



# The Observer

## Sacramento Audubon Society

### *September General Meeting*

Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 7pm via Zoom

The September 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).

### **CalTrout: Fish and Bird Management and Conservation**

CalTrout is a non-profit conservation organization that strives to respond to the state's resource issues while balancing the needs of wild fish and people. CalTrout is driven by science to restore abundance to California's freshwater ecosystems by working to ensure healthy waters for resilient populations of wild fish. This work is based in the belief that abundant wild fish indicate healthy waters, and healthy waters benefit all Californians. Through partnerships in places where wild fish influence the community, CalTrout drives science-based solutions that work for the diverse interests of those communities. With more than sixty large-scale conservation projects underway, in tandem with public policy efforts in Sacramento, CalTrout works to support freshwater and estuary ecosystems through a three-pillared approach to conservation – science, advocacy, and restoration.

Locally, in the Sacramento Valley, CalTrout works closely with rice farmers, agencies, and other stakeholders to use flooded winter rice fields to grow healthy salmonid fry by providing critical habitat, not only for fish, but birds.

Join us for a joint presentation by Cliff Feldheim, CalTrout Central Valley Project Manager and Molly Ancel, Outreach and Education Manager. The presentation will offer an overview of CalTrout's statewide work, tactics, and vision, with a deeper look at CalTrout's local Sacramento Valley projects on fish and bird management and conservation.

**Cliff Feldheim** has worked as a fish and wildlife biologist in the Sacramento Valley since 1997. He graduated from Humboldt State University with a B.S. and M.S. in Wildlife Management. Over the last 25 years, his work has focused on habitat restoration and management, and the development and implementation of species-specific monitoring programs. He is an award-winning waterfowl biologist who has co-authored over a dozen peer-reviewed journal articles.

Cliff has worked for California Trout since 2021 where one of his roles is to bring together fish and bird management and conservation in the Central Valley and Suisun Marsh. He represents CalTrout on the Central Valley Joint Venture, a migratory bird conservation partnership, and he is the Central Valley Salmon Habitat Partnership Coordinator.



**Molly Ancel** has worked in environmental programming since 2015. As CalTrout's Outreach and Education Manager she works to expand and tend CalTrout's partner base and to connect CalTrout's conservation work to the human communities that live in those places through youth programming, educational models and partner collaborations, and communications. Molly holds a B.A. in Critical Indigenous Studies from the University of British Columbia, where her senior research work was on salmon fisheries co-management between First Nations and the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). In the Bay Area she previously co-developed, facilitated, and trained staff on ecology-based programming for youth, including fishing and tidal ecology-based programming. In the mountains of Southern California she developed and directed programming on sustainable agriculture for youth and adults, and led local youth outreach efforts focused on rural community justice.

## A Huge Thank You

Sacramento Audubon was founded in 1950, and for more than seventy years has always relied on volunteers. Truly countless hours have been spent on organizing birding trips, education, fund raising, and protecting our sacred birds. Over the past two years I've had the pleasure working with the following volunteers who are transitioning their roles with Sacramento Audubon; Bill Bianco (Past President), Daphne Reiner (Outgoing Vice President), and Maureen Geiger (Field Activities Chair). Bill and Daphne's term ended in June. Bill is still Chair of the Bobelaine Sanctuary Committee and will remain on the Board as Past President for one more year. Maureen will be stepping down as Field Activities Chair in September, but will still belong to the Committee and lead trips. The following is a little background on their many years of service, along with some words of thanks from those that have worked with them over the years.

**Bill Bianco** joined the board in August 2015 as a director. He became Vice-President in August 2016 and President in August 2018. In addition to being President these last four years, which requires an enormous amount of work, he worked as the Outreach Committee Chair, contributing countless hours towards connecting Sacramento Audubon Society to the people in our area.



