

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

Rolling In As President

“Hope is the thing with feathers.” - Emily Dickinson

It is my great honor and privilege to serve as the new President of the Sacramento Audubon, wheels and all! Our Chapter over the last seventy years has worked tirelessly to safeguard our sacred birds and their ecosystems, and I look forward to furthering this work. I am also passionate about insuring a culture of diversity and inclusiveness.

My journey into the world of birds started when I retired from my career in transportation planning six years ago. I was invited to attend the “Birds of Winter” lecture and field trip course given by Ed Harper at Effie Yeaw. Ed’s lectures and photography were exceptional, but for me the “trouble” starting on our first field trip. My muscular dystrophy made it very difficult to walk and use binoculars to see birds.

FSHD is a slowly progressive form of muscular dystrophy which results in the weakening and atrophy of muscles. Having been diagnosed at age sixteen, I grew up with a “can do” attitude and enjoyed surfing, skiing, backpacking, and camping. My symptoms only significantly materialized about ten years ago, and now at sixty I am very thankful that I pushed the limits throughout my life.

For several years after the “Birds of Winter” course I relied on a binocular/monopod setup along with a wheeled walker for birding. But the art/sport/science of birding is one of quick movements and long walks over uneven surfaces, especially if photography is part of the practice. My joy of watching birds was being quickly overshadowed by the work of pushing the walker and getting the monopod/binocular setup in time to see the birds. So I decided to first build, and then purchase an all-terrain power wheelchair, along with a mobility

van. I also designed and built an articulated arm for my wheelchair to support both my spotting scope and camera.

During my journey of finding more creative ways to see birds I discovered the fledgling organization Birdability.org. Started in 2020 by Virginia Rose, a paraplegic from age sixteen, this organization promotes inclusion and diversity within the birding world, saying that birding should be for “everybody and every body.” They also have extensive information on best practices for developing accessible birding trails, along with a nationwide online mapping system for documenting existing accessible trails.

When I reached out to Sacramento Audubon regarding my involvement with Birdability, I was introduced to Maureen Geiger whom I’m sure many of you know. Maureen is a tireless volunteer for Sacramento Audubon having led hundreds of birding trips and organizing countless other trips through her work on the Field Activities Committee. Maureen welcomed my involvement with open arms having led trips herself in the past for birders with mobility issues. Her love for birds is contagious, and I caught her bug! Little did I know that two years later I would be President.

My work to date, has been focused on identifying birding locations within the Sacramento Region that are truly accessible. To promote use of these locations, we have created a new webpage entitled “Accessible Birding.” I also started leading local birding trips with the hopefully catchy title, “Easy Walk or Roll” trips. My latest trip was along the Humbug Willow Creek Trail, located in Folsom. You can read about the trip highlights on Page 5.



My All-terrain Wheelchair and Scope/Camera Mount. Photo by Carrie Sage

One of my goals is to help others with physical limitation to use optics. Recently I built an electric motorized pan/tilt/zoom spotting scope for a fellow muscular dystrophy birder who lives in Austin. You can read about the story on my website (www.fshdbirder.org) blog entitled “Electric Pan/Tilt/Focus Scope.” Anyone interested in learning more about his work, or needing assistance on adaptive equipment can contact me at paul@fshdbirder.org.

During my term as President I will strive to continue the legacy that is Sacramento Audubon. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any pressing issues or helpful ideas. Together we can continue to safeguard our sacred birds and their ecosystems, while promoting a culture of diversity and inclusiveness.

—Paul Miller

Field Trips: Field Trips August 1 – September 12, 2022

Sacramento Audubon has returned to volunteer-led field trips.

Precautions are still in place for everyone's safety. Unless otherwise noted, field trips are geared towards adults and those over age 13. With wildfires on the rise, smoky conditions may occur. Please note that a forecast of bad air quality (AQI of 100 or higher) will result in trip cancellation. If you are unsure, please contact the trip leader.

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please contact the trip leader. Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ridesharing/carpools. 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 may be helpful. Please arrive early if you need driving directions or plan to carpool as starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place.

COVID - 19 Protocols

- Some trips may require advance registration. For those trips, please only sign up if you are committed to attending as field trips have a limited number of participants.
- All participants, including children 5 and up and field trip leaders, must be vaccinated.
- Additional restrictions may be required, such as proof of vaccine or face masks. It varies with each field trip. Please read the description of the field trip carefully. Do not register for a field trip if you are unwilling to comply with the stated COVID precautions.

