

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

January General Meeting

Thursday, January 19, 2023 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.

Learning About Trees is a Gateway to Bird Conservation

Discussing a wild career path, Jonelle Mason will present an insight to the zookeeping field, a deeper look at wildlife conservation, and how you can get more involved.

Jonelle Mason's dedication to wildlife and our natural world, motivated her to pursue a bachelor's degree in biology. Beginning her career with some of the largest animals on the planet, she used animal training to influence thousands of people throughout the country. As a Master Herpetologist, Jonelle studied reptiles and amphibians extensively while also maintaining a special admiration for these generally unloved creatures. She spends her free time volunteering at a local reptile rescue, working on community preservation projects, and volunteering at a wildlife rehabilitation center. After working with exotic animals for more than a decade, Jonelle joined the Project Learning Tree team, combining her fierce love for nature and environmental education.

Jonelle approached Sacramento Audubon to share more information regarding Project Learning Tree. The program's goal is to "advance environmental literacy, stewardship, and career pathways using trees and forests as windows on the world." And where there are forests, there are birds! Jonelle and Paul Miller are also collaborating on leading a second Mindful Birding trip in early 2023.



Ducks in Scopes at the Cosumnes River Preserve

Saturdays, January 7, 14, 21 & 28, 2023.

Come any time between 10 AM and 2 PM.

Wintering waterfowl and cranes are here! Don't miss this chance to see them in the seasonal wetlands at the Cosumnes Preserve. CRP docents have a row of spotting scopes set up, including lower ones for children, giving you excellent views of the many colorful ducks, other waterfowl, shorebirds and more.

Microscopes and hand lens provide close-up looks at "Duck Soup", dishes of water dipped from the pond full of water fleas, rat-tailed maggots, scuds, and other squiggly things that provide the protein the birds are feeding on.

The Preserve is a quick drive from Sacramento: south on I-5 to Twin Cities Rd; left (east) on Twin Cities for 1 mile; then right (south) on Franklin Blvd. The viewing area is in the first parking lot on your right as you drive into the preserve.

Steady rain or high wind cancels event.



Northern Pintail. Photo by Mary Forrestal

Field Trips: Field Trips December 1 – January 15, 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 ride-sharing/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.

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area

Saturday, January 7, 8 AM

Expected length: 6 hours

Leader: Sonja Sorbo, (916) 390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com

Maximum number of participants: 10
Registration is required for this trip.

Please email Sonja if you would like to attend.

A Lands Pass is required for entry to Gray Lodge Wildlife Area.

This winter trip offers fantastic opportunities to view waterfowl, and it is one of the more reliable places near Sacramento to see Blue-winged Teal. Sometimes thousands of geese take flight over the water, to the delight of birders. Other species to expect for the day include passerines, wetland birds, and raptors. We will spend some time walking the trails, which are all well graded and on level ground. After lunch, we'll take a drive around the auto loop. If there's time and if the group agrees, we'll drive home to Sacramento via a different route looking for Sandhill Cranes, grassland birds, and raptors.

NOTE: A Lands Pass is required for entry to Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. (Anglers or hunters possessing a CA license are free.) You may purchase a day pass three ways:

1. By paying \$4.50 cash at the "iron ranger" at the parking lot.
2. By phone (800) 565-1458. (Bring the temporary authorization number provided to you by the salesperson.)
3. Online, go to CDFW's website at ca.wildlifelicense.com and "continue as a guest." Select 2023 Lands Pass.

Paying by phone or online, the fee is \$4.89 for a 1-day pass.

Meeting place, directions, and other details will be provided upon registration.

Beginning Birder Walk Cosumnes River Preserve

Sunday, January 8

This trip is full.

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip, with three Audubon trip leaders, it is a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. On this trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks, and bird behavior as we look at individual birds.

Registrants will be sent the meeting time and exact location, along with other information.

Cosumnes River Preserve

Thursday, January 12, 9 AM

Expected length: 3 hours

Leader: Paul Miller, (916) 768-7503
pjmiller1962@me.com

Maximum number of participants: 6
Registration is required for this trip.

Please email Paul if you would like to attend.

