at tables near the park entrance, weather permitting. Please note: this area

is generally colder, wetter, foggier and windier than Sacramento, so dressing in layers is recommended. There is a \$5 parking fee. Meet Maureen in the Park and Ride in West Sacramento at 7:30am or at the Lynch Canyon park at about 8:30. From Sacramento on I-80 West, after Fairfield, take the Red Top Road exit. Go south (left) under the underpass. In less than 0.1 mile, turn right on McGary Road (parallels I-80) and follow for 1.8 miles. Turn right on Lynch Road, go under the I-80 overpass and through the gate into the gravel parking lot.

Saturday, February 24, 8am

William Pond Park, 8am

Leader: Cathie LaZier, 916-502-2699
empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie along the first parking area just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk down to some different spots on the river, where mergansers and goldeneye can be found in the backwaters and wrens and towhees call from the bushes. We'll check out the heron rookery and look at the pond area. California Quail, Western Bluebirds and Lark Sparrows may be found in the park area. Trip will end before noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east and it runs into the park. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Sunday, February 25

Beginning Birding Field Trip for Adults
William Pond Park

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on looking and listening. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 916-502-2699. Complete information can be found on page 6.

Sunday, February 25, 6:30am

Bodega Bay

Leaders: Mark Martucci

916-833-6722

matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471

shoppe01@surewest.net

Join Scott and Mark for a full day of birding around Bodega Bay, taking in a variety of habitats. Plan to see waterfowl, shore-

Field Trips continued on page 6

Field Trips continued from page 5

birds, gulls and raptors. Bring lunch, water and warm clothes. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take the West Capitol Ave exit. Turn left, and the Park and Ride will be on your immediate left. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. This is one of the most popular trips; it's been called "the best Audubon trip we have taken" by more than one participant.

Saturday, March 3, 8am

Bushy Lake

Leader: Darrell Mohr, 916-225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. He'll be looking for a variety of resident and wintering species. With most leaves fallen from the trees, there will be better views of the lake, and Wood Ducks are a good possibility. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. You may want to bring water. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders.

Sunday, March 4, 6:30am

Arrowhead Marsh and the Martin

Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline

Leaders: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471

shoppe01@surewest.net

Mark Martucci, 916-833-6722

matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Arrowhead Marsh and MLK, Jr. Regional Shoreline, encompassing much of San Leandro Bay, is an extremely productive birding area. It is well known for Ridgway's Rails, lots of wintering ducks and hundreds of shorebirds during the falling tides. It has also produced rarities and hard to find species such as Nelson's (formerly Sharp-tailed) and Swamp Sparrows. We will likely spend most of the day there. However, time permitting, we may visit other nearby locations. Bring lunch and liquids, and dress for possible cold early morning temps. Meet Scott and Mark at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave, Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Tuesday, March 6, 8am

Lake Solano/Putah Creek

Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207

spskua2@comcast.net

Ann Burri, 916-947-7573,

burrin.nellieann@gmail.com

This is a great area to find a variety of woodpeckers, Phainopepla, Brown Creeper, Barrow's Goldeneye and many other late wintering birds. Meet Tim and Ann at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride exit a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip, which will end in the late afternoon, so you may want to bring lunch and water.

Saturday, March 10, 7am till noon

Michigan Bar and vicinity

Leader: Chris Conard, 916-203-1610

conardc@gmail.com

We will focus on Michigan Bar Road and may visit portions of Latrobe and Meiss Rds, though access will be partially dependent on road conditions and recent weather. Vast areas of open grassland and blue oak woodland interspersed with rocky outcrops and the Cosumnes River provide habitat for winter raptors, resident and winter songbirds, and perhaps a surprise or two. We'll have a mix of car birding (bring FRS radios if you have them) and short to moderate walks. Meet at the Park and Ride on Hwy 16 (Jackson Hwy) just west of Sunrise Blvd and the Folsom South Canal (7 miles east of Watt Ave). Steady rain will cancel the trip.

Sunday, March 11, 7:30am

Mather Lake

Leader: Wayne Blunk, 916-876-0457

Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake can be a hotspot for birding, with a variety of possibilities. Join Wayne to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron and Common Yellowthroat. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning and more experienced birders.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

It's Autumn again, and the wintering waterfowl, shorebirds and cranes are back. This is an opportunity to work on duck and other wetland bird identification, and is a great trip for families, youth groups and newer birders.

