

January General Meeting

Thursday, January 20, 2022 at 7pm via Zoom

The January meeting will be held online via Zoom. You must register for the meeting, but there is no cost to register and you do not need a Zoom account. Registration is required due to space limitations set by Zoom. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information on how to join the meeting. You will also receive email reminders about this event. For more information visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker.

Successful Backyard Nestboxes

Presented by Mike Azevedo and Georgette Howington of the California Bluebird Recovery Program

There was a time when the Western Bluebird was abundant, and then trouble struck. Humans introduced non-native invasive birds that drove bluebird populations downward in a hurry. People began removing the trees that bluebirds need to raise their young. Bluebirds became extirpated from some of their former habitat. All of their problems still exist but nest box programs have combined nationwide to see a massive resurgence of bluebirds and even other cavity nesting birds.

Every week, the California Bluebird Recovery Program hears about bluebirds being found in places they hadn't been seen in years. But bluebirds are not alone in needing nest box programs and there is a science to the installation and monitoring of nest boxes. Tree Swallows, Bewick's Wrens, Ash Throated Flycatchers, Chestnut Backed Chickadees, Barn Owls, Wood Ducks are all cavity nesting birds that need our help.... to correct damage that we've caused to their environment.

Find out how you can be a part of this project to add a missing component: Homes! for cavity nesting birds in Sacramento. County Coordinators for the California Bluebird Recovery Program will be on hand to give a presentation on how to put up successful nest boxes.



Mountain Bluebird by Maren Smith



Western Bluebird by Mary Forrestal

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President's Letter

Sacramento Audubon Society activities were suspended in March 2020 due to the pandemic. That seems like a lifetime ago, doesn't it? Like many other organizations, we adapted and pursued our mission to educate and advocate on behalf of birds and birding. As we enter the New Year, I wanted to share the many ways we have supported and will continue to support our mission.

The big news is that our much-missed field trip activities are back, with changes. Please take note. Trip size is now limited, online registration is required and participants must be vaccinated (see Field Trips on our website at www.sacramentoaudubon.org). I want to thank the Field Trip Committee and the Website Committee for working tirelessly to come up with a solution that allowed for field trips to resume in a way where both leaders and participants will feel comfortable.

Our General/Monthly meetings will remain virtual. We've switched our online meeting provider from Webex to the more familiar Zoom with the hope that participants will find it easier to navigate. I'd like to thank board member and Website Committee Chair Mary Forrestal for administering these meetings. Anthony Asay, our Monthly Speaker Chair, continues to provide us with interesting speakers. Anthony is also our newest board member and we look forward to his contributions in this new role.

Sharon Wisecarver, our longtime editor of The Observer, stepped down this past summer. I'm very grateful to Sharon for her years of service to the Society. We benefitted from her high standards and excellent editing. Our new editor, Carla Resnick, has been doing an excellent job as well.

Our website continues to impress with its well thought out design, navigability, professional appearance and overall usefulness. Just look at these numbers for 2021: 51,000 visits—38,000 of which have been unique visitors. 181,000 individual page views.

The most popular page continues to be the "Sacramento Area Birds Checklist" with 38,231 page views. In aggregate, the birding location pages have been viewed over 10,000 times. While *The Observer* remains a vital part of Sacramento Audubon Society (and for many of you the main source of information on SAS), it is our website that introduces

people to SAS. The four-person Website Committee deserves our many thanks for their excellent work.

Board member Paul Miller has been instrumental in bringing accessible birding to SAS. He created and chairs the Accessibility Committee. He worked with the Field Trip and Website Committees to create the "Accessible Birding" recommendations on our website. SAS's first accessible birding trip, led by Paul, was in December. More are on the way. We are truly indebted to Paul for his leadership in this area.

Our sponsorship of Effie Yeaw's "Nature in Your Classroom" program for Sacramento City Unified School District Title 1 schools continues. Since spring 2021, SAS's Vice President, Daphne Reimer, has reached out to 35 schools with our offer of sponsorship. 11 schools have registered for programs. Several schools are pending. By the end of 2021, over 1000 students will have seen (or are scheduled to see) an Effie Yeaw Nature Center's "Nature in Your Classroom." (We've also been pleased that we are supporting Effie Yeaw by sponsoring these programs.)