Cosumnes River Preserve is a wonderful venue for those with mobility challenges. Within a few hundred feet of the main parking lot there is a wooden easily accessible viewing platform. The flooded fields attract a wide range of dabbling ducks. Greater White-fronted Geese, Sandhill Cranes, dowitchers, Wilson's Snipe, and yellowlegs should be present. There are always some passerines and raptors.

Specific meeting place and directions will be provided at the time of registration.

North Natomas Regional Park

Saturday, January 14, 8 AM

Expected length: 3-4 hours

Leader: Ben Graber, (916) 844-8682
grabber984@protonmail.com

Join Ben for a leisurely morning walk. We can expect to see a wide variety of grassland species including Meadowlarks, Ring-necked Pheasants, and Savannah Sparrows, along with herons, egrets, and waterfowl. Various wintering species of raptors, including falcons, are also possibilities. This trip will include approximately 2 to 3 miles of walking over flat terrain, and bringing liquids is recommended. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

Meet Ben at North Natomas Regional Park, 2501 New Market Dr, Sacramento 95835. From Sacramento, take I-5 North to Del Paso Rd, Exit 525A. Go right/east on Del Paso Rd. In half a mile turn left onto Town Center Dr.

Teal Bend Golf Course

Sunday, January 15, 8 AM

Expected length: 3-4 hours

Leader: Richard Barbieri, (916) 761-1124
offleash227@gmail.com

Join Richard in exploring the rich habitat of Teal Bend Golf Course. There are a variety of habitats, including wooded and riparian areas, supporting resident birds and attracting wintering and resident birds. Easy walking around the golf course. Bring water and snacks.

Meet Richard at the parking lot at Teal Bend Golf Course. The address is 7200 Garden Hwy, Sacramento 95837. From Sacramento, take I-5 north,

then when I-5 splits into Highway 99, take Hwy 99 north. Take Exit 309 at Elverta Rd and turn left (west). Drive about three miles, then turn left onto Garden Hwy. After about a mile, turn left into the golf course. Proceed to the parking lot.

Ancil Hoffman Park

Wednesday, January 18, 8 AM

Expected length: 4 hours

Leader: Nancy Gronert, (279) 346-4790
sacauduboncorsec@gmail.com

This trip will focus on birding by ear skills and best practices with the Merlin Sound app. Ancil Hoffman Park is a recreational park run by Sacramento County. The 396-acre park, dotted with ancient oaks and bordered on two sides by the American River, includes a nature preserve with riparian and oak woodlands, shrub lands, meadows, and aquatic habitats. We'll check out the trails, river, and trees for the calls of wintering sparrows, kinglets, and thrush, and year-round birds like woodpeckers, towhees, wrens, and whatever else we can detect.

Meet Nancy at Ancil Hoffman Park in the picnic parking lot across from the golf course parking lot. From California Ave in Fair Oaks, take the Tarshes Drive entrance and follow it all the way to the last parking lot on your left. A Sacramento County Parks Pass or a \$6 day use fee is required. Heavy rain cancels.

Family Birding Walk at Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Saturday, January 21, 10:30 AM

Expected length: 1 hour

Leaders: Betty Cooper, Rich Howard
Please see www.sacnaturecenter.net or call (916) 876-4918 for registration and other details.

Join Audubon birding leaders Betty Cooper and Rich Howard, and Nature Center docents, for a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, and other resident birds such as towhees and Bushtits will be active. Families and individuals are encouraged to enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists and birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. Paid registration is required through Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

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Field Trips: continued

Family Friendly Trip to Putah Creek South Fork Preserve

Monday, January 23, 9AM
Expected length: 2 hours
Nicole Barden (530) 304-5461
nicolembarden@gmail.com

Join Environmental Educator Nicole to visit this mixed riparian, upland grassland, and oak savannah habitat. We will be on the lookout for wintering waterfowl, Say's Phoebe, Horned Larks, and raptors in the flooded fields. Traveling along the creek, we will be on the lookout for Hooded Mergansers, herons and Otters. We may also see a Red-breasted Sapsucker in the oaks. This trip is open to all birding levels and ages and will be slow paced. We will be listening for birds as much as looking for them, and will keep an eBird list as we go. Beginning birders and young birders are encouraged to join. The trail is flat, un-paved, and travels through mixed shade and sun. There are no bathrooms available at the preserve. We are expecting to travel no more than 2 miles.

