# The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

# General Meeting

Thursday, March 18, 2021 Webex Meeting 7pm See details below

Learning to Fight the **Climate Crisis** Susan Schneider

How to join the meeting: The March 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.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that humanity has only about ten years to cut global greenhouse gas emissions in half, and the consequences of failure are dire. The technology to solve the climate crisis has been available for years: This is a behavioral challenge. Simply providing information about what's needed is seldom sufficient, sadly. This talk focuses on learning principles like positive reinforcement-more complex than it might seem. From the fuel efficiency feedback in car dashboards to gamification of all sorts of sustainable behaviors, we can learn to make green choices. Standouts include Seattle's transportation program, an internationally successful approach getting kids to eat their veggies, and energy efficiency campaigns with surprising incentives. Ample resources offer support for anyone trying to make a difference-at home, at work, and in the community. But can we learn to change quickly enough?

Initially focused on renewable energy, Susan Schneider holds degrees in environmental General Meeting continued on page 2

# PLEASE VOTE ON THE SAS BYLAW CHANGES

The SAS Board has proposed changes to our Chapter's bylaws. SAS members are asked to vote on the changes electronically, on the SAS website starting 3/18/21. You may review a marked copy and the revised copy of the bylaws on the website now at www.sacramentoaudubon.org/bylaws. The voting ballot will be available 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.

# This Month's Suggested Birding

#### MARCH 2021 From Carla Barbaro, cbarbaro@comcast.net

March to April brings the magic of spring with its riot of color and movement. California Audubon estimates the Spring Migration brings more than a billion birds

back into California. Some of these passerines are passing through to other breeding grounds. Others delight us with their songs as they mark their territory and build their nests. Many locations listed in prior Observers can be explored in the spring, especially along the American River Parkway. Putah Creek remains a

favorite area for birders to find a variety of warblers. Lingering waterfowl will still be present at Yolo Bypass Area and Cosumnes River Preserve. Nesting Great Blue Herons can be found in large numbers at their Rookery along the river at William Pond. Here are a few additional recommended birding sites.

#### DEER CREEK, EL DORADO CO

This riparian zone along Deer Creek includes oak woodlands and open grasslands, affording a variety of bird habitats for migrant and resident passerines. Follow along the Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad tracks which have become a railsto-trails corridor open to the public for hik-

ing. Expected species are Willow and Ash-throated Flycatchers, Yellow-breasted Chat, Blackheaded Grosbeak, Bullock's Oriole, Western Bluebirds, vireos and numerous woodpeckers, sparrows, and raptors. Be prepared to hike along the ties of the tracks which can be uneven. Bring adequate water and dress for a cool morning with warming during the day. Mosquito

spray may be needed.

**Directions:** from Sacramento take Hwy 50 east to Latrobe Road, Exit

30A. Follow Latrobe Road south for about 4.8 miles until you cross a bridge; you will pass Cothrin Ranch Road on the left at the end of the bridge, and then watch for a broad gravel pull out on the right. A very small brown sign says El Dorado Trail. Park there, and after entering the field, take the trail to the far right near the road (west) and follow it a short distance to the railroad tracks. You are now on the hiking trail.

March Birding continued on page 2



Bullock's Oriole

Linda Pittman

#### General Meeting continued from page 1

and mechanical engineering and did an energy efficiency project for US Steel. After a stint in the Peace Corps, she obtained a PhD in psychology, specializing in reinforcement learning. Schneider's award-winning book for the public, The Science of Consequences, covers learning principles and their many applications, including sustainability. A lifelong environmental activist, Schneider was recently President of San Joaquin Audubon, and co-chairs the San Joaquin County Climate Action Coalition. She also recently joined the board of Idle-Free California. (No need to idle a vehicle more than 10 seconds!) Schneider coauthored two chapters in the upcoming *Practitioner's Guide to Creating* Successful Environmental Behavior Change, and has given numerous climate change talks and workshops. A Visiting Scholar at the University of the Pacific, Schneider is a consultant for Root Solutions, a Bay-area sustainability nonprofit.

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/Sacramento Audubon.

Anthony Asay, Program Chair

#### EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER, ANCIL HOFFMAN PARK, CARMICHAEL

March Birding continued from page 1

This nature center area should not overlooked in the spring as the trails are easy to walk, family friendly, and lead to good views of the American River. This is a wonderful place for children to find Wild Turkeys, Acorn Woodpeckers and deer. There are many nesting species such as Bushtit, and Anna's Hummingbird. Bluebirds, wrens, thrushes, vireos, raptors and migrating warblers also inhabit the area. For directions see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 parking fee is required.

