



# The Observer

## Sacramento Audubon Society

### *November General Meeting*

Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 7 PM via Zoom

The 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](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker).

### **Birds of Belize**

Presented by Richard Cimino

Rich lives in Larkspur, Marin County, and is active with the Marin Audubon Society (as a field trip leader), Point Blue Conservation, the McNear Vaux's Swift Fall migration census group, and Golden Gate Raptor Watch. He is an active participant and member of several Marin County Christmas Bird Counts, and is a Board Member of the Friends of Olompali State Historical Park, where he leads a team for the 2021 Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas.

In a past life he was Conservation Chair for Ohlone Audubon, and a stake holder in the Altamont Pass Wind Resource (turbine collisions with Golden Eagle) Area, the Alameda Creek Alliance, and Friends of Tesla Park. He started the Eastern Alameda County Christmas Bird Count.

Rich has been birding in California for 55 years, and is a field guide for Yellowbilled Tours, which offers annual birding tours to: Nome, Alaska; Belize; Guatemala; and Panama, as well as tours throughout California, Arizona, New Mexico, and sometimes Wisconsin.



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### **Central Valley Birding Symposium 2022 • Friday, November 18—Sunday, November 20, 2022**

In order to keep everyone safe, this year's symposium will have three days of live, in-person field trips around the Central Valley, with two shorter days of virtual programs. There will be a mix of familiar itineraries and new specialty trips, with leaders new and old. Depending on your trip point of departure, you may choose to stay nearby or drive from home. In addition, you can decide whether to share a car with others.

The Central Valley Birding Club feels that this presents the safest option for all concerned, and many bird festivals around the country are also adopting this format. We wish we could meet as before, but the safety of our members and presenters continues to be our priority. We are looking forward to seeing you in the field this year. This year's CVBS is Friday, November 18, through Sunday, November 20, 2022.

All workshops and programs are virtual. The following are this year's Keynote Programs:

- Bird Identification Panel: Moderated by Ed Harper
- Revealing the Pacific Raptor Flyway – a Forty-Year Retrospective of the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory, with Allen Fish
- A World on the Wing: The Global Odyssey of Migratory Birds, with Scott Weidensaul



- Update on Central Valley Bird Conservation and Research Programs, with Dan Airola
- How to Look at Shorebirds with a focus on Calidris and Tringa, with Jon Dunn and Lara Tseng

For a listing of all activities, visit: <https://cvbirds-symposium.netlify.app/>

## Field Trips: Field Trips November 1 – December 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](mailto:sacramentoaudubonfieldtrips@gmail.com).

### Cosumnes River Preserve

**Thursday, November 3, 9AM**  
Expected length: 3 hours  
Leader: Paul Miller, (916) 768-7503  
[paul@pjmiller.com](mailto:paul@pjmiller.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 an easily accessible, wooden 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.

### Sacramento River: Garcia Bend Park to the Infamous Water Tower

**Saturday, November 5, 8 AM**  
Expected length: ends before noon  
Leader: Ben Graber, (916) 844-8682  
[bgrab984@protonmail.com](mailto:bgrab984@protonmail.com)  
Maximum number of participants: 10  
Registration is required for this trip.  
If you would like to register for this trip, please email Ben.

This is a new location for Sacramento Audubon, but not for Ben! This section of the Sacramento River is one of the more reliable spots to see the imperiled Yellow-billed Magpie. Osprey and Bald Eagles have also been seen here. We can expect to see egrets, herons, and various waterfowl along with the usual sparrows and towhees.

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

### Camp Pollock

**Wednesday, November 9, 9 AM**  
Expected length: 2 hours  
Leader: Bill Bianco (916) 889-4849  
[biancowm@yahoo.com](mailto:biancowm@yahoo.com)

Join Bill at Camp Pollock, the Sacramento Valley Conservancy property on the American River just east of downtown Sacramento. Some of you will know this as the old Boy Scout Camp, which it was for many years. Bill will survey the property, which is composed of wide grassy areas interspersed with huge old cottonwoods, oaks, a large native plant nursery and a variety of shrubbery. This property has not been well birded, at least that he knows of, and Bill would like to get a start on changing that. Restrooms are not available.

Meet Bill at the Camp Pollock parking lot. Going North on I-5 from downtown, take the Garden Hwy Exit. Go east on Garden Hwy. Turn right on Northgate Blvd. Proceed for a short distance and turn right into Camp Pollock.