This trip will happen rain or shine but local flooding will cancel. Some of the best birding I have experienced was in the rain, just don't forget your rain gear! If you are unsure, please email Nicole to confirm the trip is happening the day before.

Meet Nicole at the South Fork Preserve parking area. From I-80, go south on Mace Blvd for 2.5 miles. The Putah Creek South Fork Preserve will be on the left.

Delta Shores Ponds

Saturday, January 28, 8AM
Expected length: 2-3 hours
Leader: Maureen Geiger, (916) 281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen and discover this great, under-birded area in south Sacramento. Specialties in winter may include ducks such as Ring-necked, Lesser Scaup, goldeneye, Bufflehead, and less commonly, Redheads, in addition to hawks, White-tailed Kites, kestrels, and other pond and open field bird species. This will involve walking a loop of about 1.5 miles half on smooth sidewalks and half on a level but bumpy and gravelly trail.

The City of Sacramento has approved 5,200 new homes east of the Ponds. As construction has already begun, this is a good time to check it out while traffic and congestion are minimal.

From Sacramento, take I-5 south 9-10 miles to the Cosumnes River Blvd exit #510. Cross over the freeway, drive past the first entrance into the shopping center and take the second right onto Delta Shores South. Passing the shopping center, go about half a mile to

the far end, turn right into the parking lot with a sign saying "RC Willey". Park facing the Pond. (Address for GPS is 8340 Delta Shores Circle South.)

Nimbus Fish Hatchery/ Upper Sunrise

Sunday, January 29, 7:30 AM
Expected length: 2.5+ hours
Leader: Kevin Thomas, (916) 217-6946
bionerdkevin@gmail.com

As winter continues in the Central Valley, 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 birds and run into our local wintering species. Expect easy walking with frequent stops to scan the river, riparian habitat, and surrounding bluffs to see what interesting birds we can find. We will be on the lookout for Barrow's Goldeneye, interesting gulls and our local Bald Eagle.

Meet Kevin at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery parking lot at the bottom of Nimbus Road. From Hazel Ave turn onto Gold Country Blvd and make a right onto Nimbus Rd.

Lincoln Wastewater Treatment Plant

Wednesday, February 1, 8 AM
Expected length: 4 hours
Leader: Sonja Sorbo, (916) 390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com
Registration is required for this trip and will be limited to 8 participants. Please email Sonja to register for this trip.

We will bird the Lincoln water treatment plant.

There are several large ponds which can hold a variety of ducks. Some years there have been hundreds of Canvasbacks and wigeons present, with an occasional Redhead or Eurasian Wigeon in their midst. Depending on the water level, we might see shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts, Greater Yellowlegs, dowitchers, Dunlin, and Least Sandpipers. While driving on the levees around the ponds, we will search the adjacent trees, fields, and fenceposts for raptors, sparrows, woodpeckers, and other resident species. A small wetland area visible from the levees can hold rails, herons, egrets, gallinules, and Marsh Wrens.

This trip will end around noon; if there is sufficient time, we might drive some nearby roads looking for flocks of geese and/or swans. Bring a spotting scope and your FRS radio if you have them. Dress warmly, since the weather can be cold and windy. Rain cancels the trip. Meeting place and directions will be provided upon registration.

Bodega Bay

Saturday, February 4, 7 AM
Expected length: Full Day
Dan Williams (714) 943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

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. There is one \$7 parking fee. Bring a lunch, water, and binoculars (scope if you have one).

Meet Dan at the Park & Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave. Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park & Ride lot.

Sailor Bar

Wednesday, February 8, 8 AM
Expected length: 3-4 hours
Mark Martucci (916) 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com
Registration is required for this trip. It is limited to 8 participants. Please email Mark to register.

Sailor Bar is on the north side of the river across from Upper Sunrise. The habitat is a mix of riparian, oak woodland, open area, and gravel tailings. Live oaks and blue oaks are the predominant trees on the hillsides, and there are stands of willow, alder, and cottonwood along the river. Join Mark for a morning walk checking out resident birds and looking for wintering species as well. Registration is required. Please email Mark to register.