Bill Bianco

Bill's responsibilities as Outreach Chair include: registering for the individual table events, organizing volunteers for every event, educating the public about our local wild birds, making sure educational materials are available, and transporting the outreach gear to and from events! Jane Van Kessel who serves on the Board, had this to say about Bill:

Bill Bianco has been a great leader for Sacramento Audubon Society for several years. As President, Bill had a strong commitment to tackle every task that came up. Whenever a problem or concern would arise, he had the special ability to know which steps to take first. Bill was a 'team' leader and always asked his fellow Board members for input. Because of his leadership strengths, Bill enabled the Board to come up with the best solutions and make sound decisions. Bill has also devoted an enormous amount of his time and effort towards the maintenance and overall well-being of Audubon's precious Bobelaine Sanctuary. He continues to serve as the Chair of the Bobelaine Committee. Thank you, Bill, for everything you do and have done for our organization. —Jane Van Kessel

The fact that this wonderful property (Bobelaine Sanctuary) exists and is in the best shape it has been in since its inception is in large part due to Bill's efforts. He is a wonderful steward and deserves many, many thanks! —Maureen Geiger

**Daphne Reimer** joined the board in September 2018 as a director and Hospitality Chair, and became Vice-President in August 2019, stepping down in June. Daphne worked closely with Bill and had this to say about their time working together:

Bill's a stand-up guy. He served as Board President for four years —the last two because no one else stepped forward. So rather than say farewell he did the stand-up thing and stayed on. He's also been

filling in as the Education Chair and Conservation Chair for the same reason. He runs the SAS outreach efforts and spends a lot of time out at Bobelaine maintaining the property. In other words, he has gone above and beyond what anyone could ask of a volunteer. He's a self-effacing fellow so you would never know how much he's done and continues to do for SAS. Thank you, Bill!

—Daphne Reimer

Daphne was a "go-getter" and tackled new ground for our organization. She worked closely with Mary Forrestal, Board member and Recording Secretary. Mary had this to say about Daphne:

I was privileged enough to work with Daphne on both the SAS Board and Website Committee. Her intelligence, creativity, and willingness to push for what she believed made her a valuable asset that will greatly be missed. She led the Board in establishing the SAS cat policy, the Nature in the Classroom program, and our sponsorship of the Amplify the Future Scholarship. She helped out in numerous other ways, and I will miss her sense of humor and endless flow of ideas. Thank you Daphne. —Mary Forrestal



Daphne Reimer

What do you say about **Maureen Geiger**? Well you simply can't say enough, in my opinion. She is the reason I joined the Board and have become impassioned working for this wonderful organization. Maureen has been a member of Sacramento Audubon since the 70's, served on the Board, and on the Field Activities Committee since the 90's, along with many other positions. To get the real picture of her vast volunteer work, here is what Chris Conard had to say:

An organization like Sacramento Audubon Society simply couldn't function without people like Maureen. I've known her for over 20 years and she's been at the center of so many programs, from field trips and the Field Activities Committee, initiating and organizing the Kids' CBC, the Education Committee, and taking on that one more project that would have fallen through the cracks without her. She was instrumental in updating the last edition of Birding in the Sacramento Region and in getting that information on the SAS website. She was also a huge help when I started compiling the Folsom CBC, leading her area and helping me get organized in the first few years. Maureen is one of the rare people who gives back far more than she takes. Plus, she's a lot of fun to talk to, go birding with, and she's a great friend! —Chris Conard

Maureen was also very instrumental in many different management aspects of the Bobelaine Sanctuary. She introduced her good friend Ken Poerner to the sanctuary, resulting in his many years of critical work improving and maintaining this wonderful birding jewel. She also assisted Bill Bianco with Bobelaine, and he had this to say:

I commend her help at Bobelaine, and her delight in cutting the poison oak. She really was a great help in organizing the old Bobelaine files and helping out at the sanctuary. I enjoyed the field trips when her friend Tim Fitzer was along; he always had a good time kidding Maureen on various subjects. One great person, glad to call her a good friend. She was helpful to me with various President duties. —Bill Bianco



Maureen Geiger

New volunteers help keep Sacramento Audubon working. Recently Taylor Florence joined the Board and joined the Bobelaine Sanctuary Committee. Bill Weaver joined the Board and will be chairing the Conservation Committee. Susan Goodrich also recently joined the Board and will be taking on Maureen's role as Chair of the Field Activities Committee. She had this to say about Maureen:

Maureen Geiger's name is almost synonymous with the Sacramento Audubon Society, since she has been associated with so many things: Field Trip Committee director, field trip leader, Bobelaine caretaker, Birding 101 book writer, project leader and participant, bird count participant, and all-around SAS hard worker! Now having interacted with her on the Field Trip Activities Committee, I know firsthand what a hard worker, and a wonderful person, she really is. Conscientious is a word which immediately comes to mind in association with Maureen, as she has always taken responsibility, for stewardship of the welfare of both birds and the SAS, to mind and to heart. Honest and straightforward, her enthusiasm and determination have ensured attendance to, and completion of many projects. A debt of gratitude is owed for the many years Maureen has worked for and supported the SAS. Even though she steps down as Field Trip Committee leader, we hope she will continue to participate, imparting her wisdom, and sharing her energy and enthusiasm for many years to come!