To Register for a Field Trip, follow the instructions in the trip description or visit <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/field-trips>. If you have questions or need help, email our Registration Coordinator at sacramentoaudubonfieldtrips@gmail.com.

Foothill Summer Birds

Thursday, August 4, 7:30 AM

Expected length: 2 ½ - 3 hours

Leader: Nicole Barden

(530) 304-5461, nicolebarden@gmail.com

Maximum number of participants: 10

Registration is required. Please email Nicole.

During this field trip we will be keeping an eye and ear out for summer favorites including Ash-throated Flycatchers, Wrentit, Lazuli Bunting, Phainopepla, and we may even get lucky and find a Yellow-breasted Chat!

This trip is open to all birding levels, will be slow paced, and we will be taking the time to appreciate bird behavior and hopefully get good looks. We will be listening for birds as much as looking for them and keep an e-Bird list as we go. Beginning birders are encouraged to join. The trail we will be on is mostly flat, unpaved, and we will cover no more than 3 miles. Bring plenty of water and sun protection.

We will meet in a parking lot along 50 and carpool to the birding location. Exact location and directions will be provided after registration.

Napa and Sonoma County Marshes

Saturday, August 6, 7 AM

Expected length: Full Day (about 10 hrs.)

Leader: Dan Williams

Maximum number of participants: 12

Online registration is required.

Registration opens: Noon July 11

Go to www.sacramentoaudubon.org/field-trips, or use this link: <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/calendar/field-trip-napa-and-sonoma-county-marshes-ymf68> to register.

Join Dan for a full day of birding two great tidal marsh hotspots in the North Bay Area. We will start at Wetlands Edge Park in American Canyon where we will walk the slough trails toward the Napa River mouth. The marshes at this time of year should be teeming with migrant shorebirds such as Marbled Godwits, Willets, both Yellowlegs, both Dowitchers, and Wilson's Phalaropes. There are usually Caspian and Forster's Terns out over the open water, and we may even get lucky and spot a Least Tern. We will spend the morning at this location, then head west into Sonoma County to Shollenberger Park in Petaluma. There we will eat our lunch, then take a leisurely stroll around Shollenberger's legendary wetlands where there are always multitudes of birds. Some less common targets we'll be looking for include Blue-winged Teal, Pacific Golden-Plover, American Bittern, and Golden Eagle. Hiking is easy on dirt trails and mostly flat ground.

Meeting location and directions will be provided upon registration.

Mather Lake Regional Park Family Friendly Trip and Great for Beginners Too!

Sunday, August 14, 8:30 AM

Expected length: 2-3 hours

Leaders: Mary Forrestal and Maggie Forrestal

Mary's Phone: (530) 551-2170

Email: cmforrestal@yahoo.com

Sac County Park Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles

Join Mary Forrestal and her 12-year-old daughter Maggie on this family friendly trip, exploring Mather Lake and the surrounding grasslands. This area can host a variety of birds, even in August.

This is a good trip for beginners as well as families. Bring water and insect repellent and be prepared for hot weather.

Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park. 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.

UC Davis Arboretum

Thursday, August 18, 8 AM

Expected length: 3-4 hours

Leader: Paul Miller, (916) 768-7503

Email: Pjmiller1962@me.com

Maximum number of participants: 6

Proof of vaccination is required

Registration is required for this trip.

To register, please email Paul

This trip is specifically designed for beginning to more experienced birders, in a location with paved trails, handicapped parking, and fully accessible restrooms. Whether you walk, use a wheelchair, or a walker, this trip is for you. We will travel along paved trails and hard-packed dirt within the UC Davis Arboretum located in the City of Davis, a short drive from Sacramento. This location offers a wonderful opportunity to see a wide variety of bird species, including the elusive Green Heron.

Bring water, a snack, and a smart phone if you have one.

Nimbus Fish Hatchery/Upper Sunrise

Saturday, August 20, 6 AM

Expected length: 2.5 hours

Kevin Thomas, (916) 217-6946

Email: bionerdkevin@gmail.com

As fall migration gets into full swing, we will take a leisurely walk along the American River, starting at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery parking lot and working our way downstream, along foot trails that parallel the river. We should get good looks at the local resident breeding birds, and run into a few early migrants making their way south. Expect easy walking with frequent stops to scan the river, riparian habitat, and surrounding bluffs to see what interesting birds we can find.