Registrants will be sent the exact location and other information. A Sacramento County Park Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Cosumnes River Preserve

Saturday, February 11, TBA
Expected length: 3 hours
Paul Miller (916) 768-7503
paul@pjmilller.com

Registration is required for this trip, and it will be limited to 6 participants. Proof of vaccination is required. Please email Paul to register for this trip.

Cosumnes River Preserve is a wonderful venue for those with disability challenges. Within a few hundred feet of the main parking lot there is a wooden easily accessible viewing platform. The flooded fields attract a wide range of dabbling ducks. Greater White-fronted Geese, Sandhill Cranes, Dowitchers, Wilson's Snipe, and yellowlegs should be present. There are always some passerines and raptors.

Meeting place and time will be provided upon registration.

Beginning Birder Walk William Pond Park

Sunday, February 12
Maximum number of participants: 10
Registration is required for this trip. Please see instructions below.

Contact Cathie LaZier at empid77@gmail.com and put Beginning Birder in the subject line.

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with three Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. On this trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks and bird behavior as we look at individual birds. Registration is required.

Registrants will be emailed the meeting time and exact location.

Bridgeway Island Pond

Wednesday, February 15, TBA
Ed Harper (916) 704-7954
calidris@surewest.net
Registration is required for this trip.

It is limited to 8 participants. Proof of vaccination is required. Please email Ed if you would like to attend.

Bridgeway Island pond in West Sacramento near the eastern edge of the Yolo Causeway was designed to hold storm water for flood control purposes. Almost 200 species have been reported here including a male Garganey in the winter of 2019, Green Herons, Common Yellowthroats, Marsh Wrens, Pied-billed Grebes, Double-crested Cormorants and American White Pelicans all work the pond. Forster's Terns and several gull species can often be found overhead as well as White-tailed Kites and Red-tailed Hawks in the nearby uplands. Unusually large numbers of Blue-winged Teal show up each winter along with Gadwall, Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, Black-necked Stilts and Avocets most of the year. Even during the hot summer, a surprising number of birds can be found here including resident Soras and Virginia Rails.

Meeting time, duration, exact location, and directions will be provided upon registration.

Field Trip Reports

Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, (12/11)

Leader John York reported that the trip was canceled due to weather.

William Pond Beginners' Walk, (12/11)

Larry Hickey, co-leader with Darrell Mohr and Cathie LaZier reported: Despite very soggy and chilly conditions eight of us met at the William Pond section of the American River Parkway for a beginning birder field trip. Fortunately, the light rain stopped just before our trip began so we were able to see and hear many of our regular wintering species including many **Northern Flickers**, dozens of **American Coots**, **Bufflehead**, **Common Goldeneye**, **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows**. A very cooperative **Great Egret** posed near us before flying directly past us uttering a loud croaking call. Highlights included a good look at a **Phainopepla** and a female **American Wigeon**. While watching a **Turkey Vulture** on the ground we were surprised to realize it was feeding on a dead rattlesnake.

Nimbus Fish Hatchery, (12/10)

Leader Max Brodie reported: Trip canceled due to inclement weather.

Gray Lodge WLR, (12/10)

Paul Miller reported that the trip would be rescheduled due to weather.

Gristmill Recreation Area (12/7)

Leader Nancy Gronert reported: Six participants showed up for a Gristmill stroll just as the fog lifted. We got good view of birds on the river: **Lesser Scaup**, **Common Goldeneye**, **Common Mergansers**, **Bufflehead**, egrets, herons, a **Peregrine Falcon** looking over it all and I'd some gulls. Participants spotted many sunning birds in the cool morning: **Red-shouldered Hawks**, a **Merlin**, and **Spotted Sandpiper**. We had plenty of opportunities to work on bird calls of **Northern Flicker**, **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, **Belted Kingfisher**, **Nuttall's Woodpecker**, **Acorn Woodpeckers**, **Spotted Towhees**, **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** and **Downy Woodpeckers** among others.

