

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



General Meeting

Thursday, October 15, 2020

Webex Meeting 7pm

See details below

My Favorite Bird Is A . . .

David Yee

How to join the meeting: October'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.

David will use the frequently asked question "What is your favorite bird?" as a way of describing some of his most favorite birding experiences. David was born and raised in the Lodi/

Stockton area and continues to live in the area today. He has had the opportunity to go birding over much of the world, but considers the Central Valley

his most favorite place. He's considered an authority on birds in San Joaquin County.

Born in Stockton, he has lived his entire life in the Stockton/Lodi area of the Central Valley. David started actively birding at the very young age of 10. By the time he was in high school birding had become his favorite hobby and passion. He went to college at UC Santa Cruz, majored in biology, and bird science was always his focus. David

General Meeting continued on page 5



David Yee

This Month's Suggested Birding

OCTOBER, From Darrell Mohr, mohrdd@gmail.com

As SAS is not offering organized field trips until we are no longer under threat from COVID-19, the Field Activities committee is suggesting a few ideas for local places to go and birds to find.

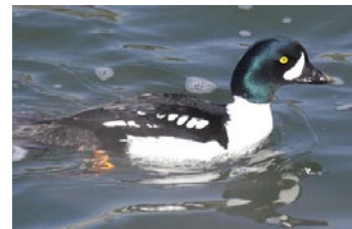
BUSHY LAKE

This area is an easy walk this time of year. At the parking lot, look along the fence on both sides of the road, as well as the drain area. Goldfinches, House Finches, towhees and phoebes are usually common in this area, as well as White and Golden-crowned Sparrows. As you walk along the paved road watch for blackbirds out in the field. Look up at the power line towers for hawks. When the paved road splits, take the lower trail at the base of the levee. When you get to the lake watch for Great Blue Herons and Wood Ducks. When the lower trail joins the levee road, turn back on the levee road along the fence and check out the trees for warblers and Great Horned Owls. If you find one owl, look closely; the mate may be nearby. Park 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.

SACRAMENTO BAR

On the north side of the river, this is a good site to look for a number of species. In the parking lot, watch the trees and brushy areas for Oak Titmice, Bushtits, towhees and Acorn Woodpeckers. Cross the bike path and head for the American River. Scan the river for Common Mergansers, Bufflehead and Common and Barrow's Goldeneye. Don't forget to check the shrubbery; often a warbler will be mov-

ing through the bushes. Look overhead for swallows as well as White-throated Swifts. If you hear a raspy bird call, look for a Belted Kingfisher. Check the banks of the river for yellowlegs and Spotted Sandpipers,



Barrow's Goldeneye
Linda Pittman

and enjoy your morning! From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania and follow it into the park. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

MATHER LAKE

Mather Regional Park is a gem for finding different species. There's plenty of parking; survey the area when you get out of your car as the parking lot usually has a number of different species. Look for blackbirds, Great-tailed Grackles, Red-tailed Hawks and finches. Along the west side of the lake look for Nuttall's Woodpeckers and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Search the tules for Green Heron and Gallinules. Now go back and across the dam; check the overflow for phoebes and wrens. Along the south side of the lake look for Double-crested Cormorants in the trees. Farther

October Birding continued on page 2

New Purple Martin Book Out Now

Hi SAS members,

Just letting you know that at long last, my book, *Life Under the Fast Lane: Ecology and Conservation of the Bridge-nesting Purple Martins in Urban Sacramento* is now out and available for purchase. A general description of the book contents and information on ordering is available in the message below.

In addition to summarizing over 20 years of research and monitoring results, a major purpose of the book was to lay out the methods by which the City of Sacramento and other agencies, and their environmental and engineering consultants, should conduct project planning, design, environmental analysis, and construction of projects near Purple Martin colonies.

The book contains specific information on key habitat elements (nesting, perching, and nest material collection sites, and access routes) for each colony site. It describes in detail the procedures for

assessing occupancy, estimating numbers, assessing potential project impacts and their significance, and appropriate protection and mitigation measures.