### Beginning Birder Walk William Pond Park

**Sunday, November 13**  
Maximum number of participants: 10  
Registration is required for this trip.  
Please see instructions below.

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.

Contact Cathie LaZier at: [empid77@gmail.com](mailto:empid77@gmail.com); put *Beginning Birder* in the subject line. Registrants will be emailed the meeting time and exact location.

### Central Valley Birding Symposium

**November 18-20**

Birders are encouraged to check out the Central Valley Bird Symposium for field trips the weekend of November 18–20. Judged by many as one of the premier birding events in the West, the CVBS is hosted by the Central Valley Bird Club. They host well-known speakers and have multiple field trips. This year's symposium information is available on their website:

<http://www.cvbirds.org/events/symposium/>

### Nimbus Fish Hatchery/Upper Sunrise

**Saturday, November 26, 7:30 AM**  
Expected length: 2 ½ hours  
Leader: Kevin Thomas, (916) 217-6946  
[bionerdkevin@gmail.com](mailto:bionerdkevin@gmail.com)

As winter sets in on 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 the foot trails that parallel the river. We should get good looks at the local resident birds and run into 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 Rd.

From Hwy 50 go north on Hazel Ave; turn left on Gold Country Blvd and then immediately right on Nimbus Rd.

### Lincoln Grasslands

**Sunday, November 27, 8 AM**  
Expected length: 6 hours  
Leader: Richard Barbieri, (916) 761-1124  
[offleash227@gmail.com](mailto:offleash227@gmail.com)

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, 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. Bring liquids, lunch, and FRS radios if you have them. Rain will cancel trip. This will be a driving trip and would be best with fewer than more vehicles.

Meet at the Park & Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Rd offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Rd and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station and park on the right in the Park & Ride.

### American River Parkway

**Wednesday, November 30, 8 AM**  
Expected length: 3-4 hours  
Leader: Mark Martucci, (916) 833-6722  
[matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com)  
Registration is required for this trip.  
It is limited to 8 participants.  
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.

### Family Friendly Trip to Mather Regional Park

**Saturday, December 3, 9 AM**  
Expected length: 2-2 ½ hours  
Leader: Nicole Barden (530)304-5461  
[nicolembarden@gmail.com](mailto:nicolembarden@gmail.com)

Join Environmental Educator Nicole to explore what this popular birding location has to offer! We will be on the lookout for resident and wintering migrant birds, including White-tailed Kites, American Bittern, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe, and Common Yellowthroat.

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 mostly flat and un-paved, and there are benches and bathrooms available.

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## Field Trips: continued

Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park.

From Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-½ miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. A Sacramento County Park Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

### Beginning Birder Walk William Pond Park

**Sunday, December 4**

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

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 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. Contact Cathie LaZier at [empid77@gmail.com](mailto:empid77@gmail.com); put Beginning Birder in the subject line. Registrants will be sent the meeting time and exact location, along with other information.

### Gristmill Recreation Area

**Wednesday, December 7, 8 AM**

Expected length: 4 hours  
Leader: Nancy Gronert (279) 346-4790  
[sacauduboncorsec@gmail.com](mailto:sacauduboncorsec@gmail.com)

This trip will focus on birding by ear skills and best practices with the Merlin Sound app in good habitat. We'll check out the trails, river, and trees of Gristmill for the calls of wintering sparrows, kinglets and thrush, year-round birds like woodpeckers, towhees, wrens, and whatever else we can detect. Meet Nancy in the parking area by the entrance. Heavy rain cancels.

From Hwy 50, go north on Bradshaw Rd. Turn left on Folsom Blvd, then right onto Butterfield Way. Turn right on Linda Rio Dr and right again on Mira Del Rio Dr. In about 50 yards, turn left into the Gristmill Recreation Area. A Sacramento County Parks Pass or a \$6 day use fee is required.

### Gray Lodge

**Saturday, December 10, 10 AM**

Expected length: 3 hours  
Leader: Paul Miller, (916) 768-7503  
[paul@pjmill.com](mailto:paul@pjmill.com)  
Registration is required for this trip, and it will be limited to 12 participants. Proof of vaccination is required.  
Please email Paul to register for this trip.