#### SHOLLENBERGER PARK, PETALUMA

A long trail circles open water and marshy flats, and many shorebirds, ducks, geese, sandpipers, and gulls can be found. A few of the typical species are Green-winged Teal, Ruddy Duck, Northern Shoveler, Virginia Rail, Black-necked Stilts and White Pelicans. Peregrine Falcons have been seen here as well. For a full list of species and directions go to Shollenberger Park, Petaluma–colintalcroft. com Note that adjacent birding areas are also listed on this webpage.



American White Pelican Chris Conard

## WILLIAM POND PARK

Located on the American River , the varied habitat supports spring migrants and nesting birds. A few likely species include Wood Duck, Bewick's Wren, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Western Bluebird, and American Goldfinch. Raptors frequent the area, and in some years a Great Horned Owl nest can be found. At least two pair of Red-shouldered Hawks usually nest here. Visit the pond at the last parking lot and take the trail along the side to your left. At the other end of the pond, looking towards the river, you'll be able to view the heron rookery. There are many small trails leading off the bike trail down to the river, and the bridge that crosses the river gives an opportunity to find water species. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east, just under 1 mile, and it runs into the park. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

#### ACCESSIBLE BIRDING NEWS AND TWO NEW LOCATIONS

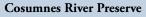
#### Our New Accessibility Committee Webpage

The Accessibility Committee is working on a webpage containing overviews of various accessible birding locations around Sacramento. You may have noticed the committee named was changed from

"Birdability" to "Accessibility". The name is already associated with a non-profit organization, thus the change. But our mission is still the same!

**Cosumnes River Preserve** 

Over the coming months we will continue to add accessible birding locations to the new webpage. Also if you know of someone who has difficulty birding because of physical limitations, let them know about our new committee. When the Covid situation improves we plan to schedule accessible birding field trips including instructive seminars.



The Cosumnes River Preserve is one of the preeminent birding locations in the Sacramento region, hosting many species of migratory birds along with a wide range of local resident populations. Located within the

preserve is the Wetlands Walk Trail consisting of a one-mile fully accessible trail system. This trail offers unparalleled views of lush marches, water-birds, and wetland plants. Section of the trail are wooden boardwalks with bridges spanning the wetlands with several viewing platforms and areas to sit. Handicapped parking and a

fully accessible restroom are also provided. Hours of operation and contact information is located on the agencies website at www. cosumnesriverpreserve.org. A PDF of the trail map can be found at www.cosumnes. org/hiking-trails/. **Directions:** Take I-5 South from Sacramento or Elk Grove. Exit on Twin Cities Road. Make a left onto Twin Cities.



Franklin Blvd (just before the train tracks). There will be a parking lot on the right providing access to the Boardwalk Trail. Continue past this parking lot to arrive

Turn right onto

Gray Lodge National Wildlife Area

> at 13501 Franklin Blvd, which is the location for both the Visitor Center and trailhead for both trails.

#### Gray Lodge National Wildlife Area

Gray Lodge is located about an hour north of Sacramento and is worth the drive. This wildlife area is another spectacular birding location in the Sacramento region, hosting the many species of migratory birds we are blessed to have, along with many interesting local resident populations. The

Accessible Birding Sites continued on page 3

## FOLSOM LAKE PENINSULA-SO CLOSE, YET SO FAR

I recently visited the Folsom Lake Peninsula, a rather remote portion of the state recreation area, about equidistant from I-80 and Hwy 50. During the pandemic, I have been

looking for more remote areas to walk, and this really fits the bill. It's a bit of a drive, and it took me about an hour and ten minutes from my home in Sacramento, but every one of the few times I've visited this site I wonder why I don't do it more often. If you haven't been, it's definitely worth a visit. If you have, you already know.

Heading up Hwy 50, exiting at El Dorado Hills Blvd and getting gas, I was somewhat surprised to see a small flock of Great-tailed Grackles fly by; I hadn't seen them there before. Continuing north to where the road becomes Salmon Falls Rd, and going another 12 miles will get you to Rattlesnake Bar Rd (if coming from Auburn, it's about 10 miles on Hwy 49 to Rattlesnake Bar Rd, by way of the



Charming Face Chris Conard

American River canyon). Even at just after 7am, there were a lot of cars parked along Salmon Falls Rd at Falcon Crest Ln as well as at Sweetwater Creek, so I was concerned it would be crowded everywhere. Fortunately, once I turned onto Rattlesnake Bar Rd, I wouldn't see a car on the road the whole nine miles to the entrance station. I stopped for a few minutes at a large pullout on the right, seven miles from Salmon Falls Rd, near extensive stands of chaparral. A California Thrasher was singing along with several Wrentits,



Salmon Falls Bridge

and a couple of Purple Finches were "pik-pik-piking" from a foothill pine. I listened and looked for Phainopeplas near the entrance station, but none were obvious and I didn't get out, but that's often a good location for them. Sometimes the entrance gate is locked and one has to park there and walk in, but today it was open.