Meet Kevin at the parking lot of the Nimbus Fish Hatchery at the bottom of Nimbus Road. From Hwy 50 go north on Hazel Avenue; turn left on Gold Country Blvd. and the hatchery is on your right.

Field Trips: continued

Carson Pass Lakes

Sunday, August 21, 6:30 AM

Expected length: 6 miles, about 7 hours

Max Brodie (510) 418-3044

Email: brodiemax@gmail.com

Maximum number of participants: 8

Registration is required for this trip.

Please email Max at the address above

Day use fee of \$10 at parking lot, bring cash.

Join leader Max Brodie on a strenuous six mile hike at 7–9,000 ft. in elevation, as we make a loop between three alpine lakes. The reward for your effort will be the chance to see species that simply can't be seen elsewhere: birds such as Clark's Nutcracker, Williamson's Sapsucker, and Gray-crowned Rosy-Finch will be some of our main targets. This trip will also spend time admiring the unique wildflowers in the area, as well as any mammals and other wildlife we come across.

Although the pace will be slow, the combination of high elevation and steep, uneven terrain make this a trip for those in strong physical condition. Trekking poles are strongly recommended.

Bring plenty of water, snacks/lunch, bug repellent and sun protection. Restrooms will be available at the start/finish of trip. Meeting location and directions will be provided upon registration.

Ueda Parkway

Saturday, August 27, 8:30 AM

Expected length: 3 hours

Sonja Sorbo, (916) 390-8463

Email: ssgasdoc@yahoo.com

This well-hidden hotspot is tucked behind a cement/asphalt plant; its year round water source (Steelhead Creek) feeds into the Sacramento River and is a magnet for birds. During this time of year, it provides habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, oak woodland residents, and lingering migrants.

We'll meet at the parking lot and spend about 3 hours walking on level terrain, on a dirt path, for about 1.5 miles. We'll check the slough and ponds for ducks and shorebirds; possible species this time of year include Northern Shoveler, Green-winged Teal, Mallard, Black-necked Stilt, Least and Western Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, and Greater Yellowlegs. This area is a favorite hunting ground for Great and Snowy Egrets, and Great Blue Herons.

Nearby oak trees and grassland may harbor woodpeckers, goldfinches, sparrows, towhees, Western Meadowlarks, Western Bluebirds, Yellow and Wilson's Warblers, Yellow-billed Magpies, Bushtits, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and possibly Lazuli Buntings.

Of course, open grassland attracts raptors, and several species are possible, including White-tailed Kites, Red-shouldered Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and American Kestrels.

Meet at the Parking Lot at 6600 Sorento Road in Rio Linda at 8:30 AM. From Sacramento take Highway 99 north, exit east on Elkhorn Boulevard, continue

for several miles until you reach East Levee Road; just after this intersection turn right onto Sorento Road and into the parking lot for Ueda Parkway.

Family Friendly Field Trip: Sailor Bar

Sunday, August 28, 8 AM

Expected length: 2.5-3 hours

Leader: Nicole Barden, (530) 304-5461

Email: nicolembarden@gmail.com

Sac County Park Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles

Join Environmental Educator Nicole to explore what this popular birding location has to offer! We will be on the lookout for our late summer feathered friends like Wilson's Warblers, Western Tanagers, and maybe even Black-throated Gray Warblers. This time of year also brings the possibility of seeing early returning birds like Cedar Waxwings.

Open to all birding levels, this trip will be slow-paced, and we will be taking the time to appreciate bird behavior along the way. We will be listening for birds as much as looking for them and will be keeping an e-bird list as we go. Beginning birders and young birders are encouraged to join.

The trail we will be walking on is mostly flat, though there are some uneven sections with large, smoothed river rocks. We will cover no more than 3 miles. Public restrooms are available at this location.

Meet at the parking lot near the boat ramp. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way just west of Hazel Ave. From Hwy. 50, take Hazel Ave. north, turn left on Winding Way, then turn Left on Illinois Ave. Follow Illinois all the way to the end.