This is a collaborative mindful birding trip lead by Jonelle Mason from UC Davis Project Learning Tree and Paul Miller. The trip will begin with short presentations by Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, UC Davis Raptor Center, Shasta Wildlife Rescue, and Project Learning Tree. Following the presentations,

Jonelle will lead a mindful birding trip along the ADA accessible Wetland Discovery Trail.

Directions, fees, and meeting location will be provided upon registration.

### Nimbus Fish Hatchery

**Saturday, December 10, 7:45 AM**

Expected Length: 3-4 hours  
Leader: Max Brodie (510) 418-3044  
[brodiemax@gmail.com](mailto:brodiemax@gmail.com)

Registration is required for this trip. It is limited to 8 participants.  
Please email Max to register.

The winter salmon run attracts large numbers of birds, especially gulls, to the area of the American River around the fish hatchery. This trip will focus on the subtle and tricky identification of these often underappreciated birds. We will cover the basics of separating adults, as well as diving into the intricacies of aging and identifying sub-adults and hybrids. Additionally, we hope to see large numbers of mergansers and both species of goldeneye. This trip will be primarily stationary as we observe the birds on the river below from the paved path behind the hatchery. If you own a spotting scope, this is a great trip to bring it as we will not be walking long distances and it will help to get detailed views of distant birds.

Please email Max for meeting place and directions.

### Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

**Sunday, December 11, 8 AM**

Expected length: Until late afternoon  
Leader: John York, (530) 320-4751  
[johnyork157@yahoo.com](mailto:johnyork157@yahoo.com)  
A \$6 per car entrance pass is required at Sacramento NWR.

We will visit the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge, with a stop at Colusa and other points in the area given time. This is a great place to view the enormous flocks of ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way south. This is also a good place for raptors, and Bald Eagles can be found here regularly. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into the afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. An RSVP to John is helpful so we know to look for you.

Meet John at the Jack in the Box parking lot, Road 102 exit in Woodland. Take I-5 north to Road 102, Exit #536; turn right (north) on 102 and take the next right turn onto East Main St, and turn right into the Jack In The Box parking lot.

## Ducks in Scopes At The Cosumnes River Preserve

**Saturdays, November 12, 19, and 26, 10 AM–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 flooding cancels event.

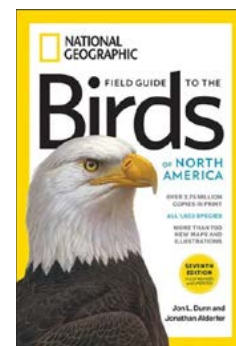
## Young Birders Club Needs Your Help

This fall Brian Williams (a thirty plus year member of the Sacramento Audubon Society, and former compiler of the Auburn and Folsom Christmas Bird Counts) is starting a Young Birders Club for 4th-6th grade students in the Linda / Olivehurst area of the Marysville school district. They will meet weekly after school and take monthly birding field trips. All of this is in preparation for the culminating event for the season, the Sacramento Christmas Bird Count for Kids.

The birding club is an unusual opportunity in this area, where awareness of nature is uncommon and family resources are often meager. In order to get the club off the ground, he has asked Sacramento Audubon and/or its members if they can donate binoculars for this amazing project. In addition he will also need field guides. In order to teach efficiently he will focus on gathering only *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America, 7th Edition* for now. Then, for all of the full-term "graduates" of the class, he is hoping to find some benefactors (either Sacramento Audubon and/or our members) who can help provide the kids with their own field guides and binoculars so they can continue to develop their interest in birds and nature once the class is over.

If you might be able to contribute he would love to hear from you. As Brian mentioned, "I will admit I'm dreaming of a bunch of "Santas" visiting our class with some amazing, life-changing gifts...."

Brian can be reached at [bwcali1@gmail.com](mailto:bwcali1@gmail.com).



### Sacramento Audubon Pin

Order your SAS pin today!