Chalk Mural Artist Madison Coan

Some biding festivals will be returning this year. The Galt Winter Festival, Walk on the Wildside, and Harvest Day are scheduled to return. Our Outreach Committee plans to participate in these events. On Labor Day weekend 2021 we were sponsors of Chalk It Up!, the hugely popular Midtown Sacramento art festival supporting arts education. The volunteer artist in charge of our chalk mural created a beautiful rendering of a Great Blue Heron. Our participation was part of an effort to expand our outreach into

the larger community, not just birding events. We plan on participating again this year.

We continue to support the work of ECOS (Environmental Council of Sacramento) and Habitat 2020. They are focusing on the opposition of the Delta Conveyance Tunnel Project, challenging new development applications to annex targeted conservation lands at Natomas Basin, and, most recently, reviewing the EIR for the California Northstate University Hospital and Innovation Center slated to replace the Sleep Train Arena in Natomas.

SAS is currently working with the City of Sacramento Parks Department on the protection and restoration of habitat at Reichmuth Park. Sadly, off-road dirt bikers have damaged habitat by making unauthorized trails. City Parks Department plans are to restore habitat, prevent vegetation clearing, remove English Ivy, and to address other management issues. In the spring we will be checking their progress on these items.

National Audubon, with SAS's support, approved a Feather River fish and wildlife habitat enhancement project at Bobelaine. River Partners along with FlowWest have submitted a grant application to the Bureau of Reclamation for project funding. Salmon and steelhead habitat restoration will be the priority. The plan is to use an old river channel that already goes through Bobelaine. If the grant is approved, the project time line would be 2 years for data collection, design and permitting; then 2 years for construction. The Bobelaine Committee was re-established to participate in design review, coordination and construction monitoring. The project grant is to include post construction monitoring. Visitor use of the sanctuary is to be coordinated with construction, so any closure would be at a minimum. Additionally. I'd like to thank the crew of dedicated volunteers that help maintain Bobelaine for all to enjoy.

This past year saw the departure of 3 board members: Elliot Chasin, Diana Hickson and, most recently, Heather White. Elliot was the SAS Conservation Chair for four years working with ECOS and Habitat 2020. His analysis of the EIR for the proposed California Northstate University Hospital

continues on page 3

Reichmuth Park: Tarnished Jewel of Sacramento Birding

Reichmuth Park, south of 43rd Avenue, between Gloria and South Land Park Drives, continues to produce wonderful birds, though it was once a much wilder place. Currently, birders are following the Bushtit flocks and dodging Frisbee golfers while hoping to see a Black-and-white Warbler that has been in the park for nearly a month. One of the most astounding birds ever found in the county was a Worm-eating Warbler from January 2018. Last year, a Tropical Kingbird was seen by many. Each of the above rarities was found by regular Reichmuth birder, Andrew Lee. Past highlights have included Plumbeous Vireo, Bell's Sparrow, Northern Parula, American Redstart, Hooded Warbler, Canada Warbler, and Summer Tanager. The oaks, willows, cottonwoods, and even some of the ornamental trees host migrating and wintering birds, and the remaining dense understory provides habitat for the occasional Pacific Wren in winter, along with Purple Finches, Fox Sparrows, and Lincoln's Sparrows.

Tim Manolis began birding the site around 1970, about a decade before the northern half of the park was developed and turf was planted for sports fields. Reichmuth is the family name of a landowner from before the South Land Park neighborhood was developed, and the old name for the site is Munger's Lake, named for an even earlier landowner. The remnant lake is an old oxbow of the Sacramento River from before it was lined with levees, back when the river was allowed to wander. Tim reports that early birding visits were made as much for waterbirds as for the rare songbirds that are now sought there. Just ten years ago, the northern, developed portion of the park would regularly flood in wet winters until more efficient pumping operations, combined with extended drought, made flooding far less frequent.

For decades, the southern half was classified, somewhat informally, as a nature area. In the past five years, and seemingly without any prior public notice, the nature area has been drastically changed for a Frisbee golf course, with clearing and pruning of trees, removal of understory, and widening of "fairways." At times, there have been widespread camping impacts, occasional fires, and feral cat colonies. Some friends have noted the sketchy nature of the site and have been unwilling to visit. Another even found a human body floating in the remnant of Munger's Lake. Recently, Dan Airola contacted the City of Sacramento when he saw unauthorized BMX bike trails being constructed, with major landscape modification. Fortunately the City was receptive to Dan's message of emphasizing the value of the park's habitat. Bill Bianco sent the City a letter on behalf of Sacramento Audubon Society, cataloging some of the impacts to the habitat, and Dan coordinated a site visit with City staff to highlight the importance of the park's habitat to birds and birders. Dan envisions continued involvement, monitoring, and restoration work days (removing invasive plants and leveling BMX jumps and trails). It is important for SAS members to be visible to the City in expressing our concerns and doing some work toward those ends, or other groups will completely hold sway. The natural character of the site is reduced, but still substantial, and it remains a wonderful birding location. To stay informed about the park and to participate in potential habitat work days, contact Dan Airola (d.airola@sbcglobal.net). -Chris Conard