Auburn State Recreation Area,

Catecroft Access (furthest access point south of Cool along Hwy 49)

Thursday, September 1, 7:30 AM

Expected length: 4-5 hours

Craig Swolgaard (530) 334-3023

Email: cswol@sbcglobal.net

This part of Auburn SRA is at about 1500 feet, near the town of Cool, and includes a nice variety of foothill habitats including oak woodland, ponds, grassland, and riparian areas. The trails are fairly level and in good condition. Trails will be shared with horses and mountain bikes but is in a low traffic area of the park. Early September is a good time to see fall migrants, including warblers and empids coming down from the Sierra Nevada.

Weather may be warm late morning but probably less than 90 degrees. Hats will help block the sun. The trail has a couple of muddy creek crossings. Please bring your own water and food. We should be done by 12 – 1 PM. Rattlesnakes occur in the park so stay on the trails. Care should be taken in oak woodlands to avoid poison oak.

Meet Craig at the Holiday Market parking lot on the corner of Hwy 193 and Hwy 49 in Cool. Park near Wells Fargo Bank. From there folks can follow Craig to the trailhead, about a mile south on Hwy 49.

Sacramento Bar

Sunday, September 11, 8 AM

Expected length: 3 hours

Paul Cordero (916) 454-4061

Email: pkcordero@gmail.com

Sac County Park Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles

On this morning walk along the American River, you will see and hear a nice variety of resident birds and maybe a few early migrants. Paul will focus on finding and identifying birds by ear. This is a great trip for beginning and more experienced birders.

Meet Paul at the parking lot of Sacramento Bar. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd; take the first left on Pennsylvania and follow it into the park to the parking lot.

Wildlife Refuge/Sanctuary North of Sacramento

Monday, September 12, 7:30 AM

Expected length: About 4 hours

Maureen Geiger (916) 281-6652

Email: mkgeiger@comcast.net

Maximum number of participants: 8

Registration is required for this trip.

Please email Maureen for registration. Destination, meeting place and directions will be provided upon registration.

Expect a nice variety of riparian residents and maybe a migrant or two. This will be a 2-3 mile walk on easy, mostly flat trail. Restrooms are available.

Sacramento Audubon Pin

Order your SAS pin today! \$10 online
<https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/store/apel-pin>

or pick one up at outreach events for \$5



Field Trip Reports

Wright's Lake, (7/7)

Leader Bill Bianco reported: Five of us started out with a stop at Lyons Creek and came upon a mosquito attack. A couple saw a **Mountain Chickadee** with food going to its well hidden nest by the parking area. Saw a few more birds and headed towards Wright's Lake. Saw a total of 16 species for the day, but heard a lot that could not be seen. Tops was seeing the female **Western Wood-Pewee** sitting on the nest with the male close by. Observed **Williamson's Sapsucker**, **Hermit Thrush**, **Bufflehead** with young, **Rufous-crowned Sparrow** to name a few. Also heard **Western Tanager** and **Northern Flicker**. Went to Icehouse Reservoir to continue sightings, but it was totally closed due to reconstruction of the camping facilities. Good weather day and all enjoyed the trip.

Del Paso Regional Park, (7/3)

Leader Maureen Geiger reported: On a cool, overcast, coastal-feeling morning, five of us sought birds on the 2-mile loop in the east end of Del Paso Regional Park. The bridle trail is easy walking and especially nice on a cool morning. Twenty-five species did not break any records, but it was very enjoyable watching several family groups with recently fledged young. Two **Red-shouldered Hawks** not long out of the nest were calling throughout much of the walk, probably hoping for free meals. The most interesting aspect of this walk was how it contrasted with the same walk several weeks ago when many birds were claiming territory and singing loudly all along the trail. This morning, most birds were very quiet and although there were probably as many **Oak Titmice** around, they were no longer calling from every oak. **Yellow-billed Magpies**, always found here, could still be found but had dispersed and were no longer congregating in large groups near their large nests.