\$10 online

<https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/store/lapel-pin>

or pick one up at outreach events for \$5



## Field Trip Reports

### Gibson Ranch, (9/17)

Leader Max Brodie reported: Great morning of fall migration dominated by numerous **Yellow Warblers**. A male **Yellow-headed Blackbird** started our day off with a bang, as we enjoyed good views from the parking lot. Three **Green Herons** and a **Willow Flycatcher** were seen well at the pond, including rare scope views of the flycatcher. FOS **Savannah** and **White-crowned Sparrows** were present, and a male **American Kestrel** perched allowing scope views. While scoping a distant **Red-tailed Hawk**, a pair of **Lewis's Woodpeckers** were seen atop distant oaks. A **Cooper's Hawk** was seen chasing an **American Kestrel**—a great show of agility by both species. Continuing on, we found another **Willow Flycatcher**, several **Black-throated Gray Warblers**, a **Blue-gray Gnatcatcher**, **Warbling Vireo**, **Wilson's Warbler**, and a skulky **MacGillivray's Warbler**. Walking south along the creek, we came upon a group of aggravated **California Scrub-Jays** and stopped to investigate. We spotted an **Anna's Hummingbird** mobbing the unseen threat before Susan spotted a very well hidden and camouflaged **Great Horned Owl**. A nearby **Red-shouldered Hawk** joined the mob in a big way as it flew straight into the owl, knocking it from its perch! Circling back to the pond, we saw the continuing **Egyptian Geese**, and had a **Lewis's Woodpecker** flying around the small oaks, allowing for closer looks at this species. Overall a very fun morning of birding with an excellent group of birders!

### Putah Creek Riparian Preserve, (9/18)

Leader Sonja Sorbo reported: Despite a weather forecast showing rain (the first autumn storm this year), we decided to brave the elements. Fortunately, Mother Nature and the birds cooperated just long enough to give us a terrific morning of birding. If we had to describe the day in just two words, they would be "yellow" and "blue" because there were **Yellow Warblers** and **Western Bluebirds** everywhere. The "bathing spot" in the creek was a delight when we arrived, with **Bluebirds** and **Yellow Warblers** frolicking in the water, dipping into the pool and then shaking water off their tiny bodies. A couple of **Lark Sparrows** and a female **Nuttall's Woodpecker** joined in the fun as well. A nearby leafless alder tree provided cover for a **Lincoln's Sparrow** and a **Willow Flycatcher** who watched the goings-on from a safe distance. A few other warbler species showed themselves, including **Wilson's**, **Black-throated Gray**, and **Orange-crowned**. While scanning for warblers, we noted a **Green Heron** stalking fish from a small log in the creek. He was successful, and the birders were greatly amused watching him trying to turn the fish so he could swallow it. It ended well for him after some effort (but the fish wasn't happy). The unsettled weather seemed to really activate the birds; dozens of **American Robins** were flying around and cackling, **Scrub Jays** were squawking, **White-breasted Nuthatches** honking, and three **Red-tailed Hawks** soared overhead, doing circles over the forest. Other species that were out and about included **Black Phoebe**, **Say's Phoebe**, **Western Tanager**, **House Finch**, **Lesser Goldfinch**, **Bushtit**, and **Yellow-billed Magpie**. A **California Quail** called from a brush pile but wouldn't emerge. We almost made it back to the vehicles before the rain began, but a bit of precipitation didn't bother us at that point. Our gamble with the weather had paid off!

### Teal Bend Golf Course, (9/24)

Leader Richard Barbieri reported: A group of 9 people set off on a nice comfortable morning through the golf course to explore adjacent property on the east side of Teal Bend. Highlights of the day were. **Black-throated Grey Warbler**, **Warbling Vireo**, a few small groups of **Sandhill Crane** flyovers, and roughly 15 **Lewis's Woodpeckers** flying in a small group. Total species count was 56 for our 4 hour walk.



Bannister Park Trip, photo by Stan Hunter

### Bannister Park, (9/29)

Leader Stan Hunter reported: It was a lovely autumn morning when nine birders strolled from Bannister Park, in Fair Oaks, down to the American River at the west end of Sacramento Bar. We visited San Juan Rapids, where we saw **Killdeer**, **Spotted Sandpipers**, **Common Mergansers**, **Great Blue** and **Green Herons**, a **Greater Yellowlegs**, a **Belted Kingfisher**, several **Wood Ducks**, and lots of **Mallards**. As we were meandering through the giant dunes of dredge cobbles, we saw a late-season **Wilson's Warbler**, and early winter arrival: **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** and a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, as well as plenty of Sacramento Bar regulars: **Oak Titmice**, **White-breasted Nuthatches**, **Acorn** and **Nuttall's Woodpeckers**, and **Red-shafted Northern Flickers**, and quite a few **Black Phoebes**. **California** and **Spotted Towhees**, **Bewick's Wrens**, **House Finches**, a **Northern Mockingbird**, **Cedar Waxwings**, and **Western Bluebirds** rounded out the regulars. A **Phainopepla** was heard but we couldn't get eyes on it. Raptors were represented by **Turkey Vultures**, **Red-shouldered Hawks** and an **American Kestrel**. A total of 40 species were identified. The stroll lasted three hours and covered about three miles.