Stop by the Cosumnes River Preserve and check out "Ducks In Scopes", where docents have a row of scopes set up, including lower ones for children, giving you good views of the many colorful ducks (up to 10 different species!) and other wetland birds.

Microscopes and hand lens provide close-up looks at "Duck Soup", dishes of water dipped from the pond full of sand fleas, dragonfly nymphs, and other squiggly things that provide the protein the birds are feeding on.

The Preserve is a quick drive from Sacramento—south on I-5 to Twin Cities Road; left (east) on Twin Cities for 1 mile; then right (south) on Franklin Blvd. The viewing area is in the first parking lot on your right as you drive into the preserve. Steady rain or flooding cancels event. Check www.cosumnes.org for updated schedule.

Come any time between 10am and 2pm on the following dates:

Saturdays: January 27, February 3 and 17

Sundays: February 11 and 25

SAS OUTREACH HELP WANTED

Upcoming 2018, Spring and Summer Outreach Events, where volunteer help will be needed. You do not have to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding and talking to people about our field trips and SAS. You would be working with an experienced volunteer. If you can work a 3 or 4 hour shift, please contact Bill Bianco at biancowm@yahoo.com; or 916-372-3318.

- Creek Week, Carmichael Park
Saturday, April 14, Outdoors
- Return of Swainson's Hawk,
Sutter's Landing
Saturday, April 14, Outdoors
- Walk on the Wildside
Beach Lake Park
Saturday, May 19, Outdoors
- Wildlife Art Festival
Double Tree Hotel, Sacramento
Saturday, July 21 and
Sunday, July 22. Indoors
- Harvest Day, Fair Oaks Park
Saturday, August 4, Outdoors

Birding and Nature Events

CALIFORNIA DUCK DAYS, FEBRUARY 9 AND 24

Yolo Basin Foundation sponsors this annual event, which takes place in the heart of the Pacific Flyway, minutes from Sacramento. It features a wide variety of field trips, workshops, and special activities for people of all ages. There are two events: a reception held on Friday night, February 9, and then the all day festival on Saturday, February 24. Enjoy field trips to sites around the region. Workshops such as waterfowl identification, wood duck box building, and duck calling for kids are held throughout the day. One of the most popular events at Duck Days is the kids' fishing activity. Children may fish for trout in the demonstration wetlands and then have their fish cleaned and packed to take home. The Duck Days Exhibit Hall will have interactive displays from local environmental organizations and will feature the crowd-pleasing Mallard ducklings (they will quack you up!), as well as live raptors, and activities for kids. More information and tickets can be found at yolobasin.org/california-duck-days/.

2018 KLAMATH FALLS WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL FOUR DAYS! FEBRUARY 15-18

The 39th Annual Winter Wings Festival will be held in **Klamath Falls, Oregon**. The 2018 festival is once again loaded with birding and nature photography talent. There are numerous photography workshops and field trips including some especially for youth; many raptor and owl prowl trips, and Bald Eagle flyouts. Registration is now open and required for all activities with an associated fee. The website with the complete schedule and registration information and forms is at: winterwingsfest.org. Further information is available at 877-541-BIRD (2473).

OLYMPIC BIRDFEST 2018, SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

From **April 13-15** the 15th annual Olympic Birdfest will take place in **Sequim, WA**. The festival offers a most spectacular setting where you can visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest. Pre and post-festival trips are also offered in this fascinating area. More information can be found at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 23rd annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 18-24** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. The northern coast of California offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats on Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where over 270 species of birds have been sighted. Held at the peak of spring migration, shorebirds abound and special opportunities are planned to see many other species, including Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Snowy Plover and even whale watching. Further information can be found at www.godwitdays.org or call 1-800-908-WING.

POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

Save the dates of **April 27-29** for the Bay Area's best birding and nature extravaganza! Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. For more information and to sign up for their email newsletter, visit pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. Tickets are scheduled to go on sale on February 20, and all proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sundays, February 25, March 18, and April 15, 2018

*Trips limited to 10 adult participants, and require a minimum of 3 participants: Registration required.

These outings are geared toward people who aren't yet entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. It is not necessary to be an Audubon member to participate. The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on looking and listening. This walk, covering about a mile and a half, will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. You can sign up for just one session, or for more than one.

Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 502-2699, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

150 Frequently Seen Birds of California's Great Valley

A great new book arrived at the Effie Yeaw store. It's a pocket birding field guide just for California's Great Valley! This beautiful, 300+ page book features full color images and detailed descriptions of the many bird species found in the valley. Small enough to fit in a pocket or waist pack, yet loaded with helpful information, this book is sure to become a hit among California's nature-lovers and beginning birders alike! It is only 4.5 x 6" spiral bound, has 320 pages, and 323 color photographs. The price is \$14.95 and it can be purchased online at sacnature-center.net/arnha/shop-books/.

The new little field guide is truly a community effort. Sacramento Audubon was one of nine community groups who contributed to the cost of printing the guide.

The book is published by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and all profits fund environmental education programs coordinated with state science standards for school classes, nature camps, programs about nature for families and programs about nature for adults.

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on February 27, at 7pm. Board meetings are held at the Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room, 601 Munroe St, Sacramento, 95825.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to Board Minutes.

THE CVBC YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

As reported in last month's *Observer*, the Scholarship will provide annual scholarships to birding camps for young birders. The application deadline is this February 15, so move quickly if you haven't applied yet. You can find all the information at cvbirds.org/youth-scholarship-fund/, including requirements, registration, and forms.

2nd YEAR OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Gesna Clarke, our Education Chair reported "We have scheduled 5 field trips for the second year of the Environmental Education Program with the Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps beginning in January and running through May. Field trips are scheduled for Bobelaine Sanctuary, William Pond Lake and Effie Yeaw Nature Center."

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.

Join Us For Family Friendly Field Trips!

Saturday, February 3 (evening), Owl Trip to Auburn Canyon

Join leaders Wendy Money and Sandra Steurer for this exciting trip. More complete information can be found on page 4.

Saturday, February 17, 10:30am, Family Nature Walk

Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael

These events at Effie Yeaw are held the third Saturday of almost every month and no registration is needed. Just show up and enjoy! Their website address for other outdoor, family friendly, weekend events is sacnaturecenter.net/events/weekend-programs/. You can add this day's birds to the GBBC event.

Saturday, February 17, 8am, Sailor Bar, American River Parkway

Join leader Ben Graber looking for birds along the American River Parkway. This is a GBBC event! More information can be found on page 6.

Saturday, March 17, North Natomas Walk

Join leader Ben Graber looking for birds in North Natomas. Trip information will be in next month's *Observer* or email Ben at Bgrabber984@gmail.com.

Saturday, April 21, 10:30am, Family Nature Walk

Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael

These events at Effie Yeaw are held the third Saturday of almost every month and no registration is needed. Just show up and enjoy! Their website address for other outdoor, family friendly, weekend events is sacnaturecenter.net/events/weekend-programs/.

SHORT-EARED OWL SURVEY

As part of a State Wildlife Grant, and in partnership with multiple entities across the west, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is coordinating a volunteer survey effort for Short-eared Owls during the breeding season. There are a total of 50 grids throughout CA, and surveys are road-based counts. There is a website for the project (www.avianknowledgenorthwest.net/citizen-science/short-eared-owls) with much more information and to sign-up for grids online. Volunteers do not need to have expert identification skills, only a keen interest in the project. A good pair of binoculars helps too!

Seasonal Observations

December 1 to December 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

Christmas Bird Counts (CBC), waterfowl, raptors, and interesting sparrows add up to make December a high point of the year, but occasionally a bird comes along that upends the typical patterns. A **Citrine Wagtail** was photographed at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) on 12/15 and seen by two birders on the morning of 12/16. Then wind gusts built to 50 mph and the bird was never seen again. This species had only been recorded twice before on the North American continent.

Maybe it will cease to be impressive someday, but continued reports of over 200 **Blue-winged Teal** at Bridgeway Island Pond in West Sacramento are remarkable from even a statewide perspective. A **Hooded Merganser X Goldeneye** or possibly **Bufflehead** hybrid was an interesting find along the American River

between Howe and Watt Avenues. Up to 60 **Mountain Plovers** were found in their traditional area along Robinson Rd at Flannery Rd in Solano County. Less expected was a single **Mountain Plover** on 12/10 along Abel Rd near Williams, west of Lone Star Rd. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** was found at the Woodland WTP from 12/8-18 and another found on the 12/28 Lincoln CBC along Brewer Rd, south of Philip Rd, was a first Placer County record; it continued through the end of the month. The **Franklin's Gull** found at the Woodland WTP on 11/21 continued through at least 12/6. A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found at the Yolo County Central Landfill pond along Rd 28H on the 12/17 Sacramento CBC, and another was at Beals Point, Folsom Lake, on 12/30. An adult **Glaucous Gull** was at the Woodland WTP on 12/8 and a second-cycle was found at Beals Point on 12/30-31.