Mather Lake Family Walk, (12/3)

Leader Nicole Barden reported: The rain and cold didn't stop our group of three birders from getting outside, splashing around, and finding some birds! To start us off, we had a **Hermit Thrush** hopping around under the picnic tables, the first of many over the course of trip. One of the best moments came early on when we noticed an **Osprey** sitting in a tall tree on the edge of the lake. Shortly after, another **Osprey** flew in and spooked the first off its perch. The two **Osprey** flew around, one circled directly over our heads, looking down at us, before heading off. The highlights didn't stop with the ospreys, we had a total of 39 species and had good looks at most of them! We heard, and then soon after saw, a **Belted Kingfisher** as it flew over the lake. We saw some movement and a flash of yellow in the reeds along the bank and a **Common Yellowthroat** appeared. A **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** flashed his red crown at us as we walked down the path on the south side of the lake. We saw a mammal swimming on the far end of the lake, but we were unable to tell if it was a beaver or an otter from that distance. Unsurprisingly, we saw at least 41 ever-present **Mute Swans** floating around the lake. We noticed one of the swans had an interestingly curved neck when it flew and wondered if it had been injured in the past. Thankfully it was acting normal otherwise and was moving and flying without issue. At one point, we flushed a **Wilson's Snipe** and had at least three other Snipe fly several passes overhead. The sparrows were out in full force as well, including a very patient **Fox Sparrow** who posed for us and a very fresh looking **Lincoln's Sparrow** that showed up right at the end. Despite the rain, the birds showed up and we were glad that we did too! You can check out our entire eBird list here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S123418244>

William Pond Park, (11/30)

Leader Mark Martucci reported: Six birders braved near freezing temperatures to record 62 species of birds along William Pond Recreation Area. Highlights included **Hooded Merganser**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Eared Grebe**, **Wilson's Snipe**, **Osprey**, **American Pipit**, and **Common Yellowthroat**"



Loggerhead Shrike. Photo by Daniel Brown

Lincoln Grasslands, (11/27)

Leader Richard Barbieri reported: We set off for the Lincoln area with three cars and eight people on clear day of birding. Near the Lincoln airport we discovered newly built **Burrowing Owl** mounds and one owl at one of the entrances. As expected we saw several **American Kestrels** and **Red-tailed Hawks**, large numbers of **Snow** and **Greater White-fronted Geese** and many ducks and shorebirds. Highlights for the day were a good long viewing of a **Sora**, five **Hooded Mergansers**, several **Lewis's Woodpeckers**, and a quick look at a **Loggerhead Shrike**. Total for the day was 86 species.

Nimbus Fish Hatchery, (11/26)

Leader Kevin Thomas reported: Ten folks joined me for this post Thanksgiving calorie burn walking slowly from the Nimbus fish hatchery downstream to just below where the Sailor Bar boat launch opens up to the river. The morning started chilly but warmed up quick once the sun came out, it was approaching 65 degrees by the time we finished our walk at 10:15 am. We started the morning with a cooperative **American Kestrel** perched on the wires over the river. We quickly scoped bunches of **Common Goldeneye** and were fortunate to get both male and female **Barrow's Goldeneye** as well. The salmon are still running in the river so we were able to pick out all the common gulls in this area along with **Glaucous-winged** and **Iceland (Thayer's) Gulls**. There were many **Turkey Vultures** feasting on the salmon as well. On our way back to the hatchery parking lot we got great scope looks at **Phainopepla** showing off its beautiful crest and red eye. As we made our last stop before ending our walk we spotted a coyote running along the trail across the river and got wonderful views of an adult **Bald Eagle** circling overhead. A great bunch of folks who enjoyed the beautiful fall morning and provided good conversation for all.

Seasonal Sightings November 1 – 30

After the excellent rarities over the past two months, things were bound to return to normal. And mostly they did, though in terms of rarities, this was certainly a better than average November. More importantly, the Sacramento Area and the Central Valley are probably at their iconic best from November through March, with impressive numbers of waterfowl, cranes, raptors, and, of course, sparrows. After all, that is why the Central Valley Bird Club holds its annual symposium each November. Among the expected waterfowl species, two female-type **Surf Scoters** were found at the Woodland WTP on 11/11. It seemed possible that a **Rufous Hummingbird** visiting a feeder in Wilton would spend the winter, but it appears that the last report was on 11/27. A **Snowy Plover** continued from October at the Woodland WTP through at least 11/12, and a **Pectoral Sandpiper** at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area was on the late side on 11/13-11/14.