### Sacramento Bar, (10/2)

Mary Forrestal, co-leader with Jane Van Kessel, reported: 19 birders enjoyed a lovely morning at Sacramento Bar. **Cedar Waxwings** and **Phainopepla** started the trip off well, with dozens of **Cedar Waxwings** sunning themselves in the trees around the parking area and four **Phainopeplas** showing off their bold crests at the tops of small trees. As we proceeded down-river, there were dozens of **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. Several migrating **Black-throated Gray Warblers** were seen by all participants. Two **Hermit Thrush** hopped in and out of view among the dead branches and grape vines. A family of **Red-**

**shouldered Hawks** circled low overhead; so that the differences between juvenile and adult plumage could easily be appreciated. The highlight of the trip might have been the **Bald Eagle**, which was seemingly called up by trip co-leader, Jane Van Kessel, after a multitude of **Mallards** and **Turkey Vultures** were seen racing down the river.

### River Bend Park, (10/5)

Leader Cathie LaZier reported: Three birders joined me for this walk in the oak woodland. It was a quiet day and participants' favorite birds were **Phainopepla** and **Wood Duck**. Most of the usual birds were present, with a plethora of **Western Bluebirds** and **Acorn Woodpeckers**. We totaled 38 species.

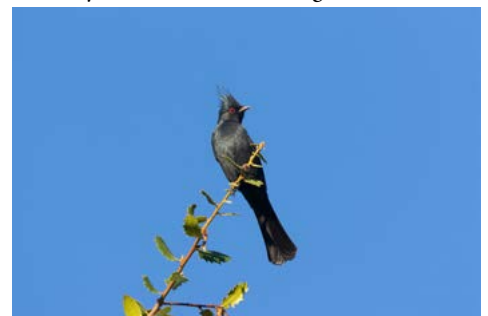
### Lake Solano County Park, (10/5) A Pop-Up Trip

Leader Nancy Gronert reported: Six participants enjoyed quite a show of **Lewis's Woodpeckers**, the most numerous of that day, chatting, calling and working on a good crop of acorns along with **Acorn Woodpeckers** and **California Scrub-Jays**. Observer estimates ranged from 65 to 150

**Lewis's**. We observed a couple migrants in **Yellow** and **Orange-crowned Warblers**, a **Black-throated Gray Warbler** as well as the usual **Wood Ducks**, **California Quail**, **Green Heron**, **Phainopepla**, **Northern Flickers**, **Nuttall's Woodpeckers**, **Tree Swallows** on the wire over the bridge, and one **Downy Woodpecker**, with the usual **Canada Geese** and **Mallards** along the water. Winter birds like **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows**, a **Ruby-crowned Kinglet**, and **Hermit Thrushes** showed up in small numbers.

### Beginning Birder Walk at William Pond Park, (10/9)

Larry Hickey, co-leader with Darrell Mohr and Cathie LaZier, reported: 12 of us enjoyed a beautiful fall morning at the William Pond section of the American River Parkway. The beginning birders who joined us were engaged and enthusiastic. Our resident **Yellow-billed Magpies** were abundant as were **Acorn Woodpeckers** and **European Starlings**. We were pleased to see and hear several species that just recently returned to stay for the winter including **American Coots**, **Golden-crowned** and **White-crowned Sparrows**. Highlights included good looks at beautiful **Lark Sparrows**, a **Belted Kingfisher**, and recently returned **Cedar Waxwings**.