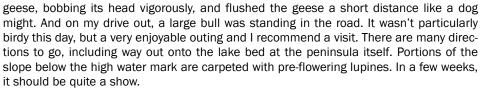
I wanted to walk toward the Salmon Falls bridge, as I'm almost done with a low-key goal of walking a loop all the way around the lake. It's taken about 30 years to cover all of the sections, so I'm in no hurry. I drove toward the campground and there were no good parking areas that way, but I found a wide shoulder and parked. From there I

walked up a gated road that became dirt and then had trail signs. Unfortunately, the signs haven't been maintained, but one said it was 6.9 miles to Salmon Falls Bridge (where it crosses the South Fork of the American). I was planning to go about five miles to close the loop where I've already walked, and just before that point, I reached the old stone Salmon Falls Bridge that is visible when the water is low like it is now. A lot of people had

come from Falcon Crest Ln, so it was rather crowded there and I didn't walk onto the bridge. But on the way, I saw hardly anyone. With low water, there are a lot of areas to wander away from trails and crowds, and heading back toward my car, I left all of the people behind and didn't see anyone except for some boats on the lake for the last hour of the walk.

Bird highlights included good numbers of Western Grebes (though without a scope, I couldn't make out any Clark's), a Bald Eagle on a nest across an arm of the lake, a Red-breasted Sapsucker, lots of Acorn Woodpeckers,

five Rock Wrens, eight Purple Finches, and a couple of Rufous-crowned Sparrows. Canada Geese were grazing, as were, unaccountably, a few cows. A calf ran in among the



#### Chris Conard

Rufous-crowned Sparrow

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.

# GBBC 2021 REPORT

Perhaps the biggest trend for birdwatchers in North America was the extreme cold affecting much of the middle and eastern parts of the continent. Nevertheless, birds are out and about and thousands of stalwart birdwatchers have been out, too. In the U.S. and Canada, this winter has been a big one for irruptive species including Pine Siskins, Purple Finches, Red-breasted Nuthatches, Evening Grosbeaks, and Common Redpolls. All are coming south from their boreal haunts and delighting admirers during the annual holiday weekend count.

Big Checklist Numbers: The United States started out with more than 90,000 checklists in just two days! At counts end the total number of checklists submitted worldwide was 307,000 with 6293 species identified. For outstanding photos look to ebird. org/media/catalog?

Blue-gray Tanager Manuel Perez



# Accessible Birding Sites continued from page 2

Wetland Discovery Trail is a one-mile paved fully accessible trail meandering along wetlands with several viewing platforms. Handicapped parking and a fully accessible restroom are provided. As stated on their website, prime time at the wildlife area is late October through early February. That's when you can see dramatic displays of more than a million waterfowl as flocks of snow geese and swans feed in the rice fields and return to the wildlife area's wetlands. The viewing is especially good as the season progresses and the birds range farther for food. Then around dusk, they come back en masse during a phenomenon dubbed "night-flight."

Hours of operation and contact information is located on the agencies' website at wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Gray-Lodge-WA. A PDF of their trail map can be found on the same page if you scroll down and click on Wetland Discovery Trail.

**Directions:** From the junction of Interstate 5 and Highway 99, take Highway 99 north to Live Oak. Turn west on Pennington (North Butte) Road. Turn right on Almond Orchard Avenue and continue to entrance. The distance from Live Oak is about eight miles.

## 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@sacramentoaudu bon.org.

## SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK



facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon

You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Sal Acosta & Suzanne Hutchinson, Theresa Arciniega, Eva Lee Arriaga, Milton Briggs, Joan L Clark, Deborah B Cooper, Terry Ervin, Kathryn George, Cynthia Hanneman, Lois Harter, James Hurley, Kimya Lambert & Chris Conard, Eric Liskay, Brian Miller, Karen E Resch and Robert Waldo made donations to the **General Fund.** 

Clifford E Anderson, Barbara Banholzer, Laura Carroll, Ellen Dutkiewicz, Tom Graham, Karen E Resch, and Alison Rood made donations to the **Education and Conservation Fund**.