The only **Long-eared Owl** report was of a bird being harassed by crows in a West Sacramento yard on 11/7. Two **Short-eared Owls** were seen on 11/29 along Yolo County Rd 27 between Davis

and Woodland. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was a great find at San Marino Park in Davis on 11/10. A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was reported at the same location and nearby Willowbank Ditch on 11/7-11/9. **Vermilion Flycatchers** are always a treat in our area, but unfortunately a female photographed on 11/24 at the Lost Slough Wetlands portion of Cosumnes River Preserve was not refound.

A few **Cassin's Vireos** were reported lingering into November, and an **American Dipper** was found at the traditional site along Putah Creek near the Hwy 128 bridge, just downstream of Lake Berryessa, on 11/24 through the end of the month. An **Evening Grosbeak** was a nice surprise at a Carmichael yard on 11/14. A **Northern Waterthrush** was an excellent find on 11/6 just north of Desmond Rd along Franklin Blvd at the bridge over Lost Slough. San Marino Park/Willowbank Ditch in Davis produced another nice find, with an **American Redstart** from 11/8-11/20, and a **Palm Warbler** was found south of Davis, on 11/26, along Yolo County Rd 104, south of Grasslands Regional Park.

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 we thank the following for their reports: Dan Airola, Nicole Barden, Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Brent Campos, Lyann Comrack, James Dunn, Frank Fabbro, Joshua Greenfield, David Hamilton, Denise Hamilton, Cliff Hawley, Jeri Langham, Dean LaTray, Andrew Lee, David Lumpkin, Mark Martucci, Nora Papian, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Mark Sawyer, Samuel Schmidt, Steve Scott, Cameron Tescher, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, and Bart Wickel. Thanks to everyone for their reports--without them, this column would not be possible.

—Chris Conard

CDFW Swan Tours

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is offering free swan tours in Yuba County near Marysville on select Saturdays, November through early January.

Upcoming swan tour date: January 7

Two tours are offered each day at 9:30 AM and 1 PM. Pre-registration is required by contacting Genelle Treaster, CDFW North Central Region, at Genelle.Treaster@wildlife.ca.gov.



Tundra Swans. Photo by Daniel Brown

Guided Sandhill Crane Tours

Cosumnes River Preserve and Save Our Sandhill Cranes offer guided Sandhill Crane tours.

Upcoming dates are:

January 14 & 28.

Registration is required via Eventbrite

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/cosumnes-river-preserve-10868733267>

For more information visit: <http://soscranes.org/visit-the-cranes/free-tours/>

Great Backyard Bird Count February 17-20, 2023

Each February, for four days, the world comes together for the love of birds. Over these four days we invite people to spend time in their favorite places watching and counting as many birds as they can find and reporting them to us. These observations help scientists better understand global bird populations before one of their annual migrations.

Learn more about next year's Great Backyard Bird Count at <https://www.birdcount.org/>

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Federal Agency Increases Efforts to Conserve Habitat Connectivity on Public Lands

Migratory birds, big-game, and other wildlife will benefit from increased connectivity on federally managed lands.



Golden Eagle. Rachel Spencer Audubon Photography Awards

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released a policy focused on maintaining, conserving, and restoring habitat connectivity for wildlife within the 245 million acres of public land managed by the federal agency. The new guidance (IM 2023-005) reflects a critical step towards stabilizing species' decline across the North American hemisphere, where nearly 3 billion birds have been lost in the last 50 years.

"This policy will help conserve connectivity, restore habitat, and stabilize populations of wildlife that need intact public land to thrive," said Sara Brodnax, policy director for public lands, National Audubon Society. "We look forward to working with the agency to ensure that our nation's most vulnerable migratory species, including birds, can continue to count on our public lands for rest, sustenance, and shelter."