Phainopepla at Sacramento Bar, photo by Larry Hickey

## Field Trip Reports *continued from p. 4*

### American Canyon Wetlands Edge Park, (10/9)

Leader Sonja Sorbo reported: This area of wetlands, ponds, and sloughs is an extraordinary place to observe waterfowl, shorebirds, and passerines. Today we saw 68 species, with shorebirds taking center stage. While grabbing our gear from the vehicles, we noted a family of three **White-tailed Kites** posing on a large shrub. What a nice way to start the day! We barely made it out of the parking lot when our attention was diverted to a set of reeds teeming with sparrows including **White-crowned**, **Golden-crowned**, **Song**, and a **Lincoln's**. Nearby a **Marsh Wren** chattered while farther out from shore a **Sora** and **Virginia Rail** vocalized. Once we tore ourselves away from this birdy area, we found a pond loaded with **Green-winged Teal** and **Long-tailed Dowitchers**. While scanning the dowitchers, we noted two **Soras** weaving in and out of them, sassily twitching their little tails. A **Common Yellowthroat** zipped by along the reedy shoreline; down the trail a bit farther we encountered two more! The receding tide had stranded fish in several small ponds, and the **Snowy Egrets** were having a field day! A couple of them had an aerial altercation over whose territory it was, and while they were busy with each other, a young **Great Blue Heron** sneaked in and speared several small fish. Meanwhile, farther out on the mudflat, dozens of shorebirds were feasting on the bounty of invertebrates in the mud—**Avocets**, **Least** and **Western Sandpipers**, **Greater Yellowlegs**, **Marbled Godwits**, **Long-billed Curlews**, **Black-bellied Plovers**, and **Willetts** were happily gorging themselves. Some areas with deeper

channels and ponds were loaded with various species of ducks, including **Gadwall**, **Pintail**, **Mallards**, **American Wigeon**, and **Cinnamon Teal**. Overhead, several **Forster's Terns** circled and plunged into the water, hoping to grab a tasty fish to eat. Not to be outdone, an **Osprey** demonstrated its skill, grabbing a finned victim for lunch. Although the water provided us with fantastic birding opportunities, we were also rewarded when looking skyward, seeing **American White Pelicans**, **Red-tailed Hawks**, a **Northern Harrier**, and a **Red-shouldered Hawk**. Several species of gulls flew in and landed, allowing us a nice look at **Western**, **Ring-billed**, **California**, **Herring**, and **Glaucous-winged**. The walk back to the vehicles took us past a pond where more than a dozen **Black-crowned Night Herons** were roosting. Other species observed included **Western Bluebird**, **Fox Sparrow**, **Say's Phoebe**, **Lesser Goldfinches**, **Anna's Hummingbird**, **Northern Mockingbird**, **Belted Kingfisher**, **California Scrub Jay**, **Northern Flicker**, **House Finches**, and **Ring-necked Pheasant**.

### Lincoln Waste Water Treatment Plant, (10/11)

Leader Jane Taylor reported: Five of us gathered on a cool morning at the Lincoln wastewater treatment plant and found a variety of waterfowl and passerines despite dry conditions. We totaled 43 species for a morning's birding before a hot sun chased us off the levees, the highlights of which were: half a dozen early **Greater White-fronted Geese**; great quantities of **Mallard** and **Canada Geese**; several species of diving ducks and both **Eared** and **Pied-billed Grebe** as well as a swimming **Greater Yellowlegs**. A riparian



Great Blue Heron, photo by Paul Miller

area below the western levees (dry presently) yielded numerous **White-crowned** and **Savannah Sparrows**. **American Kestrel** and **Northern Harrier** were also seen. Heard were **Nuttall's** and **Downy Woodpecker**, and **Golden-crowned Sparrow**.

### UC Davis Arboretum, (10/12)

Leader Paul Miller reported: The UC Davis Arboretum is such a wonderful and easily accessible location for birding. Our group located a total of thirty species, highlighted by our seasonal **Yellow-rumped** and **Yellow Warbler** visitors along with the **Double-crested Cormorant**, **Great Egret**, **Great Blue Heron**, **Green Heron**, and **Pied-billed Grebe** locals. The paved trail meanders along both sides of Putah Creek offering great bird viewing. And the local population of ground squirrels never fail to elicit a "what's that" from birders hearing their high pitched calls.

## Seasonal Sightings September 1 – 30

Observing birds ties us to the seasons and makes us more aware of the world around us. At no time is this more true than during the peak of migration. This September produced an outstanding number of rare and unusual reports along with excellent numbers of regular migrants. While shorebird migration tapered off substantially by the end of August, this was one of the busiest Septembers for songbird migrants in recent memory. **Calliope Hummingbirds** are much more regular in spring, so an individual visiting a yard in Galt from 9/14–21 and another at Upper Sunrise along the American River Parkway (ARP) from 9/19–21 were both notable.

