

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



General Meeting

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Webex Meeting 7pm

See details below

Biking For Birds: 365 Days, 18,000 Miles, 618 Species, 1 Great Adventure

Dorian Anderson

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.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker.

On January 1, 2014, Dorian Anderson boarded his bicycle for an eco-friendly twist on the classic birdwatching Big Year, a project during which a bird-watcher tries to maximize the number of bird species observed during a calendar year.

Where his predecessors utilized cars, planes, boats, and even helicopters, Anderson pedaled his bicycle 18,000 miles through 28 states during his first-of-its-kind bicycle Big Year. He saw the country like no birder before him, overcame immeasurable physical and mental challenges, and found an incredible 618 species by year's end.

Anderson will speak about the genesis of his bike-birding project, provide a recount of *General Meeting* continued on page 2



Dorian Anderson

This Month's Suggested Birding

NOVEMBER From Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris

We are fortunate to live within a few hours of some of the best winter waterfowl and crane viewing in California and November/December are great months to get out and enjoy it. Since we still will not be able to offer guided Field Trips, due to Covid 19 restrictions, we would like to offer the following recommendations for places to visit on your own. Don't forget to take warm clothes, something warm to drink, your binoculars and a spotting scope, if you have one.

COSUMNES RIVER PRESERVE

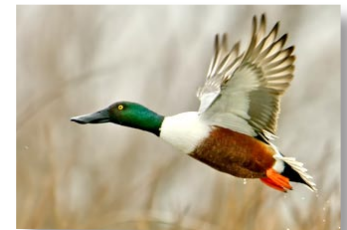
Walking the boardwalk loop is a great way to check out the wintering waterfowl, including a variety of duck species, Greater White-fronted Geese, and Sandhill Cranes. Dowitchers, Wilson's Snipe and yellowlegs should be present, and there are always some passerines and raptors. Driving Desmond and Bruceville Roads can also be good viewing areas. Trail information can be found here: www.cosumnes.org/hiking-trails/ and location directions here: www.cosumnes.org/contact/.

COLUSA NWR

Approximately 1 hour north of Sacramento, the Colusa NWR is a great location to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be plenty of ducks and geese, as well as other wetland species, passerines and raptors. Spend time at the viewing platform where a spotting scope will be useful, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through riparian habitat next to the main viewing pond. Finish your outing to this wonderful NWR by taking the short auto tour. Driving directions and maps can be found here: www.fws.gov/refuge/colusa/.

GRAY LODGE WILDLIFE AREA

This refuge is a prime wintering area for migrating ducks and geese with both walking trails and an auto route. There is a \$4.25 per person charge at Gray Lodge, and it's wise to bring the exact amount for the Iron Ranger. Driving directions and maps



Northern Shoveler
Dan Brown

of the area and other information can be found here: wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Gray-Lodge-WA.

SACRAMENTO NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

This a great refuge for viewing the enormous flocks of ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way south. This is also a good place for raptors; and Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons are a possibility. There are walking trails and a 3.7 mile driving route with a couple of great viewing platforms as well. Please note there is a \$6 day use fee for each vehicle at the refuge, or buy a Duck Stamp and support all our national refuges. Driving directions and maps of the area and other information can be found here: www.fws.gov/refuge/sacramento/.

November Birding continued on page 2

his travels, highlight the birds he saw, and reveal how his adventure changed his life. His personality and enthusiasm are unparalleled, and his tales of birding, cycling, extreme weather, landscapes, accidents, and self-discovery will inspire others looking to make positive changes in their own lives.

Dorian started birding in his backyard in Philadelphia at age seven. His interest grew to include the Delaware Valley and Jersey Shore during his preteen years, and he attended several of Victor Emanuel's youth birding camps as a teenager. He envisioned himself a life-long birder until his educational rise and coincident alcoholism extinguished his birding desire. His life focused on science and drinking, his birding childhood passion laid comatose for more than a decade.

Anderson received his B.S. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Stanford



University, his Ph.D. in Developmental Genetics and Molecular Cell Biology at NYU, and spent three years as a Postdoctoral Fellow in Molecular Neuroscience at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School. Exhausted by the academic rat race and searching for direction, he resigned his postdoctoral position to undertake his bicycle Big Year adventure.