Black-and-white Warbler by Chris Conard



American Redstart by Chris Conard



Worm-eating Warbler by Chris Conard

President's Letter continued from page 2

next to Stone Lakes National Wildlife
Center provided ammunition for the defeat
of this project. Diana served on the board
for over 10 years in various capacities. As
Corresponding Secretary she not only wrote
our many thank you notes to donors, but
helped write and revise SAS policies and
also served on many committees. Having
had a long history with the board, she always
offered sound advice. Heather was involved
in the initial redesign of our current website.
She also brought her design skills to her
role as Corresponding Secretary with her
creation of our thank you postcards. She

looks forward to helping us with future design projects.

Although the pandemic has disrupted so many things for so many people, I am proud of our response as an organization. Even though we couldn't bird together, we still encouraged birding with DIY field trips, suggested birding locations and virtual programs. The board never missed a monthly meeting but learned to adapt in a virtual setting. Financially, we are as sound as we've ever been thanks to our generous membership and outside donors.

I'd like to thank my fellow board members for helping steer the Society in these uncertain times. I'd like to acknowledge the work of Jane Van Kessel, our Membership Chair and Harriet Saeck, Treasurer, whose behind-the-scenes work can easily go unnoticed. I also want to thank all of the committees that work to make this a better organization. And finally, I'd like to thank you, SAS member, for your ongoing support.

—Bill Bianco

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Field Trips: January 19— February 16, 2022

Sacramento Audubon is gradually returning to volunteer-led field trips. As the pandemic continues, we have added precautions for everyone's safety. We are only offering a few field trips each month and registration is required for all participants. More field trips will be offered as we gain experience with this new way of doing things. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

COVID - 19 Protocols

- All participants must register in advance to attend. Please only sign up if you are committed to attending, as field trips have a limited number of participants.
- All participants, including field trip leaders, must be vaccinated.
- Field trip participants should maintain adequate social distance.
- There will be no sharing of binoculars, scopes or other optics on any field trips.
- Additional restrictions may be required, such as proof of vaccine or facemasks. 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.
- Field trips leaders are authorized by the Sacramento Audubon Board to cancel field trips if unregistered participants attempt to join or stated precautions are not met.

To Register for a Field Trip:

- 1. Visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/field-trips
- Select a field trip by clicking on the picture or title of the trip. This will open a new webpage. At the top of the new page, it will indicate if registration for the field trip is open, closed, or coming up.
- 3. If registration is open, scroll to the bottom of the page and fill in your name and email address and click the "Register Now" button.
- 4. You will be sent an email by our Registration Coordinator within 48 hours. The first participants to register will be sent an email with meeting location and directions. Remaining registrants will be added to a waiting list.
- 5. Please let us know as soon as possible if you will not be able to attend, we have a waiting list for most field trips.

If registration for a field trip is marked as full, this means the field trip and waiting list are full.

If you have questions or need help, email our Registration Coordinator at sacramentoaudubonfieldtrips@gmail.com.

West Placer County

Saturday, January 29, 8 am (Expected length: 6 hours or more) Leader: Richard Barbieri Maximum number of participants: 8 Registration Opens: Noon December 28, 2021

Western Placer County can often rival the great wildlife refuges in numbers and diversity of waterfowl, and it is also known for large concentrations of raptors. Besides the expected species, Eurasian Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, and Lewis's Woodpecker are all possible. Join Richard for a full day of exploring this diverse area and bring liquids, lunch, and FRS radios if you have them.

Covid Protocols: Participants will be required to adhere to COVID-19 protocols as outlined.

Eastern Sacramento Lakeside Walk

Tuesday, February 1, 8 am (Expected length: 2-2½ hours) Leader: Darrell Mohr Maximum number of participants: 8 Registration Opens: Noon January 4, 2022

Join Darrell to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron and Common Yellowthroat. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Covid Protocols: Participants will be required to adhere to COVID-19 protocols as outlined.