Less expected shorebirds this month included a **Snowy Plover** on 9/9 at the Woodland WTP, and a **Ruff** from 9/2–5 along Bogue Rd, west of Yuba City. The early arrival of **Lewis's Woodpeckers** noted last month was followed by reports of dozens from regular haunts in the low foothills such as near Michigan Bar. A **Gray Flycatcher** from 9/23–24 at Folsom Point, Folsom Lake, was a nice find for a species much more regular in the spring. A juvenile **Black-throated Sparrow**, also from Folsom Point on 9/23, was even more of a surprise. **Green-tailed Towhees** were reported on 9/10 at Mace Blvd by Putah Creek, on 9/13 from

Grasslands Regional Park in Yolo County, and on 9/20 from Babel Slough. A locally very rare female-type **Orchard Oriole** was an excellent find at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 9/20. No group of birds symbolizes songbird migration more than warblers. We are usually lucky to have three or four rarities among the regular migrants, but this month was outstanding. Continuing from August, **Tennessee Warblers** were unusually well represented: one was found from 9/3–9 along Putah Creek near Pedrick Rd, with another at Upper Sunrise (ARP) just downstream from the Nimbus Hatchery on 9/16. Apparently a different **Tennessee Warbler** was found at Upper Sunrise on 9/21–22, with another at Rossmoor Bar (ARP) on 9/22. An **American Redstart** was found at Babel Slough from 9/16–17, while a **Northern Parula** was seen from 9/2–5 near the Gristmill access to ARP. A **Blackburnian Warbler** was found at Babel Slough from 9/20–23, and another was at the Orr Ranch portion of CRP on 9/24. A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was reported on 9/21 at Reichmuth Park, with two found there from 9/22–24, and one continuing through 9/28. A **Blackpoll Warbler** was reported from Grasslands Regional Park, Yolo County, from 9/13–19, and another was at Upper Sunrise from 9/16–19. And

wrapping up this impressive list, a **Palm Warbler** was found at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on 9/27–28, and another was seen in an Orangevale yard on 9/28.

To view photos of some of the highlights, visit [www.sacramentoaudubon.org/bird-sightings](http://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](mailto:groups.io/g/centralvalleybirds)) and in eBird ([ebird.org](http://ebird.org)). It is impossible to list everyone, but we thank the following for their reports: Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Lyann Comrack, Todd Easterla, Gil Ewing, Frank Fabbro, Robert Furrow, Cliff Hawley, Marcel Holyoak, Scott Hoppe, Logan Kahle, Jeri Langham, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Roger Muskat, Ed Pandolfino, Nora Papiian, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Mark Sawyer, Steve Scott, Cameron Tescher, Kevin Thomas, Bart Wickel, Violet Wu, and Wentao Yang. Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

—Chris Conard

## Morro Bay Bird Festival 2023 Save the Date: January 13–16

Registration opens November 5 for the 2023 festival. The four-day festival offers field trips, presentations, master classes, and special events.



<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.



Registration begins in early December. Contact: [info@snowgoosefestival.org](mailto:info@snowgoosefestival.org), 530-592-9092

## Governor Signs Audubon-Supported Law Making Access to Nature Part of State Policy

Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law a bill that, for the first time, establishes that basic access to nature for all Californians is state policy. Assembly Bill (AB) 30, authored by Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San José), partnered with Audubon California to craft the Equitable Outdoor Access Act, declaring that “it is state policy, among other things, to ensure that all Californians have equitable opportunities to safe and affordable access to nature and access to the benefits of nature, and to prevent and minimize the intentional and unwarranted limitation of sustainable public access to public lands.”

The bill requires relevant state agencies to consider public access to the state’s incomparable coasts, including mountains, forests, state and urban parks when developing budgets or establishing state policies.

“Time spent outdoors has been linked to lower levels of disease, depression and violence,” said Gaylon Parsons, Interim Executive Director for Audubon California. “Yet, millions of Californians, including in some of the state’s most disadvantaged neighborhoods, lack even a basic city park or urban street trees where they can seek shelter from the sun. All Californians benefit from AB 30 as it contributes to undoing more than a century’s worth of planning decisions that marginalized people of color and lower-income Californians.” —California Audubon

## An eBird Moderator’s Take on Best Practices for Using Merlin

Suddenly, everywhere we go, birders are using Merlin. Holding our phones up and looking about, Merlin is telling us what’s out there waiting to be seen.

Anyone who has birded for very long will have heard of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, THEE institution in this country where the most in-depth study and advancing knowledge of birds, birders, and the wonderful sport of birding is occurring. Many of the Lab’s resources can be accessed online, including courses, reference materials, and—more to the point for this article—apps.