As the book notes, we have had a number of projects in Sacramento that properly considered the needs of Purple Martin, but unfortunately also a number that did not, which resulted in nesting disruption, nestling mortality, and degradation of habitat. Given that this last Central Valley population has declined by 85% over the last 15 years, from 172 pairs to only 25 pairs, it is imperative that we do the best possible planning to protect remaining nesting birds. I hope that those of you who are doing environmental work within Sacramento or intending to do so, and those responsible for the Purple Martins, will get a copy of the book and follow its conservation guidelines.

Thank you! Dan Airola, Conservation Research and Planning

NOTE: SAS donated \$1500 to CVBC to help with the publishing of the book. The book order page can be found at www.cvbirds.org/birding-resources/birding-references/life-under-the-fast-lane/



Life Under the Fast Lane

October Birding continued from page 1

down look for Yellow-headed Blackbirds. Introduced Mute Swans should be swimming in the lake, along with Pied-billed Grebes and American Coots. Watch the field for California Quail. From Highway 50 go south on Zinfandel, Exit #17, about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd, take the first left into the park area. Use your Park Pass or pay the \$5 fee. Enjoy the morning!

GRISTMILL RECREATION AREA

This area can be very productive. Drive all the way in to the last parking lot and walk upstream, keeping an eye out for warblers; a number of rarities have been found at this location. As you go upstream look for Northern Rough-winged Swallows. The trail will end at a fence. Look in the trees for Varied Thrush. The trail ends at a fence; go back along the river and look for Common and Barrow's Goldeneye and Common Mergansers, scanning the bushes for warblers. Farther down look for Red-breasted Sapsucker. On the return walk take the upper trail where you may find Downy and Nuttall's Woodpeckers and Yellow-billed Magpies. From Hwy 50 exit at Bradshaw Rd and go north to Folsom Blvd. Go left on Folsom, then right on Butterfield Way, right on Linda Rio Drive and right again on Mira Del Rio Drive, turning left into the signed access for Gristmill Recreation Area. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Meet Your Board

This month we continue with the profiles in the *Meet Your Board* series. Here you are meeting current, outgoing and new board members. We hope that these introductions will provide you with a better sense of your board and each member's commitment to the Sacramento Audubon Society's mission.

NANCY GRONERT – Board Member

Hello! This year I continue my decade's long position teaching 8th grade science. Holding onto those last retirement money bumps, one of these years I'll hand over my whiteboard and head out birding. Online interactive distance learning—can you say Zoom, FlipGrid, Pear Deck, Kahoot, Screencastify to name a few—is exhausting.

I've been a member of Sac Audubon for a good number of years, more likely to list birds than years. I was a National Audubon member for years before I realized there were local member chapters. Apart from some early mentors, like Terry Colborn, no Audubon field trip experiences have been as rewarding and fun as Sacramento Audubon. It was amazing to me on field trips to experience the level of expertise from birders who could accurately name every call I heard and carefully teach details—what you can't get from a book or website. Thank you to all the leaders! Given what a wonderful group and after numerous requests, I decided this was a board I might find truly rewarding.

The skills I bring are love of birding and being in the field, educational background and some tech expertise in various areas. I have never been a long range planner. I'm more likely to consider a goal in the next one to two years like the view of a rose-breasted grosbeak in Lundy Canyon.

From the board meetings I've participated in, the topic of diversity of birding groups has been up there. Birding vicariously through a Montana Bird list—my mom's home state and where I spent so much time over the years—I noticed the following link. Although it's twitter, the content comes up in a web browser: twitter.com/scottvedwards1?lang=en. Considering our current tweeter in chief, I don't follow twitter but the I loved the goal of this adventurous biker and educator, who considered Covid to be a prime opportunity to bike from the Atlantic to the Pacific, birding along the way. I only caught him halfway across the continent from the Montana alert, as he biked through the very white areas I grew up in. What a picture of his travels though, where at times it was safer to take his Black Lives Matter sign down.