North Coast Day Trip

Saturday, February 5, 7 am (Expected length: Full day. Return to meeting place ~5-6 pm) Leader: Dan Williams Maximum number of participants: 12 Registration Opens: Noon January 10, 2022

Join Dan for a full day of birding in a variety of coastal habitats. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and raptors. Rain or shine. Very little hiking. One \$7 parking fee. Bring a lunch water, and binoculars (scope if you have one).

Covid Protocols: Participants will be required to adhere to COVID-19 protocols as outlined.

Riparian Area near American River College

Sunday, February 13, 8 am (Expected length: 2-3 hours) Leader: Maureen Geiger Maximum number of participants: 8 Registration Opens: Noon January 17, 2022

This large, little-known park with its lush riparian habitat can be very birdy, and is definitely worth exploring. Some possibilities include large numbers of Yellow-billed Magpies, woodpecker species, Bewick's Wrens, Cedar Waxwings, and Yellow-rumped Warblers. This is about a two-mile walk.

Covid Protocols: Participants will be required to adhere to COVID-19 protocols as outlined.



American Bittern by Dan Brown

JANUARY 2022



Yellow-billed Magpie by Ray Rozema

Seasonal Sightings November 1 to November 30

While much of the month was quite dry, there were flooded areas for waterbirds following the historic late-October storm. This was another month with a good number of interesting reports.

A **Trumpeter Swan** was found among **Tundra Swans** along Cornelius Rd in Sutter County on 11/21; and two **Trumpeter Swans** were found along Poundstone Rd, east of Arbuckle in Colusa County, on 11/28. A "**Bewick's Swan**," the Eurasian subspecies of Tundra Swan, with extensive yellow at the base of the bill, was found among other Tundra Swans along Hwy 45, north of Knight's Landing and south of the Colusa County line, on 11/22. A male **Redhead** was a nice bird for Sacramento County at the Bufferlands on 11/15. One of the year's most exciting birds for the area was a female-type **Long-tailed Duck** found on 11/26 near the Nimbus Hatchery, continuing into December and seen by at least dozens of birders.

The first **Mountain Plovers** of the season were reported along Hwy 45 in Yolo County, just south of the Colusa County line on 11/22; up to 65 were reported by month's end. About 30 **Mountain Plovers** were reported along Flannery Rd, south of Dixon, also on 11/22. A **Rednecked Grebe** was found and photographed at the Woodland WTP on 11/8-11. The **Cassin's Kingbird** found on 10/29 at the Davis Cemetery and Arboretum continued through 11/2. A **Hammond's Flycatcher**, probably the same one that has wintered near the Tall Forest at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) for at least two years, was found again on 11/19. A late **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Mather Lake on 11/19 was also a surprise.

At least two **Lapland Longspurs**, an excellent find, were photographed and recorded along Latrobe Rd, just west of the intersection with Michigan Bar Rd, on 11/10, and at least one continued to be found sporadically through 11/25; another was found and nicely photographed at Beals Point, Folsom Lake, on 11/12. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was found at Reichmuth Park on 11/20-21, and presumably the same bird was spotted more regularly in December. A male **Hooded Warbler** photographed at a normally closed portion of CRP on 11/27 was quite unexpected, but was about the tenth record for Sacramento County, and, surprisingly, the sixth for CRP. A **Wilson's Warbler** was a nice find for late in the season on 11/17 along Lake Spafford in the UC Davis Arboretum, continuing into December.



Mountain Plover by Alan Schmierer

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 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 I want to thank the following for their reports: Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Lyann Comrack, Lily Douglas, Konshau Duman, Gil Ewing, Mike Guard, David Hamilton, Denise Hamilton, Cliff Hawley, Jim Holmes, Liam Huber, Emmett Iverson, Jeri Langham, Mark Martucci, Leslie Morris, Adam Panto, Nora Papian, Michael Perrone, Ron Pozzi, Jim Rowoth, Uday Sant, Steve Scott, Katie Smith, Cameron Tescher, John Trochet, and Lynette Williams. Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

-Chris Conard

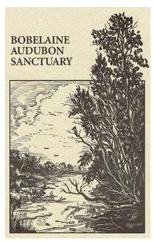
Volunteering Opportunity Bobelaine, Trash Pick-up Day

Saturday, January 29, 2022

Looking for volunteers to help with trash pick up along the sanctuary's east boundary, the Feather River; and the various trails. If weather cancels, back up day is Saturday, February 19. If interested please contact Bill Bianco at president@sacramentoaudubon.org

Thank you, to all the Bobelaine volunteers.