A huge issue for birders from the very beginning is how to learn which of those elusive bird species is making that chip, chirp, buzz, or song. We hear them all the time, have trained ourselves to listen and to hear, but still, many of us need help identifying what we are hearing, at least sometimes. Ace birders suggest leaving one’s bins at home to see what can be found when one only listens. This can be difficult and frustrating, even for those who have birded for years and years.

But now, finally, Merlin to the rescue! This free app, created by the Cornell Lab, is designed to assist birders with visual and sound identification and the tracking of life lists. The sound ID feature contains thousands of bird songs and calls and is designed to be used in specific areas to eliminate extraneous, irrelevant bird sounds. It can be incredibly useful, but like any assistive device, it must be used with care and consideration. For more on Merlin and its use in general, visit <https://support.ebird.org/en/support/solutions/48000450743>

To help users learn how best to use Merlin, Jason Thiele, an eBird reviewer in Wisconsin, wrote an article with pointers and best practices for its use in the field. He has given permission to share what he wrote, and his five main points follow. The complete article may be found at <https://wsobirds.org/about-wso/news/1851-5-cautionary-tips-to-document-birds-id-d-by-merlin-app>

1. “Identified with Merlin” is not proper or acceptable documentation! Merlin can do a good job at identifying birds, but it’s not infallible.
2. Save the recording of the bird to your device and upload it to your eBird checklist.
3. If you’re unable to make or submit a quality recording, you should at the very least provide some sort of description of the song or call you heard.
4. Whenever possible, offer other evidence such as a visual description of the bird, notes about its behavior, and/or a photograph or video to support the audio ID.
5. Above all, birding ethics should always apply.

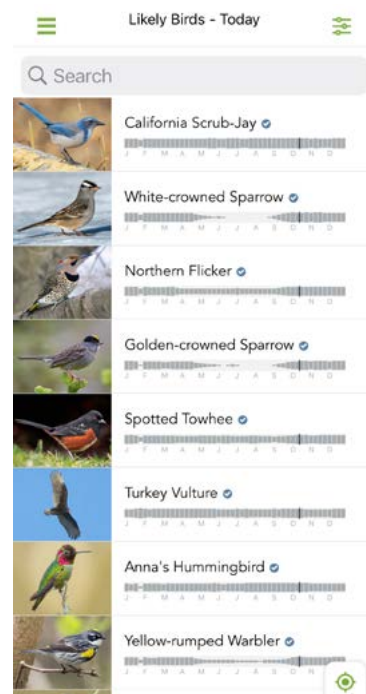
The bottom line, the main take away of what could also be called the ethics of using the Merlin app for sound recording, is that bird species may not be added to an eBird list just because “Merlin said so.” For one thing, Merlin makes mistakes. According to one long-time local birder, this is less and less common but definitely still possible. Another experienced birder said Merlin “sometimes gives bizarre results.”

One way to elicit a correct ID is to verify the bird Merlin has identified by playing the song/call of that species from another app on your phone. If the bird responds and is then seen, of course, it can be counted. But if it is not seen and does not respond, it may not be entered into eBird regardless of what Merlin said. The Cornell website has in depth tutorials on its use and is a good place to start understanding how and when to use this app

And an important point: at all times, responsible birders must be careful to limit the use of playbacks to reduce disturbance. Jason Thiele in his best practices states: Be judicious in your use of playbacks to elicit a response from the bird, especially in highly-birded areas. This is particularly important during nesting season.

For more on the ethics of birding in general, visit <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/news/ethical-birding-practices> on the Sacramento Audubon Society website.

—Maureen Geiger



## SAS NEW MEMBERS

*Please welcome these new members:*

Nancy Baumgartel  
Tony Cavagnaro  
Katie Ferroggiaro

## Thank You For Your Generous Donations!

### General Fund

Adrienne Brown  
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Steve & Tracy Wetzel

### Bobelaine Sanctuary

Karen D. Benson  
Adrienne Brown  
Jon J. Courtway  
Jane Van Kessel

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

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](mailto: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, November 29, 2022.**

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found at [sacramentoaudubon.org/board-minutes](https://www.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](http://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 [sacaudubonmembership@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.

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### *November General Meeting Program*

**Birds of Belize** • Presented by Richard Cimino  
Thursday, November 17, 2022 at 7 PM via Zoom