Momentum from that life-changing project opened up many doors including public speaking, travel writing, and tour guiding. He worked in Colombia as a consultant for the National Audubon Society, and he leads birding tours for Alvaro's Adventures and Tropical Birding. He is an accomplished bird photographer, and he is currently finishing a book about his bike-birding adventure.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are now held online the third Thursday of the month. The public is welcome. Details of how the meetings will be held online can be found at the beginning of this article. 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

CBC for 2020-2021 Cancelled

Our SAS President CBC leaders are so sorry to announce that due to the pandemic this year, we will not have the traditional Christmas Counts, but we are hoping to have them next year.

However, you are encouraged to get out there, bird and record your findings this season. The great valleys of California are essential wintering spots for innumerable avian travelers. Please see our November birding column beginning on page 1 for nearby places to enjoy birding. Our eBird article by Chris Conard, on page 3 gives you a hint at what can be accomplished with this fantastic tool. It's not quite a pizza and compilation at the end of a CBC count but it does give you a chance to contribute to the citizen science behind CBCs. Also in Chris's *Seasonal Findings* column beginning on page 4, you will notice his reference to the unusual year we're having and the unusual amount of rare birds being seen.



November Birding continued from page 1

WOODBIDGE ECOLOGICAL RESERVE (AKA ISENBERG CRANE RESERVE)

This Reserve is considered by many as "The Place to see Cranes". A popular site to watch flyouts and flyins. Ducks, geese and other winter birds can be viewed here too. A CDFW Lands Pass must be in possession by each visitor who is 16 years of age or older, however, visitors who are in possession of a valid California hunting or fishing license in their name are exempt from this requirement. Lands passes may be purchased on-line, by phone at (800) 565-1458, or in-person at locations wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold. Driving directions and maps of the area and other information can be found here: wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Woodbridge-ER.



Greater White-Fronted Goose
Dan Brown

YOLO BYPASS WILDLIFE AREA

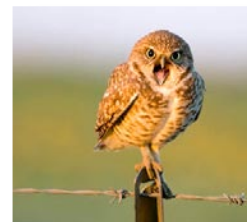
This great area is only 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. The area has walking trails and an auto route. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl. This can also be a good viewing area for migrating swans. For directions and map of the area: wildlife.ca.gov/lands/places-to-visit/yolo-bypass-wa

PROPOSED HOSPITAL THREATENS BIRDS OF STONE LAKE WILDLIFE REFUGE

California Northstate University (CNU) is proposing to build a hospital with helicopter pad next to the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge in Elk Grove. Sandhill Cranes, Swainson's Hawks, and Burrowing Owls are just a few of the over 200 bird species that inhabit the refuge. The proposed 11-story building creates a collision risk for many of the birds. Additionally, the proposed helicopter flights pose a collision threat and create noise disturbance for the birds of the refuge. Light pollution from the 24-hour facility would be another negative consequence to both roosting and migrating birds.

Sacramento Audubon has sent a letter to the City of Elk Grove detailing our concerns with the project and recommending the City Council reject CNU's proposal. If the city council feels that the project must go forward then SAS is urging them to consider the Environmentally Superior Alternative which limits the building to six stories and eliminates the helicopter pad and flights. You can find the entire letter authored by Sacramento Audubon at: sacramentoaudubon.org/news/proposed-hospital-threatens-birds-of-stone-lake-wildlife-refuge. Additional information on the project is available from Habitat 2020.

There is still time to make your voice heard. The public comment period for this project ended on Tuesday, October 13, but you can leave feedback by email for the City of Elk Grove directly at cnuproject@elkgrovecity.org.



Burrowing Owl
Dan Brown

WHY eBIRD AND SOME TIPS FOR USING IT

Many of you use eBird. But many of you don't, or don't get out of it what you might. If you haven't yet jumped into eBird, I challenge you to watch the three-minute video (eBird.org/about) and not be inspired. With the sense that so much is going wrong right now, this is something clearly going right.