—Susan Goodrich

And finally, Dan Tankersely, a long time friend of Maureen and a birding trip leader for many, many years, had this to share about her:

As are most folks on the Field Activities Committee, Maureen is an above average birder. But more than that, she is dedicated to helping SAS be all it can be. She served on the SAS Board and the Field Activities Committee for many years, and has participated in countless projects in many different capacities. She developed the "Kids Christmas Bird Count" and was instrumental in bringing "Family Friendly" field trips to the field trip schedule. Maureen is a "Can Do" person, and always accomplishes what she sets out to do.

I am so honored to be working with such amazing people! Together we can continue the legacy that is Sacramento Audubon. We can build on their hard work, foster a culture of diversity and inclusiveness, and ensure our sacred birds are protected and cherished for countless generations in the future!

—Paul Miller

### Merlin Sound ID

Have you discovered Merlin Sound ID? I absolutely love it. As a birder of only a few years, it is much easier for me to identify birds by sight rather than by sound. Merlin Sound ID is helping me change that. It allows me to check my sound IDs – did I just hear a Marsh Wren? And when I hear a sound that I do not recognize, Merlin Sound ID will give me an idea of what bird to look for.

This morning as I sat at my desk, windows open, I heard a loud ka-ka-ka-ka-ka-ka-ka. My phone was sitting right next to me, so I quickly opened Merlin, pressed Sound ID and waited for the bird to call again. There it was, ka-ka-ka-ka-ka-ka-ka. Merlin immediately identified it as a Cooper's Hawk. A bird that I have frequently seen around our home, but did not recognize from its call.

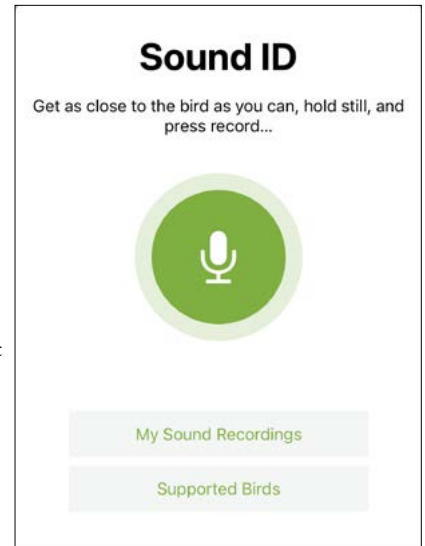
This spring, Merlin helped me find, Lazuli Bunting, Wilson's Warbler, and Western Tanager - all birds I easily recognize by sight but cannot identify by calls or songs. As I bird if I hear a song or call I don't recognize, I'll open the app and see what Merlin suggests. Then I'll stop and scan the area until, if I am lucky, I can see the bird.

There are a couple limitations to Merlin Sound ID. Depending on the quality of your phone, you may be able to hear sounds that the app cannot. Merlin recommends getting as close to the bird as you can without disturbing it, standing still, remaining quiet and recording for at least 30 seconds. It is also a good idea to set the location on your Merlin app prior to trying to use Sound ID. And be sure to download the bird packs you will need prior to using.

You can learn more about the Merlin app and Merlin Sound ID by visiting All About Birds (<https://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/>). If you are using Merlin Sound ID when creating an eBird checklist, be sure to follow eBird's best practices for using Merlin Sound ID.

I hope you will enjoy Merlin Sound ID as much as I do and happy birding.