Bannister Park to Sacramento Bar, (6/28)

Leader Stan Hunter reported: Eleven birders enjoyed a lovely morning of birding at Bannister Park and Sacramento Bar in Fair Oaks. The morning was cool and calm, and it was an easy stroll along the paths, surrounded by the dunes of cobbles that are the trademark of the dredge tailings along the American River. The birders varied from Sacramento Audubon regulars to some folks who were new to birding. We started at Bannister Park at 7:30 AM, and wandered down the trail to San Juan Rapids to get a view of the American River, which was running surprisingly high. A **Green Heron** provided us with a good show across the river as a **Spotted Sandpiper** went flying upstream. Continuing our ramble along

the paths, we saw a variety of raptors including **Red-shouldered** and **Cooper's Hawks**, an **Osprey**, and an **American Kestrel**, along with **Turkey Vultures** and **Ravens**. A pair of **Belted Kingfishers** criss-crossed a dredge pond while a pair of eclipse-plumage **Mallards** plied the waters. A variety of songbirds was seen, such as **Black Phoebe**, **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Phainopepla**, and a female **Bullock's Oriole**, while **Acorn Woodpeckers**, **White-breasted Nuthatches**, **Spotted Towhees**, and **California Scrub-Jays** serenaded us. Year-round regulars were present, including **Oak Titmice**, **Tree Swallows**, **Nuttall's** and **Downy Woodpeckers**, **Bushtits**, **Northern Mockingbirds**, and **Lesser Goldfinches**. Bannister Park resident **Yellow-billed Magpies** were present, though unusually quiet. All in all, 37 species were seen in two and a half hours, over a distance of a bit less than three miles. A surprisingly good day for late June. Thanks to all who participated!

Loney Meadows High Sierra Loop near Emigrant Pass, (6/25)

Leader Sonja Sorbo reported: Birding in the Sierras in the summer offers a welcome respite from the Valley heat and presents opportunities to see some wonderful bird species. Even if the birding is quiet, the hike alone is worth it. Our trip to Loney Meadow on a stunningly beautiful summer day provided the participants with a great hike and some amazing bird encounters. The adventure began with a quick pit stop at the Sierra Discovery Trail where we noted two gorgeous male **Lazuli Buntings** in nearby shrubs. Their turquoise heads definitely turned our heads! Our final destination was just a few miles away and we made haste to get there, braving some rocks and ruts in the dirt access road. While gathering at the trailhead, we could hear over a half a dozen birds species singing in the forest and nearby meadow — **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, **Mountain Chickadee**, **Stellar's Jay**, **American Robin**, **Dark-eyed Junco**, and **Mountain Quail** were all celebrating the new day. As we hiked along the meadow, we were delighted with the fly-over of a lone **Sandhill Crane** who saluted us with that marvelous purring call. Shortly thereafter, a **Wilson's Snipe** whizzed low over the meadow, and then roosted on a wooden post in full view, delighting the photographers in the group. Elsewhere in the meadow, **Red-winged** and **Brewer's Blackbirds** popped up and down in the shrubbery. A pair of **Spotted Sandpipers** was present as well, but we missed seeing their fuzzy chicks which two birders outside of our group had been lucky enough to observe. Several species announced their presence with songs, including **Nashville**, **MacGillivray's**,

Wilson's, and **Orange-crowned Warblers**, but we were only able to lay eyes upon the latter two. **Warbling Vireos** and **Cassin's Vireos** were also quite elusive. Luckily, we had prolonged and excellent views of several **Western Tanagers** as well as three **Fox Sparrows**, three **Green-tailed Towhees**, **Chipping Sparrows**, and multiple **Red-breasted Nuthatches** — in fact, one Nuthatch basically buzzed us! **Western Wood-Pewees** seemed to be everywhere, sallying out of the trees and calling incessantly. One of the best viewings of the day was a nesting pair of **White-headed Woodpeckers** who were feeding a chick. Numerous forays out and back by the exhausted parents provided good photographic opportunities (from a respectful distance). The White-headed weren't the only active species—we also saw a **Downy Woodpecker** and a couple of **Red-breasted Sapsuckers**. We were exhilarated by the distant calls and drumming of a **Pileated Woodpecker**, but were unable to find it...maybe next time!