Plainfield School (along Yolo County Rd 97) hosted up to three **Short-eared Owls**,

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome these new members:

Karol McCormac

Bruce Hester

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Joe Easley, John and Lura Harding, Diana Hickson and Keith Wagner, Brian Miller, Sonia Santa Anna, and Judith G Tracy made donations to the **General Fund**.

Martin D Bailey, Dick and Kari Bauer, Dennis and Meg Bryerton, Debara Johnson, Kent Milton, Joyce C Rietz, Judith G Tracy, and Nancy Weagly made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

A donation to **Bobelaine** was made by Pamela Herlihy.

Thank 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 continuing restoration after last winter's flooding.



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon

Observations continued

plus up to six **Ferruginous Hawks**, at the end of the month. At least four **Long-eared Owls** returned to their winter roost in a private olive orchard near Putah Creek between Davis and Winters. On 12/21, a walk up Rayhouse Rd off of Hwy 16 in the Cache Creek Canyon produced a **Northern Pygmy-Owl**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, and three **Hairy Woodpeckers**. Another trip on 12/29 on Rd 53 out of Guinda turned up three **Northern Pygmy-Owls**. Only one **Lewis's Woodpecker** was reported along Scott Rd, near Carson Creek, and none were apparent on Latrobe or Michigan Bar Rds this December.

The "**Western Flycatcher**" (likely **Pacific-slope**) found along Babel Slough on 11/19 continued on 12/13; another was found at the Orr portion of the Cosumnes River Preserve on 12/23. Single **Cassin's Vireos** were reported from North Davis on 12/1, Cache Creek Preserve on 12/3, and in Winters on 12/15. A **California Thrasher**, quite rare for Sacramento County, was very conspicuously singing

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

Your membership supports the SAS mission of conservation, environmental education and protection of the region's natural ecosystems and diverse wildlife populations. Please include your email address if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List for letter/email writing on conservation issues.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Mara Weston, Membership Chair, mara_weston@yahoo.com
7708 McClintock Way, Sacramento, CA 95828-4321

Date _____ *The Observer* Newsletter \$25 per address \$ _____

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

Send address changes to our Membership Chair to help keep down our costs.

ATTEND THE FUTURE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

March 15, At the Effie Yeaw Nature, Center, 7pm
Harry Fuller, *Birding Spots Off I-5*

along Humbug Creek near the corner of Oak Ave Parkway and Blue Ravine Rd in Folsom on 12/31, continuing into January. The **Palm Warbler** found at the Woodland WTP on 11/24 continued through 12/8, and a **Wilson's Warbler** was found in North Davis on 12/14-27. The **Swamp Sparrow** found just off the auto tour at YBWA on 11/25 continued through the end of December. On 12/25, a **Harris's Sparrow** was found in Sutter County at a private residence south of the small town of Meridian, along S Meridian Rd; it continued into January. The **Orchard Oriole** found on 11/30 in North Davis continued through 12/12. Rounding out the three species of orioles in Yolo County this December are one to two **Hooded Orioles** continuing through the end of the month in North Davis and a first-year male **Bullock's Oriole** found on 12/10 at Park Blvd and Acorn St in West Sacramento. Good numbers of **Purple Finches** and **Pine Siskins** continued throughout the month.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recentsightings.html). The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000' 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). It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Holly Coates, Maurice DeMille, Lily Douglas, Gil Ewing, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, Jim Holmes, Dan Kopp, Arav and Aranya Karighattam, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Tim Ludwick, Mark Martucci, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Shannon Skalos, Steve Scott, Kirk Swenson, John Trochet, and Dan Williams.

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

Chris Conard

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www.sacramentoaudubon.org



White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Send all copy to the Editor. Observations must reach the Seasonal Observations Editor by the 8th of the month.

The Observer is published by the Sacramento Audubon Society, monthly, January through December, except June and August, when we publish abbreviated editions.

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

Thursday, February 15

At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm

February 15: Marti Ikehara, *Cuba*



Cuban Stamp 1961-62