Long-terms goals are to be part of the change to save habitat which means climate change and a more just world. As my mother said so often, 'If you want peace, work for justice.'



Nancy Gronert

COMMON POORWILLS IN SACRAMENTO'S LOW FOOTHILLS

One of my favorite things to do each late summer and fall is to drive some of the backroads of Sacramento County looking for Common Poorwills and any other nocturnal wildlife. The strategy is pretty simple: wait until dusk and drive slowly, looking for poorwills and other animals in the road as well as their eyeshine. Occasionally I stop at promising sites to listen for owls, but much of this is a slow (~15 mph) driving activity. The chosen sites are typically the gravel and occasionally rough Michigan Bar and Latrobe Rds in the vicinity of Rancho Murieta, as well as nearby Meiss Rd. Looking at eBird records, most of the success has been in the latter half of September, through October, and sometimes continuing into November. It is possible for them to continue later into the season as poorwills are the only birds known to hibernate (or more precisely, go into torpor for up to weeks at a time, "waking up" on warm nights to forage). Most of these birds are migrating through the low foothills along the edge of the Valley, though it is likely that some at least occasionally breed out there, as singing has been heard in the appropriate season. Poorwills occasionally turn up on the Valley floor (I have found one at the Bufferlands in 23+ years), but they are far more regular in Sacramento County above about 200 feet in elevation, usually not too far from open oak woodland. Elsewhere, they are often found in chaparral, but Sacramento County hardly has any of that habitat.

Finding a poorwill is not guaranteed, with perhaps a 25% success rate. When a poorwill is found in the road, about half of the time it will either continue foraging in the headlights (flying up for insects and landing nearby) or just remain perched on the road, allowing good binocular views and even photos; I've walked within a few feet of them and they sometimes appear oblivious to my presence. Other times they will fly out of view and you only get a quick look, or, worst of all, an ambiguous look. The eyeshine is an interesting phenomenon. A structure called a tapetum lucidum in the eyes of poorwills and many other nocturnal animals (owls, cats, dogs, cows, nocturnal primates, for example, and spiders have analogous structures, and also give a creepy, many-eyed eyeshine) reflects light back through the retina, allowing them to perceive more from the available light than diurnal animals like us can. Eyeshine varies in different species, and is pinkish in poorwills. It's odd when they make their slow, moth-like flight through your headlight beams, and the eyeshine can appear to leave a blurry trace as they move through your field of vision.

It's wonderful that there are still open spaces like this so close to Sacramento. Much of the land adjacent to these roads has been protected as part of Deer Creek Hills, Howard Ranch, and vernal pool preserves. The pungent smell of vinegarweed (*Trichostema lanceolatum*) growing along the roadsides is evocative of those open spaces and the poorwill time of year. Other animals detected include a few bobcats, Burrowing Owls foraging (they winter but mostly don't breed out there), tarantulas (males are out in the fall looking for mates), kangaroo rats, western toads, and a few species of snakes (I'm still looking for my first *Hypsiglena*), including a fair number of rattlesnakes soaking up warmth from the road. Most of these are neonates, but occasionally a large rattlesnake will be on the road. Once I was watching a fairly large rattlesnake that was stretched out on the paved portion of Meiss Rd, soaking up the remaining warmth of the day. I heard and then saw a vehicle was coming up fast and was afraid it would go around my car and run over the snake. I stood about four feet from the snake and stomped my foot on the ground, hoping it would move out of harm's way. Understandably, the snake took this as a threat, but I was amazed that it coiled and struck at me three times before I could jump back, and then crawled under my car and off the road. I've always had respect for rattlesnakes, but the quickness and fierceness it exhibited raised it several notches in my estimation.