Tells Creek, (6/18)

Leader Craig Swolgaard reported: Saturday, June 18, a group of eight birders drove uphill from Georgetown to Van Vleck Meadow, located at the end of Cheese Camp Road in El Dorado County. The elevation is 6500 feet, well in the Canadian Life Zone, where many higher elevation Sierra Nevada birds are found. The weather was cold with a sky dominated by storm clouds, though fortunately no rain or snow. On the way to the trailhead parking, we stopped along Cheese Camp Road, at a large pond and found a pair of **Ring-necked Ducks** along with a female **Bufflehead**. A few **Tree Swallows** soared overhead and a **Pileated Woodpecker** called from the forest. After parking at Desolation Wilderness trailhead we spent the first leg of the trip hiking along a road that bordered the meadow, familiarizing ourselves with the calls and songs of the more common birds. **Fox Sparrow** called from the meadow, **Wilson's Warblers** sang from the riparian brush, **Brown Creeper** and **Hermit Warbler** announced themselves from the forested area. After crossing Tells Creek we entered into the edge of meadow, hearing and seeing several **Lincoln's Sparrows**. We eventually arrived at an area where I had found a **Williamson's Sapsucker** pair and a **Willow Flycatcher** while scouting the week before. We quickly located the sapsucker pair, finding their nest cavity and watching the adults feed the young from a safe distance. No Willow Flycatcher this time. A total of 31 bird species were recorded from Van Vleck meadow and 16 species seen at the pond. The cold, cloudy weather didn't seem to faze our quest. We also saw **Band-tailed Pigeons** and a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** in my front yard.

Humbug Willow Creek, (6/15)

Leader Paul Miller reported: “The Humbug Willow Creek Trail, located in Folsom, is a wonderful paved trail meandering along the creek. We had eight participants, including two long time Audubon members with physical challenges. One used a seated wheeled walker, and the other an electric wheelchair provided by the trip leader. Both had not been birding for a while and greatly enjoyed being back out with our sacred birds. The group also included two visitors from India here visiting family. They were very impressed by the well designed and maintained trail system that is not common in India. In total we saw/heard eighteen species including an **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, **Bewick’s Wren** and **Spotted Towhee**. The creek is also home for many Red-winged Blackbirds and they serenaded us with their eclectic songs during our visit.”



Humbug Willow Creek trip group. Photo by Cathie LaZier

Seasonal Sightings June 1 to June 30

June is a very important time for birds in the Sacramento Area, with many species wrapping up or still in the middle of their annual breeding efforts. That said, it can be a tough time for birders, with uncomfortably warm days and less local species diversity than any other time of year. In many years, we get a late June record of an eastern vagrant warbler or the like, providing an exclamation point for the annual spring migrant. This year, we were not so lucky. Consequently, many birders head to the mountains to enjoy cooler temperatures and species that pass through our area in April and May. **Blue-winged Teal** continue to be widely reported throughout the year, suggesting they are established to a degree that would have been astonishing a decade ago. A calling **Common Nighthawk** was a nice surprise in the River Park neighborhood, west of Sac State, on 6/13. An **Allen’s Hummingbird** continued at a private yard southwest of Clarksburg through at least 6/6.

The break in the June doldrums begins around the third week of the month with the arrival of migrating shorebirds. **Least Sandpipers** and **Western Sandpipers** are usually among the earliest. A **Snowy Plover** was a nice find for the area, at the Woodland WTP, on 6/25. A **Marbled Godwit** was at the same location on 6/22-23, as were three **Willetts** on 6/23; another **Willet** was found in the Yolo Bypass on 6/27. For only the second time since 2008, a pair or two of **Least Terns** failed to show up at the Sacramento Regional WTP. A **Glossy Ibis** reported on 6/3 was an apparent first Yuba County record. It was

found among a big **White-faced Ibis** flock along Plumas Arboga Rd, south of Marysville. Sadly, it appears that **Burrowing Owls** are nearly extirpated as breeders in the Sacramento Area, with about five known individuals continuing into June. Typically, there is an influx in the fall, with most migrating out of the area by the end of March. After decades of declines and plateaus, numbers in the breeding season have nearly dried up, starting about ten years ago. Habitat loss is certainly a factor, but declines are likely tied to a reduction in prey base because of drought and, perhaps, pesticides such as neonicotinoids (Burrowing Owls are partially insectivorous). A few species of songbirds have a migration pattern lingering into June. These include **Willow Flycatchers** (last reported on 6/17) and **Swainson’s Thrushes** (last reported on 6/19). **Warbling Vireos** and **Wilson’s Warblers** were also found into early June. A juvenile **Dark-eyed Junco** was an interesting find at Sailor Bar on 6/29. A junco pair was reported in Davis throughout the month, and there are previous breeding records for the city. **Yellow Warblers** continue to breed in small numbers in remote portions of Cosumnes River Preserve, reclaiming their historical breeding territory after decades of absence caused by forest clearing and brood parasitism by **Brown-headed Cowbirds**. To view photos of some of the highlights, visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/bird-sightings, and then click on the highlighted eBird checklists. The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12