—William Bianco



15th Annual Galt Winter Bird Festival

Registration is open for the Galt Winter Bird Festival.
The festival features in-person tours, and online presentations. Free childrens activities, live wild animal presentation, photography exhibit, and more. The one-day event is Saturday, February 5, from 10am–2pm.

For more information call 209-366-7115 or email jgarcia@cityofgalt.org



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From Audubon California



Western Meadowlark by James Halsck

600,000 Acres Enrolled in Audubon Grassland Bird Conservation

Audubon's Conservation Ranching Program (ACR) is our key strategy to save grassland birds. We partner with ranchers to restore habitat, adopt bird-friendly management practices, and sequester carbon in soils. Audubon California's Bobcat Ranch became the first property to receive ACR certification. Now, we have 16 ranchers enrolled on over 600,000 acres across California.

North America's grasslands are among the most imperiled ecosystems in the world. As a result, grassland birds have declined more than any other bird group in the continent, by as much as 80% for some species.

The vast majority of America's grassland birds breed on private lands which is why working with ranchers is our best hope for conserving them. California has 61 million acres of rangelands that provide food production, carbon sequestration, water infiltration, and habitat for a wide range of species.

A recent study identifies California grasslands as more reliable and resilient carbon sinks than forests (Pawlok 2018). However, this historic California land use is under threat with an average of 20,000 acres a year being lost to development or crop conversion (Cameron et al2014).

Climate change, invasive species, aquifer depletion, and poor grazing practices also degrade large portions of grasslands, increasing economic and ecological vulnerability. To slow the loss of rangelands, stabilize declining populations of grassland birds and wildlife, and contribute to climate mitigation, Audubon created the Audubon Conservation Ranching Program (ACR).

https://ca.audubon.org/conservation/conservation-ranching

How to Draw Birds with John Muir Laws



The Audubon California YouTube channel offers several videos from the "How to Draw Birds" classes they offered, starting in May of 2020.

Richardson Bay Audubon Center partnered with artist John Muir Laws to offer a six-class series covering the fundamentals of drawing birds. More than 175,000 people learned how to draw raptors and waterbirds, making their birds pop off the page.

The instructional videos run between an hour and a half to 2 hours each, and John Muir Laws demonstrates the fundamentals of drawing birds.

He presents information about feather shape, head position, and other important anatomical features of birds to notice while drawing birds

The classes are:

- Let's Draw Owls: Anatomy and Angles
- Let's Draw Owls: Feathers, Textures, and Environment
- Birder's Field Journal FUNdamentals
- Birder's Field Journal Pro Tips
- How to Make Bird Drawings Come Alive
- Rotating Birds and Drawing them at all Angles
- Drawing Raptors and other Large Birds in Flight
- How to Draw Garden Birds
- How to Draw Waterbirds
- How to Draw Raptors

These videos can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/T9ib_6m_M0Q

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.

Thank You For Your Generous Donations!

General Fund

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Marcia L. Berner

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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



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

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members:

Harper Arend-Steinhart

Rajesh Bhargava

Marcia L. Berner

Clifford Feldheim

Sharon Kersten

Dakota Mitchell

Heidi Sanborn

Marjorie Shock

Mary Stump

Betsy Vallejo

John Walter

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Please contact President, Bill Bianco, at president@sacramentoaudubon.org; 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, except for June, July, and December when no meetings are held

The next meeting is January 25, 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.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

www.sacramentoaudubon.org P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

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

I want to add an extra Donation of: \$______

Total Enclosed \$

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: https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/join-renew

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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 membership@sacramentoaudubon.org.

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

Sacramento Audubon Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit. #94-1615830 Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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www.sacramentoaudubon.org facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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membership@sacramentoaudubon.org

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Seasonal Observations: Chris Conard

2405 Rio Bravo Circle, Sacramento, CA 95826 (916) 203-1610, e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

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

The Observer Editor: Carla Resnick, e-mail: carlaphoto@gmail.com

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.

January Events: Mark your calendars

January General Meeting

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Presented by Mike Azevedo and Georgette Howington of the California Bluebird Recovery Program



Western Bluebird by Mary Forrestal

Trash Pick-up Day at Bobelaine

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Pick up along the sanctuary's east boundary, the Feather River; and the various trails.