Using eBird is easy. If you can record a list of birds, you can use eBird. Unlike so many things on the Internet, there are no ulterior motives. eBird is maintained and continuously updated by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, with many partners, including the National Audubon Society. The goal is simple yet profound: record and archive bird detections from around the world, as many as possible, to get as accurate as possible a picture of where birds are, how many there are, and at what time of year they occur. The conservation and scientific implications are hard to overestimate.

Below the surface are tools that subtly help you become a better birder. When you visit a new area and go to enter your checklist, you are presented with a seasonally appropriate list of species for the region and time of year. These lists are starting points, and should cover all the expected species, as well as expected numbers, for the season. If you find something less expected, you'll be prompted to provide some details, and you can even upload photos and sounds to document your sighting. eBird is worldwide and is supported by thousands of regional reviewers to maintain the lists of expected species and review unusual records.

To get started, just visit eBird.org. All you need for an account is an email address and a user name (most people use their own name). You can enter lists by signing in on the website, or on a highly usable smartphone app. I

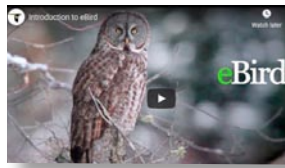
am a bit of a Luddite by nature, but the app has won me over. Using GPS, even where you can't get a cell connection, it will position you in the right spot and give you a checklist to work with in the field, as well as produce a track of your birding route on a satellite map of the area. The search function for use in the field is excellent, and you don't have to hunt around in a notebook or on a paper list. If you see a Red-tailed Hawk, just entering "rt" in the search bar will bring up the species name. A quick tap will add one, and if you see another, a second tap will record that bird. After using it a few times, it will become second nature.

There just isn't space to discuss all of the features, but now is the time to get started. Check eBird.org

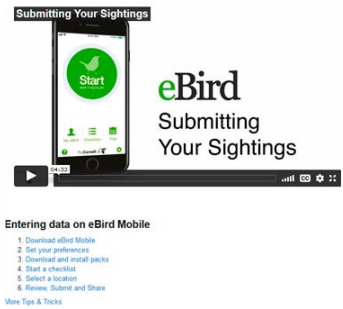
for many guides and tutorials. It is a wonderful resource for permanently archiving your records, comparing what you've recorded from year to year, archiving your photos and sound recordings (with helpful articles on how to do this). And I barely have space for the outputs. You can explore species range maps that are based on actual reports, including your own. Get bar charts of local abundance for your county, or the hotspot, state or country you will be visiting. View photos and illustrated checklists of any location you can think of, and sign up for alerts of rare birds or species you "need."

Last point: check out eBird.org/science and watch a few of the abundance animations, now available for nearly every North American species, showing the timing and abundance of their seasonal movements as they play out over a year's time. eBird is a labor of love by thousands of people and it keeps getting better. What could be better than that?

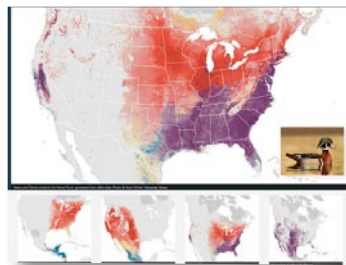
All screen shots are from the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology eBird website.



Intro to eBird
eBird.org/about



Short Video Explaining How To
Submit Your Sightings



Abundance Maps

Chris Conard

HOW TO HELP AN INJURED SONGBIRD

Bird Watcher's Digest Editor, Dawn Hewitt writes:

Your immediate goal is to keep it safe and reduce its level of stress without causing further harm. The best way to do that is to put it into a secure, dimly lit container. If the bird is lying in a reasonably safe place, go find a paper bag slightly larger than the bird. A lunch bag or a paper grocery bag is fine. If you need to move the bird immediately to keep it safe (from pedestrians, cats, traffic, etc.), pick it up as gently as possible with your hands. Hold it securely and well supported without squeezing it, or gently place it out of harm's way (outdoors) while you go find that bag.

Warning: While a stunned bird won't bite, an alert injured bird might! These instructions are for an unconscious or groggy bird.