—Mary Forrestal



### Paul Miller's Accessible Birding Featured on California Audubon Website



Bird-Friendly Communities

Accessible Birding - Paul's Story

"Hope is the thing with feathers." - Emily Dickinson

The story, which appeared in the August issue of *The Observer*, is featured on the California Audubon website, in the "Bird-Friendly Communities" section. <https://ca.audubon.org/news/accessible-birding-pauls-story>



## Field Trips: Field Trips September 1 – October 16, 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).

### Auburn State Recreation Area, Catecroft

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

**Thursday, September 1, 7:30 AM**

Expected length: 4-5 hours

Craig Swolgaard (530) 334-3023

Email: [cswol@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cswol@sbcglobal.net)

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

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

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

### Sacramento Bar

**Sunday, September 11, 8 AM**

Expected length: 3 hours

Paul Cordero (916) 454-4061

Email: [pkcordero@gmail.com](mailto:pkcordero@gmail.com)

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

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

Meet Paul at the parking lot of Sacramento Bar. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd; take the first left on Pennsylvania and follow it into the park to the parking lot. A Sac County Park Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

### Wildlife Refuge/Sanctuary North of Sacramento

**Monday, September 12, 7:30 AM**

Expected length: About 4 hours

Maureen Geiger (916) 281-6652

Email: [mkeiger@comcast.net](mailto:mkeiger@comcast.net)

Maximum number of participants: 8

Registration is required for this trip.

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

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

### Oak Woodland/Riparian Habitat near Elverta

**Saturday, September 17, 7AM**

Expected length: 5 hours

Leader: Max Brodie (510) 418-3044

[brodiemax@gmail.com](mailto:brodiemax@gmail.com)

Maximum number of participants: 8

Registration is required for this trip.

Please email Max if you would like to attend.

Join leader Max Brodie for a morning of birding focused on fall migrants. We will be hoping to see some of the species that only briefly pass through our area on their way to and from their breeding and wintering grounds. Some targets include Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting, Western Wood-Pewee, and Black-throated Gray Warbler. It's always a fun surprise to see what shorebird and waterfowl species are using the pond. The duration of the trip will be walking along dirt trails and grassy areas on gently rolling terrain. Restrooms are available throughout the area.

Meeting place, driving directions, and parking information will be provided upon registration.

### Putah Creek Riparian Preserve

**Sunday, September 18, 8 AM**

Expected length: 4-5 hours

Sonja Sorbo (916) 390-8463

[ssgasdoc@yahoo.com](mailto:ssgasdoc@yahoo.com)

Maximum number of participants: 10

Registration is required for this trip.

Please email Sonja if you would like to attend.

This UC Davis preserve, along the banks of Putah Creek, can be a terrific place to find migrants and resident birds this time of year. We will have a leisurely walk on an easy trail and should be finished by noon. Bring water and snacks if desired.

Meeting location and driving directions will be provided upon registration.

### Teal Bend Golf Course

**Saturday, September 24, 8 AM**

Expected length: 3-4 hours

Richard Barbieri (916) 761-1124

[offleash227@gmail.com](mailto: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 fall migrants. Easy walking around the golf course. Bring water and snacks.

Meet at the parking lot at Teal Bend Golf Course. The address is 7200 Garden Highway, Sacramento 95837. From Sacramento, take I-5 north, then when it splits into I-5 and Hwy. 99, take Hwy. 99 north. Take Exit 309 at Elverta Road and turn left (west). Drive about three miles, then turn left onto Garden Highway. After about a mile, turn left into the golf course.

## Field Trips: continued

### Bannister Park /Sacramento Bar

Thursday, September 29, 7:30 AM

Expected length: 3 hours

Leader: Stan Hunter (530) 902-8462

Stanton.hunter@gmail.com

Spend a few hours exploring around Bannister Park and Sacramento Bar, along the American River in Fair Oaks. We will take a leisurely stroll along the paths that wander through the dredge tailings, looking for late-summer regulars and seasonal migrants in the woods, on the ponds and along the river.

Meet Stan at the Bannister Park parking lot. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd.; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd. Take Fair Oaks Blvd to Bannister Rd and go south toward the river. Park in the parking lot. No permit needed.

### Sacramento Bar

Sunday, October 2, 8 AM

Expected length: 3-4 hours

Leaders: Jane Van Kessel, Mary Forrestal (530) 209-0826

cmforrestal@yahoo.com

Jane and Mary will be checking for mergansers, early goldeneye, and other birds on the river. Among the more common passerines, such as crowned sparrows, towhees, goldfinches, and wrens, there's a possibility of the less common Phainopepla, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and who knows what other surprises! This is a great trip for beginning and more experienced birders.