You may be asking, "Is it safe out there?" Latrobe Rd in particular, but also Meiss, has a fair bit of sketchy activity, from shooting, dumping, and large bonfires. One morning before sunrise, Kimya and I had to turn around because a group was camped in the middle of Latrobe Rd and I didn't want to deal with the kind of people who thought that was a good idea. The ranch operation on Michigan Bar Rd keeps some of the undesirable behavior away, but elsewhere there's a lot of questionable activity best avoided. The best way to do that is to skip Friday and Saturday evenings (predawn is usually okay) and turn around and get out of there if there are people who give you the creeps (a good approach to life). Otherwise, it can be a lot of fun and the promise of seeing the annual poorwill migration and/or some other surprise keeps me going back each fall.

Chris Conard



Common Poorwill
Chris Conard

TIPS FOR FALL AND HELPING BIRDS IN CRISIS

FEEDERS

In the fall and during wildfire emergencies birds need food and water even more. The feeders, of course, provide food for nourishment but also allow stressed birds and fall migrants a quick place to refuel. Just keep your feeders clean! Tube feeders are great but don't forget the ground feeding birds like many of our sparrows. Use a variety of seeds to feed the most species. Sweep and refresh the seeds on a regular basis. Scattering the seeds under or near your bushes gives visitors unfamiliar with your yard a safe place to feed. Don't forget the hummingbirds. Keep those feeders up and clean. Feeding is a great way to attract new visitors and maybe a new species to your yard, plus it helps keep birds resilient.

AND BATHS

You can provide water in a bird bath or shallow tray (2 inches) for drinking and bathing, even in an apartment with a balcony. If you add rocks or gravel the birds won't hesitate to bathe or drink. For the smoke refugees and fall migrants-bathing gives them a chance to clean their feathers, very essential for out flying friends. As with feeders do not neglect keeping your water spots clean. A daily refresh with clean water is recommended to prevent the spread of disease and to flush away any ash that might collect.

BE LAZY IN YOUR YARD FOR FALL

While it's tempting to cut back everything in the yard for fall if you let dried seed-heads, flowers, and stalks remain you might be surprised at the number of birds who stop and visit. The seeds attract birds at any time and in the spring dried plants attract nest builders. The 'lazy' includes leaves. I'll venture you've repeatedly seen birds scratching away at leaves. The moisture under leaves also produces insects that birds love and need to feed on.

DON'T FORGET THE HAZARDS

Migrants, stressed, fleeing birds and your local birds are all vulnerable to our beloved cats and our windows. Visitors especially, won't be aware of kitty skulking in the bushes. A window reflecting blue sky may seem the perfect place to fly off to. Please see the September *Observer*, page 4, for tips on cat and window precautions you can take.

Education and Outreach Kids' Corner

FUN FACTS ABOUT HUMMINBIRDS

Q: Have you ever wondered what a hummingbird's colorful patch of throat feathers is called?

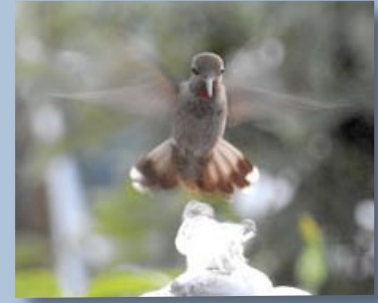
A: The feathers are called a "gorget" (pronounced gor-git). The term comes from a period in history when a knight-in-armor wore a metallic collar—or gorget to protect his throat. The gorget is found on many males, particularly those found in North America, and they are iridescent.

Q: What fountains do hummingbirds prefer?

A: Hummingbirds prefer places that are easy for them to perch and take advantage of the water. Fountains with small bubblers and rough textures such as slate slabs are favored. These are the best options because they give birds plenty of space to access the water where they feel safe and comfortable. Hummingbirds also love to drink from water hoses.



Hummingbird at water hose



Hummingbird at fountain

Q: How can I attract more hummingbirds to my backyard?