Swainson’s Thrush. Photo by Daniel Brown

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 listserv (groups.io/g/centralvalleybirds) and in eBird (ebird.org). It is impossible to list everyone, but we thank the following for their reports: Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Lyann Comrack, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Linda Gal, Leif Gallagher, Cliff Hawley, Liam Huber, Jeri Langham, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Asher Perla, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Steve Scott, Cameron Tescher, Jim Thomas, John Trochet, Tom Uslan, and Dan Williams. Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.
—Chris Conard

Requesting Bobelaine Volunteers

Friday, August 5 & Friday, August 19
7 – 11:30 AM

Help remove the invasive red sesbania. Looking for a few volunteers to help with Sesbania removal at the Bobelaine Sanctuary.

Contact Bill Bianco for more details,
biancowm@yahoo.com

Sesbania punicea Also known as scarlet wisteria or rattlebrush, red sesbania is a deciduous shrub or small tree in the pea family that is rapidly expanding its range in northern California, specifically in the Sacramento region. (CDFW)

Harvest Day

Saturday, August 6, 8 AM–2 PM
Fair Oaks Horticulture Center
Free

Featured horticultural experts will speak about selecting the right trees for our changing climate, building robust soil to sustain your garden with less water, and creating a wildlife-friendly landscape. Visit local community organizations at their booths to get free info, shop at the garden specialty merchants, and picnic with a snack from one of the food vendors. Master Gardeners will be available in all areas of the garden so it's a great opportunity to ask lots of questions and listen in on a wide variety of mini-talks throughout the day.



Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival to Return in November



Planning is underway for the 24th Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival on the first weekend in November.
<https://lodisandhillcrane.org>

Ring the Alarm: Today's Water Crisis Isn't a Fire Drill

News headlines in mid-June captured what Audubon's Western Water team knows well: the Colorado River Basin and Great Salt Lake are in trouble—both facing historically unprecedented risks. Both may be headed towards ecological disasters, years in the making, the result of a pernicious combination of climate change aridifying the region and water management that does not adequately prioritize the environment. In the Colorado River Basin and at Great Salt Lake, warming temperatures and declining river flows threaten people and nature. And, we know there's significant quality wildlife and bird habitat still worthy of attention and investments.

Birds tell us that water-dependent habitats across the arid West are essential oases and they are in decline. The water issues created by a century of law and infrastructure development are magnified by today's climate crisis. For over 100 years, we've operated under a legal framework in the West where water has been "developed" without consideration for the Indigenous communities that have been on the land since time immemorial, and at the expense of the environment, sometimes draining the last drops of water that supported habitats. Across the West, water stress is evident—and people and birds will feel its effects. Audubon is working on some solutions (make sure you keep up with our ongoing posts), but for now, let me paint a picture of how dire the situation is.

With Great Salt Lake reaching its lowest ever recorded water levels, ongoing drought and increasing development pressures diverting the water flowing down rivers to the lake, a drying Great Salt Lake threatens the health of Salt Lake City residents, the future of key Utah industries, and the survival of millions of migratory shorebirds, waterfowl, and other wildlife. We are currently in uncharted territory as we test thresholds of water levels and this could have cascading effects that would ripple throughout the ecosystem. Although Auduboners tend to focus on the birds and ecology (where else in the West does one find FIVE globally Important Bird Areas at one location?), Great Salt Lake generates enormous impact for Utah and the region with \$1.56 billion annually in economic contributions through mineral, aquaculture, and ski industries, and other recreation activities. The potential economic cost of the drying Great Salt Lake could reach \$25.4 billion to \$32.6 billion over 20 years, according to a 2019 report from the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council. Much like the Salton Sea in California – another giant salt lake—which is already experiencing severe air quality issues from the exposed dry lakebed, the public health and quality of life for communities around Great Salt Lake are at risk from increased dust from larger areas of exposed lakebed. Increased dust on snow also has the potential to compound the timing of snowmelt and thus water availability.