Gently place the bird in the bag, fold the top over, and secure with a clip. This makes a secure container in which the bird cannot hurt itself.

During hot weather, place the bag in a shaded spot where it will not overheat, or, if the outdoor temperature is frigid, place the container in the sun, but make sure the bird is in a dim or dark space and does not overheat. Check on the bird every 15 minutes or so by listening for movement. Don't unclip the bag if you take it indoors; it might escape the bag and get trapped in your house!

When you hear the bird scratching about, it should be ready for release. Slowly and gently turn the bag onto its side and unclip the top so the bird can walk, hop, or fly out when it is ready. (It might be difficult for a bird to fly straight up to exit a tall, upright bag.) It could take the bird an hour or more to recover from a hard strike. Give it time. Do not offer the bird food or water as it is recovering, and don't try to force-feed it.

If the bird is alive but has visible injuries such as a broken leg or wing, open wounds, or injuries to its eyes or bill, it will need to be taken to a wildlife rehabilitator as quickly as possible.

This helpful info was found at birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/solve.php.

A list of local Sacramento rehabilitation sites can be found on the SAS website at sacramentoaudubon.org/injured-bird.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Agricultural-Natural Resources Trust (Executive Director), Elliot Chasin & Reanna Wights, Jon J Courtway, Donna Haught, Ann Kohl, Julia Sheldon, Peter Thomas, Jane Van Kessel and Steve & Tracy Wetzel made donations to the **General Fund**.

Valerie Chenoweth, Jon J Courtway, John & Julie Hamlin, Joyce C Rietz, Steve & Tracy Wetzel and Glenn Wilson made donations to the **Education and Conservation Fund**.

Jon J Courtway, John & Julie Hamlin and Glenn Wilson 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 continuing restoration and management.

E-WASTE DROPOFF NOVEMBER 21

Cleaning out the house for the holidays or looking to buy new tech on Black Friday? Start gathering your electronic waste and bring it to Camp Pollock for a touchless dropoff. Sacramento Valley Conservancy is partnering with Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps again for an e-waste fundraiser to support the Camp Pollock Native Plant Nursery. Please review the list of acceptable items and RSVP so they can plan accordingly. For RSVP and much more information go to sacramentovalley-conservancy.org/event/ewaste-2020-11-21/.

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.

Field Trip Information

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

BOBELAINE SANCTUARY CLOSED

Due to levee construction, Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary will be closed through November 23, 2020.

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!

SAS WEBSITE UPDATES

Check out a couple of new pages on the SAS website: The Interactive Area Birds Checklist at www.sacramentoaudubon.org/sacramento-birds-checklist and the Gallery of Birds at www.sacramentoaudubon.org/gallery-of-birds with photos of over 240 species of Sacramento Area birds. These fantastic photos were all contributed by Sacramento Audubon members.

We can always use more photos for the website. If you are photographer interested in contributing, please email webmaster@sacramentoaudubon.org for details.

The website committee is also looking for a volunteer to help with setting up and maintaining an on-line store. If this project is something you are interested in helping with, contact Mary Forrestal at cmforrestal@yahoo.com.



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon

You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

Seasonal Sightings

September 1 to September 30 Rare and Unusual Bird Reports www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

With the continued severe smoke on top of a worldwide pandemic, this is not the September that any of us would have chosen. Yet, looking back after this round of smoke has cleared, with fine particles deep in our lungs, the list of birds recorded in September 2020 is remarkable in both the number and diversity of rarities. There were also some interesting Valley floor records of species that likely fled their Coast Range haunts ahead of the fires. Among the latter was a **Hairy Woodpecker** in north Davis on 9/11 through at least 9/20, a higher than usual number of **Green-tailed Towhees** reported locally, and a **Rufous-crowned Sparrow**, very rare on the flats of the Valley, at Babel Slough on 9/19. A **Chimney Swift** reported on 9/10 from the Harrington Way access to the American River Parkway (ARP) is among a handful of reports of this enigmatic species in the region. Among the interesting shorebird records was a **Ruff**

in Colusa County on 9/29-30 in a flooded field off of Sycamore Cutoff between Hwys 20 and 45. A **Sanderling** was at the Sacramento Regional WTP on 9/9-10, and a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on 9/22-23 accounted for one of very few historical records of this species in the area.