A: Grow native plants that have lots of nectar to attract these energetic birds. Nectar is a sweet, liquid substance produced by the flowers of plants. It is made in glands of the plants called nectaries. Hummingbirds need this sweet (sugar) solution to fuel their high energy lifestyle. Did you know that they flap their wings around 60 times per second, have hearts that beat on average 1,200 times per minute, and stick their tongue in and out of a feeder 13 times per second?

A common trait that many nectar producing plants have is that they are long and tubular. Examples include red columbine, beebalm, trumpet honeysuckle, cardinal flower, and red buckeye. Insects have a hard time reaching the nectars in these types of flowers, but hummingbirds with their long beaks and tongues, are perfectly adapted.



Hummingbird at succulent flower



Hummingbird at tubular flower

Q: How long do hummingbirds live?

A: Depending on the species, hummingbirds live on average 3 to 5 years, but have been known to live up to 12 years.

Q: What do hummingbirds make their nests out of?

A: Common items used to build hummingbird nests includes spider silk/webs, lichens, moss, bark fragments, leaves, feathers, fur, and plant fibers.

Watch for next month's Kid's Corner with all your Mockingbird questions answered

Young birders are encouraged to share ideas, suggestions, birding experiences and photos or sketches in a future Kids' Corner article. For more information, contact education@sacramento-oudubon.org.

All photos are courtesy of Gesna Clarke

Gesna Clarke

went on to become a full-time chemist, but birding remained his passion, and according to his wife of 35+ years, his obsession.

David is considered the top birder and field ornithologist in his native San Joaquin County, and is one of the top birders in the Central Valley. He has authored the *Annotated Checklist of the Birds of San Joaquin County*. He was a Regional Editor of *North American Birds*, *Northern California Region* from 1986-1994.

David has travelled throughout the state of California, birding its every corner. He has travelled extensively throughout the US

in pursuit of birds, and has made numerous visits to Mexico, Central America, and Southeast Asia as well.

David has been an active field trip leader and bird teacher since his college days. He has led numerous birding tours throughout the US and Central America for decades. He has always made sharing birds a high priority in his birding career, and loves people more than birds (which is saying a lot!) David is a past president of San Joaquin Audubon, the Central Valley Bird Club, and the Western Field Ornithologists. He and his wife helped start the Central Valley

Birding Symposium in 1997, and he continues to serve on the steering committee.

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/Sacramento Audubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

Anthony Asay, Program Chair

BATHING BEAUTIES

As if COVID-19 and the heat weren't bad enough, now we have lung-clogging smoke. We birders did not realize how lucky we were just dealing with COVID and heat because even then we could zoom out early in the day and bird as much as we wanted. Now, in late August, even that avenue is cut off from us unless we want asthma or other problems in this terrible air.

But for the motivated birder (and let's face it—we pretty much all are) there are still alternatives, one of which is backyard birding. If you are lucky, you might have great sightings or at the very least charming experiences without having to leave your home turf.

This is how it works for me. My laptop sits on a desk in front of wide windows facing my backyard. I have purposefully landscaped for birds, bees, butterflies and other insects, and thus, every time I work at this computer on SAS business, email, etc., I can watch the goings on.

Water has always been a main feature in my yard. Since I have traveled often in the past 15 years, I did not put out feeders that needed to be filled and cleaned, but water was easy to provide.

Over the years, I have seen many species appear at the birdbath. Some just drink, some also bathe, and it is enormously entertaining to note the different bathing strategies employed by different birds and different species.

At Putah Creek once, a few years ago, while sitting quietly looking for birds, I watched a flycatcher drop like a rock from a little branch above the creek, hit the water with a splat, then fly up to the branch again and preen its feathers for a long time. Apparently, this did the trick.