Even more stunning is the realization that the Colorado River's major reservoirs—water supply for some 40 million people—are on life support. The federal U.S. Bureau of Reclamation in March took the unprecedented step of claiming a human health and safety emergency to justify reducing the water it releases from one of those reservoirs. At a U.S. Senate hearing in mid-June, Reclamation Commissioner Touton stated that net Colorado River water uses must be reduced in the next year by 2-4 million acre-feet, a staggering volume that amounts to about 30 percent of average consumptive use. Our water supplies across the dry West are in severe crisis because of historic over-development, compounded today by climate change. Warming temperatures are creating "hot droughts" that deplete flows in rivers, the flows that people and nature depend on. Today there is no longer enough water to supply all of the demands. Colorado River flows in the first two decades of the 21st century are 20 percent lower than flows in the last century. In years when we see "average" snowpack levels in the mountains, river flows are low: last year in the Colorado River's headwater mountains, a 91 percent snowpack yielded only a 55 percent flow. That discrepancy demonstrates an impact of climate change between the mountain tops and the valley bottoms. Snowmelt isn't reaching the rivers in the same way; warmer temperatures drive evaporation, turning the soils into thirsty sponges.

— Karyn Stockdale, Audubon Western Water Initiative Senior Director



Sandhill Cranes and Snow Geese.

Photo: Marti Phillips/Audubon Photography Awards

<https://www.audubon.org/news/ring-alarm-todays-water-crisis-isnt-fire-drill>

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members:

Gary DeMar
Meghan Hertel
Nancy Lapp
Laurie Necaize

Thank You For Your Generous Donations!

General Fund

Anonymous, Bethany Cates, Betty J. Cooper, Deborah B. Cooper, Kit Custis, Roger Dunstan, Susan Fregien, Nancy Gronert, Timothy & Angela Jackson, Peggy Jenkins (*In Memory of Jack Wilburn*), Eric Liskay, Craig De Martini, Charlet Newton, Maria Reyes, Emily & Kelley Shelton, Jane Waln, Stuart S. Walthall

Education and Conservation Fund

Kit Custis, Elizabeth Etgen, Christine Hansen, Marc & Natalie Fenner, Joan Ferroggiaro, Susan Fregien, Timothy & Angela Jackson, James & Nancy Joye, Craig De Martini, Robert & Anne Meagher, Kathy Moore & Dan Brown, June A. Ritzman, Jane Waln

Bobelaine Sanctuary

Kit Custis, Lynn Daly, Susan Fregien, Maureen K. Geiger, Timothy & Angela Jackson, James & Nancy Joye, Nancy Kapellas, Craig De Martini, Susan Thrower, Christie Vallance, Jane Waln, Richard & Salli Warinner, John York

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.

See the Latest SAS Action on Facebook

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You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

- Promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds.
- Foster the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach.
- Encourage, support, and provide environmental educational opportunities.
- Advocate for the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Please contact President, Paul Miller, at sacaudubonpresident@gmail.com 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, except for June, July, and December when no meetings are held.

The next meeting is:

Tuesday, August 30, 2022.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found 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. Members receive our online newsletter, *The Observer*; so be sure to include your email address.

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www.sacramentoaudubon.org

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

SAS Membership per address/household (for 12 months): \$ 35

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Mail this form with your check payable to Sacramento Audubon Society to the address shown above. You can also use your credit card or PayPal account on SAS website:

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New members will receive *The Observer* in color via email. Please provide your email address above. If you would prefer a black & white, paper copy mailed to you instead, please email sacaudubonmembership@gmail.com.

If you would like to be added to the SAS Action Alert list, check here _____.

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White-tailed Kite Daniel 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.

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Birding Trips

Foothill Summer Birds, August 4
Napa and Sonoma County Marshes, August 6
Mather Lake Regional Park Family Friendly Trip and Great for Beginners Too! August 14
UC Davis Arboretum, August 18
Nimbus Fish Hatchery/Upper Sunrise, August 20
Carson Pass Lakes, August 21
Ueda Parkway, August 27
Family Friendly Field Trip: Sailor Bar, August 28
Auburn State Recreation Area, Catecroft Access
September 1
Sacramento Bar, September 11
Wildlife Refuge/Sanctuary North of Sacramento
September 12