A **Long-eared Owl** was a nice find in a closed portion of the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 9/21, as was a **Least Flycatcher** along Babel Slough Rd on 9/5. An early **Pacific Wren** was found at Reichmuth Park on 9/26, and a **Varied Thrush** was also early on 9/20 at Elk Slough near Clarksburg. A **Gray Catbird** was an excellent find in the largely burned-over Putah Creek Canyon west of Winters on 9/27-29. One to two **Clay-colored Sparrows** were found at Folsom Point, Folsom Lake, from 9/12-15 along with a few of the more expected but still notable **Brewer's Sparrows**. Single **Vesper Sparrows** were found at Folsom Point on 9/4, at Sailor Bar along the ARP on 9/21, and at Don Nottoli



SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members.

Executive Director of the Agricultural-Natural Resources Trust

Steven Coughran

Audrey Fan

Celia Glacken

Lorraine Markoff

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 on November 24, 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

northern border of the Stone Lakes NWR on 9/26. A **Bobolink** was an excellent find on 9/22 in a closed portion of the CRP.

Among the impressive warblers found this September was a **Northern Waterthrush** along Putah Creek, downstream of Winters, on 9/7-9, and another at Bushy Lake in the ARP on 9/12. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was found at Babel Slough on 9/4 and 9/15, and the bird continuing from last month in the Putah Creek Riparian Reserve was reported through at least 9/12. Single **Tennessee Warblers** were widely reported, including at Verde Cruz Creek on 9/3, near the intersection of Fair Oaks and Greenback, at Putah Creek downstream of Pedrick Rd on 9/10, along Putah Creek near Mace Blvd on 9/20, and at Lodi Lake on 9/22-23. A **Kentucky Warbler** was heard-only at the CRP on 9/3, but called back and forth to a recording. An **American Redstart** was seen briefly in the River Park neighborhood near Sac State on 9/23, and a **Northern Parula** was at Ancil Hoffman

Park in the ARP on 9/14, with another along Putah Creek near Pedrick Rd on 9/25-26. A **Magnolia Warbler** on 9/20 along Pumphouse Rd near Clarksburg was a nice surprise, as was a **Blackburnian Warbler** seen by many on 9/4-5 downstream of Pedrick Rd, near Levee Rd; another **Blackburnian Warbler** was at the CRP on 9/25, and a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was also at the CRP on 9/18. As many as three **Blackpoll Warblers** accounted for observations in the vicinity of the Gristmill access to the ARP, with one on 9/15, two on 9/16, and subsequent reports on 9/20-23; just across the river at William B. Pond, there were reports on 9/19 and 9/27. Another **Blackpoll Warbler** was found at the CRP on 9/21, and a male **Summer Tanager** was at the CRP on 9/18. Wow.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Society Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/bird-sightings).

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

Stuart Angerer, Max Brodie, Lyann Comrack, Leo Edson, Andy Engilis, Lief Gallagher, Susan Goodrich, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Scott Hoppe, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Sean McAllister, Dan Murphy, Roger Muskat, Frances Oliver, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Linda Pittman, Steve Scott, Gavin Stacey, Kirk Swenson, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, Bart Wickel, Dan Williams, and David Yee.

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

Chris Conard

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

P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Date _____

The Observer Newsletter \$35 per address (1 Year) _____

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society or use your credit card

or PayPal on our website at: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____ Check for Action Alert _____

New members will receive *The Observer*, in color, via email. (Please provide your email address above.) If you would prefer a black and white paper copy mailed to you instead, please email: membership@sacramentoaudubon.org

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White Tailed Kite Dan Brown

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Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Membership/Subscriptions: membership@sacaudubon.org

P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

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Sacramento, CA 95826

916-203-1610, e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

Program Chair: Anthony Asay, e-mail, cend86@gmail.com

Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, sawise7@sbcglobal.net

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, November 19, 2020

Dorian Anderson, *Biking For Birds:
365 Days, 18,000 Miles, 618
Species, 1 Great Adventure*

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