Maybe Putah Creek encourages creative bathing. Veteran Yolo County birder Manfred Kusch reports seeing a Warbling Vireo demonstrate its interesting bathing technique by sailing down from a perch, hitting the water with a splash, and returning to the perch, repeatedly, until it became wet enough to proceed to a prolonged preening session like the other bathers who take more traditional baths. He reports seeing a Hutton's Vireo, with a style similar to its Vireo cousin, hopping repeatedly from a large rock into the water and flying back up until soaked enough to start its preening session in a safe spot in the rose thicket.

Bushtits turn into little motorboats, literally running across the bottom from one side of the birdbath to the other, splashing water as they go. Often this is communal and a handful will charge across at the same time. Very humorous to watch and equally endearing.



Splashing, Bathing Bushtits
Sharon Wisecarver

Then there is the sprinkler style of bathing. Recently, I had an oscillating sprinkler going trying to keep things alive during this heat wave. And I saw a juvie Scrub Jay and a Mockingbird literally doing calisthenics jumping through the water! Incredible. I have seen this before, especially with hummers, but never

two species at the same time and

never with such enormous enthusiasm. The Mockingbird especially was quite the athlete.

Scrub Jays also enjoy bathing in the birdbath. Once in, they head for dead center, then proceed to bathe so vigorously they spray most of the water out. When I go out and most of the water is gone, I know a Scrub Jay has been there.

On another recent, very hot and smoky day, a Wilson's Warbler and an Oak Titmouse showed up wanting to bathe or maybe cool off. The Warbler fluttered around in a tiny puddle in a bare spot in the lawn, whereas the Titmouse waded into the birdbath. One quick dip was all the Titmouse wanted, and then he was gone. (This was a special treat as Titmice have only shown up in this neighborhood in the last year or so.)

I continue to believe that varying supplies of water is what will attract the most birds, much more than food. Especially in this Valley in this time of year.

So let us all take heart. Birds will continue to show up, to bathe when they find water, and to enrich our lives as they always have. We just need to be watching.

Maureen Geiger

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Ann Burris, Elissa Callman, M Cordova & K Peters, David Crow, Roger Dunstan, Joe Easley, Dennis Eckhart, Darryl Felix, Bud Getty, Diana Hickson, Nancy Kapellas, Barbara Leary, Therese Lowrey, Max Mcneely, Susan Scott & Ed Harper, Kathy Sims, Ken & Janet Stites, Howard Whitaker, Joel Wiley and Your Cause-Npo Nonprofit made donations to the **General Fund**.

Karen D Benson, M Cordova & K Peters, Dennis Eckhart, Nancy Kapellas, Therese Lowrey, and Susan Scott & Ed Harper made donations to the **Education and Conservation Fund**.

Karen D Benson, M Cordova & K Peters, Dennis Eckhart, Christine K Holmstrom, Nancy Kapellas, Therese Lowrey, M A Nunes, Susan Scott & Ed Harper, and Doctors J W & Patricia Wells 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.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL

Altacal Audubon Society's Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway, scheduled for January 27-31 of 2021, has been canceled. While the Snow Goose Festival is on hold, Altacal Audubon will be looking into some alternative ways to continue to celebrate the millions of waterfowl and thousands of raptors that call Northern Sacramento Valley their home during the winter months.

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 October. It is not clear when they will resume, so please check the SAS website, sacramentoaudubon.org, and our Facebook page as they will reflect future field trips as soon as they are scheduled once again. A new series suggesting places to bird according to the month can be found on page 1.



SACRAMENTO AUDUBON'S ACTION ALERT

Join our Action Alert subscriber list and receive monthly alerts on important local issues affecting birds, wildlife and habitat.

www.sacramentoaudubon.org/conservation-alerts. Speak up for those who cannot speak!



LOCAL NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL BIRDING MAGAZINE

Mark Cudney hit his 900th ABA bird in Hawai last year!!! Mark was a trip leader, board member and xmas count compiler at various times.

Louise McCullough reached her 849th ABA continental bird with a Yellow-chevroned Parakeet in LA in June, just a few weeks past her 101st birthday!!! Louise was an active member and past president of SAS. Our congratulations go out to both of them.