Sal Acosta & Suzanne Hutchinson, Milton Briggs, Danielle Fontaine, Cathy George, Carl Norton, and Karen E Resch 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 effecting 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

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

Despite the continuing pandemic, the unfolding season allowed for a good escape into the natural world. Storms arrived, some packing a punch, but seasonal rain totals remain historically low. One of the more interesting birds was a male Baikal Teal shot by a hunter on 1/20 at the Delevan NWR just north of the area typically covered here. While it wasn't a bird we could enjoy in life, the record speaks to possibility; this species of Siberia and eastern Asia has been detected in the state fewer than ten times. The striking male Blue-winged Teal x Northern Shoveler continued into February at the Lost Slough Wetlands of Cosumnes River Preserve. One to three Surf Scoters were found on the San Joaquin River in early January off Sherman Island in extreme southwestern Sacramento County. Two

White-winged Scoters spent the month, starting 1/2, near the Folsom Lake dam, accounting for just the third occurrence of this species in Sacramento County (all since 2017). A **Red-breasted Merganser** continued, moving between Beals Pt and near the Folsom Lake dam, and a **Rednecked Grebe** first found on 1/10 exhibited a similar pattern. Another **Red-necked Grebe** was found in the shipping channel in West Sacramento on 1/27, continuing into February.

One of the most widely enjoyed birds in recent memory was a cooperative male **Broad-billed Hummingbird**, found on 1/29 in a private yard in central Davis by brand new birders who then opened their yard to dozens of socially-distanced visitors into February. A very rare but near annual wanderer to Southern California, this species is a great find in the northern half of the state. A **Costa's Hummingbird** was a nice surprise in Folsom on 1/24.

# SAS NEW MEMBERS

# Please welcome these new members.

Eva Lee Arriaga Rebecca Barger James Bennett Sompol Chatusripitak Kim Christmann Deborah B. Cooper Jeanne Courtney Nanette Endean Cynthia Hanneman Mae Harms Karen Jacques Cassidy McDonald-Ryan Regina & R David Minister Joanne Narloch Tara Page Edward Rimpo Regen Rose Deborah Viney Robert Waldo Norman Weinstein Edith Young

# 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 March 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

Last month's **Black-headed Gull** continued at the Stockton WTP through at least 1/17, and the **Glaucous Gull** near the Nimbus Hatchery continued through 1/6. A **Yellow-billed Loon** was a great find, seen by many from 1/14 through at least 1/24 on the Mokelumne River, near the Tower Park Marina and Hwy 12. Two **Pacific Loons** continued on Folsom Lake, often near the Sacramento/Placer county line.

An **Eastern Phoebe** found on 1/24 along Cache Creek near the Wild Wings County Park was enjoyed by many into February. A **Tropical Kingbird** at Reichmuth Park 1/31 also continued, providing the fourth record for Sacramento County and the first continuing bird in a legitimate, public location. A vigorously calling **Pacificslope Flycatcher** was a nice surprise at Sherman Island on 1/1, and a **Cassin's Vireo** was seen in residential Davis from 1/12-24. Up to 40 **Mountain Bluebirds** 

# 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. All new members will only receive our newsletter online so be sure to include your email address and check if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application www.sacramentoaudubon.org membership@sacramentoaudubon.org
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mailed to you instead, please email: membership@sacramentoaudubon.org

were enjoyed by many along the short section of Meiss Rd north of the Cosumnes River. A calling **Evening Grosbeak** was reported in Elk Grove on 1/2, and in keeping with this finchy winter season, two **Cassin's Finches** were reported at Rollingwood Buffs near Lake Natoma on 1/13, with up to 25 along Rayhouse Rd on 1/23, and one to two found in an Orangevale yard on 1/29 were enjoyed by many visitors into February. And finally, a flock of **Red Crossbills** was reported in Citrus Heights on 1/8.

To view photos of some of the highlights, visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/birdsightings, and then click on the highlighted eBird checklists.

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 (groups.io/g/centralvalleybirds) and in eBird (ebird.org). It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Brent Campos, Konshau Duman, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Will Hemstrom, Isaac Henderson, Adrian Hinkle, Jim Holmes, Emmett Iverson, Augie Kramer, Adam Kucharek, Jeri Langham, Andrew Lee, Lori Markoff, Mark Martucci, Nora Papian, Frances Oliver, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Ron Pozzi, Jim Rowoth, Steve Scott, Gaven Stacey, Kirk Swenson, Eddie Tache, Simon Tache, John Trochet, Zeke VanZante, Bart Wickel, Lynette Williams, and David Yee.

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

Chris Conard

Sacramento Audubon Society P.O. Box 160694 Sacramento, CA 95816

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White Tailed Kite Dan Brown

# Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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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

#### 7pm, March 18, 2021

Susan Schneider, Learning To Fight the Climate Crisis The March meeting will be held online via Cisco Webex. To receive a link to join the meeting, email meetings@sacramentoaudubon.org.



Susan Schneider