The BLM's emphasis on habitat connectivity builds upon decades of work by local communities, state governments, Tribes, and other partners to ensure a sustainable future for wildlife migration. Prior efforts include Department of the Interior's 2017 Secretarial Order 3362 and BLM Instruction Memorandum 2018-062, which promoted collaboration with western states and furthered the understanding of species' movement across connected landscapes. The BLM's new guidance will continue this important work and ensure habitat connectivity is considered in future planning processes. In recent years, migration corridors and connected landscapes have gained widespread support through research, funding, and collaborative conservation. In the western United States, efforts have focused on important big-game species, like Elk, Mule Deer, and Pronghorn Antelope, especially in light of increased human conflict, development, and climate change.

However, many fish and wildlife species depend on intact, connected habitat. Migratory birds make a long and perilous journey across North America every year. Along the way, these birds depend on critical breeding, stopover, and wintering sites for their survival. New science and data, like those developed by Audubon's Migratory Bird Initiative, are now clearly showing where and when migratory birds travel – and much of the habitat needed for avian migration is found on public lands like those managed by the BLM.

"Birds depend on connected landscapes and habitats as they migrate across the hemisphere," said Brodnax. "These areas of importance are essential to their survival. Audubon migration science, such as the recently launched Bird Migration Explorer, could inform and strengthen connectivity efforts across BLM lands."

—National Audubon Society

Bird Festivals

Morro Bay Bird Festival January 13–16, 2023

The four-day festival offers field trips, presentations, master classes, and special events. Keynote Speaker: David Allen Sibley. <https://morrobaybirdfestival.org>

Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway, Chico January 26–29, 2023

The 2023 festival offers field trips, a banquet with Keynote Speaker Julie Rentner (President of River Partners), workshops, youth activities, and art exhibit. <https://snowgoosefestival.org/>

Galt Winter Bird Festival Saturday, February 4, 2023

Events include bird tours, bird photography exhibit, free childrens' activities, live wild animal presentation, youth art contest, and more. <https://www.cityofgalt.org/our-city/special-events/winter-bird-festival>

Winter Wings Festival in Klamath Falls, Oregon February 17–20

Festival runs Friday through Monday, with free Friday afternoon presentations, including updates on the Klamath Basin and stakeholder initiatives. <https://winterwingsfest.org/>

Save the Date Olympic Peninsula Bird Fest April 13–16, 2023

This festival provides participants the opportunity to view a wide variety of birds normally seen on the Olympic Peninsula. Field trips are planned for Sequim Bay, Port Angeles Harbor, Ediz Hook, Dungeness Spit and the Elwha River, as well as trips through wooded areas to view songbirds and locate owls in the evening. <https://olympicbirdfest.org/>

Point Reyes Birding & Nature Festival April 21–23, 2023

Point Reyes National Seashore provides the main backdrop for the festival, where the Pacific Flyway, Pacific Ocean, and other influences provide an ideal location for birding and wildlife viewing. <https://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org/>

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members:

Marilyn Bryant
Kathleen Clas
Jessica Dias
William George
Dennis Gunvalson
Sally Guthrie
Emily Hockman
Esther Marcroft
Kelle Marshall
Heidi Paessler
Christine Paulsen
David Rousseau
Gayle Sweigert

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 board meeting is:
Tuesday, January 31, 2023.**

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found at sacramentoaudubon.org/board-minutes.

Thank You For Your Generous Donations!

General Fund

Jean Alford, Marilyn Armbruster, Tom Biglione, Betty J. Cooper, Steven Coughran, R. M. Fratti, Terrie Gray, Ann Kohl, Bob & Becky Norris, Gibbe & Ann Parsons, Gail Porter, David Rial, Sara A. Rosen, Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Harry & Karen White, YourCause - NPOconnect

Education and Conservation Fund

Jean Alford, Marilyn Armbruster, Tom Biglione, Steven Coughran, Richard & Mary Howard, Dr. J. M. Langham, Barbara Leary, Mary P. Morris, Jane G. Taylor, Deborah Viney

Bobelaine Sanctuary

Jean Alford, Marilyn Armbruster, Tom Biglione, Steven Coughran, Richard & Mary Howard, Lena O. Lem, Bob & Becky Norris, David Rial, Marguerite Roth, Jane G. Taylor, Fred Turner

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.

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: \$ _____

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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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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.

Monthly Program: Learning About Trees is a Gateway to Bird Conservation

Presented by Jonelle Mason

Thursday, January 19, 2023 at 7pm via Zoom