DON'T FORGET TO COVERUP

It may be fall but mosquitoes are still out and about. The first Yolo county West Nile Virus case was recently reported. Also the appearance and spread of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes is particularly of concern. They are aggressive, day biting mosquitoes and one was trapped in Winters in mid-September. Public health officials recommend applying repellents containing federally approved ingredients such as DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535 on your skin or clothing. Wearing long sleeve shirts, long pants, socks and shoes outdoors is good advice for mosquitoes, but also for ticks.

Around your house and yard get rid of standing water. This is another reason to keep your bird baths clean. A regular wash up can keep larvae from forming. If you have a pond, or collect rain water, call Sacramento-Yolo County Vector Control at 800-429-1022 for a free batch of mosquito fish. They are about the size of guppies and will gobble larvae.



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon
You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

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

As the list of species below attests, August is one of the most exciting months for bird migration. This August was severely impacted by major fires in the region, particularly in the Vacaville and Winters areas, where many lost their homes from fires sparked by an intense lightning storm, rare for our region. Subsequent air quality was historically bad, making time in the field unhealthful or at least a lot less enjoyable than it otherwise would be. Of course, while many of us have a choice to be outside, nothing stops migration, and interesting birds kept moving through the area. A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** at the

Sutter NWR on 8/26 was a very nice find. The only **Least Bittern** of the month was reported at Cache Creek Wild Wings Park on 8/9.

Topping the list of shorebird reports for the month was a **Stilt Sandpiper** reported on 8/13 at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). Single **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were found at the Arbuckle WTP on 8/8, the Woodland WTP on 8/16, the Sacramento Regional WTP (SRWTP) on 8/19-21, CRP on 8/23, and the Linda WTP in Sutter County on 8/28. **Solitary Sandpipers** were found along Woodbridge Rd on 8/1-2, East Catlett Rd on 8/25-26, and the Linda WTP on 8/28. **Least Terns** were last recorded for the year at SRWTP on 8/6, with an adult and fledged young tern perched together.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members.

Robert Adler	Caroline Kim
Elissa Callman	Barbara Leary
David Crow	Max McNeely
Heather Fargo	Jean Nakano
Hannah Gabriel	Viola Saima-Barklo

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 October 27, 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.

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

Observations continued

This "fall" appears to be shaping up as having a regionally strong migration of **Green-tailed Towhees** throughout the state and beyond, with local reports in a Davis yard on 8/26, a West Sacramento yard on 8/30, continuing into early September, and at Boulder Ridge Park near Loomis on 8/31. Vagrant warblers are perhaps the most valued currency of the season. Highlights included a **Black-and-White Warbler** on 8/23 on the Solano County side of Putah Creek near the Pedrick Rd bridge, continuing into September, and a female-type **Hooded Warbler** nearby also on 8/23. On 8/27, an adult male **American Redstart** was found at Paradise Beach; others searching found a female of the same species on the same day. A **Northern Parula**

was seen by several observers at Ancil Hoffman Park on 8/27-29, and a **Canada Warbler** was reported on 8/26 at Gibson Ranch County Park.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (<https://www.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:

Max Brodie, Brent Campos, Lyann Comrack, Colin Dillingham, Sid England, Jim Gain, Lief Gallagher, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, Jim Holmes, Scott Hoppe, Jeri Langham, John Luther, Mark Martucci, Gary Mele, Frances Oliver, Asher Perla, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Linda Pittman, Ryan Rickman, Steve Scott, Sean Smith, Judy Spittler, Lucas Stephenson, Eddie Tache, Simon Tache, John Trochet, Sally Walters, and David Yee.

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

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White Tailed Kite Dan Brown

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ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

7pm, October 15, 2020

David Yee, *My Favorite Bird Is A*
October's meeting will be held online
via Cisco Webex. To receive a link to
join the meeting, email
meetings@sacramentoaudubon.org.