Meet in the parking lot at Sacramento Bar. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania. Proceed along Pennsylvania to the parking lot. A Sacramento County Parks Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

### River Bend Park

Wednesday, October 5, 8 AM

Expected length: 3-4 hours

Leader: Cathie LaZier (916) 502-2699

empid77@gmail.com

We'll walk through the oak woodland and over to the river, looking for small woodland birds and woodpeckers. We sometimes have good looks at Red-Shouldered Hawks or Great Horned Owls. The walk will end by noon and it's a great walk for beginners. Meet Cathie at the first parking lot on your right, just past the entrance kiosk.

From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field Road, take Beaudry Drive north into the park. A Sacramento County Parks Pass, or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

### American Canyon Wetlands Edge Park

Sunday, October 9, 8 AM

Expected length: 6-7 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.

We will walk 3-4 miles on level trail around this tidal marsh hotspot, searching for ducks, shorebirds, and passerines. Bring plenty of water, snacks, and lunch.

Meeting location and directions will be provided upon registration.

### Beginning Birder Walk

#### William Pond Park

Sunday, October 9

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; put Beginning Birder in the subject line. Registrants will be emailed the meeting time and exact location.

### Lincoln Wastewater Treatment Plant

Tuesday, October 11, 7:30 AM

Expected length: 4-5 hours

Leader: Jane Taylor (916) 884-1323

1jgtaylor@att.net

Maximum number of participants: 5

Registration is required for this trip.

Please email Jane Taylor if you would like to attend.

Join Jane for a morning outing to the Lincoln Wastewater Treatment Plant. Several large ponds can hold any number of duck species, and if the water levels are favorable, shorebirds as well. Trees, fields, and fence posts adjacent to the levees may yield raptors, sparrows, woodpeckers, and other species. A small wetland area visible from the levees can hold rails, herons, egrets, gallinules, and Marsh Wrens.

After birding the plant as time permits, we will explore other watery/marshy/grassy sites in the area. The trip should end by noon; bring water and snacks. The plant is often windy so bring warm layers. Spotting scopes are extremely useful so if you have one, bring it along. Heavy rain will cancel.

Meeting location and directions will be provided upon registration.

### UC Davis Arboretum

Wednesday, October 12, 8 AM

Expected length: 3-4 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.

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

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

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

### Point Reyes National Seashore

Sunday, October 16, 8 AM

Expected length: All Day

Leader: John York (530) 320-4751

johnyork157@yahoo.com

John plans a full day of birding at the usual places at Point Reyes, including the Fish Docks and Abbott's Lagoon (if the weather is good). If it's too foggy at the coastal spots, we'll bird the onshore locations. Bring fluids, snacks, and dress for changeable weather. John plans to stop for lunch at the deli in Inverness.

RSVP to John by email or text is recommended in case of change of plan due to weather, etc.

Meet John at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. Take the West Capitol Avenue exit #81, turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

### Sacramento Audubon Pin

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

or pick one up at outreach events for \$5



## Field Trip Reports

### Yuba Gap, (7/9)

Sandra Steurer, co-leader with Nicole Barden, reported: We had 9 participants who enjoyed a nice evening of mountain birding. We had great looks at the **Common Nighthawks** which came out early in the evening. Some highlights were the **White-headed Woodpeckers**, **Western Tanager**, **Chipping Sparrows**, **Yellow Warblers** bringing food to a well hidden nest, and a quick flash of a **Sooty Grouse**.

### Cosumnes River Preserve, 5:30 AM trip targeting Blue Grosbeak (7/17)

Leader John Trochet reported: Only one person showed up, 10 minutes late. We tried behind the Farm Gate near the Tall Forest, on the McCormack-Williamson Tract in the Delta and at the Denier parcel. I held out little hope, but we heard one singing the day before near the Tall Forest during the (monthly) survey. We tried there a few times, of course, but had no luck. Nor were we successful elsewhere. So the target bird evaded us. The participant had never seen the parts of the preserve that she saw. She said that she enjoyed the outing even without seeing a Blue Grosbeak.

### Bufferlands, (7/24)

Leader Chris Conard reported: A lovely morning quickly warmed up, but we finished our outing by 10:30 before the heat really set in. Highlights included several views of up to five **Blue Grosbeaks**, a family group of **Western Bluebirds**, plus many **Ash-throated Flycatchers** and **Common Yellowthroats**. A couple of participants saw a **Western Tanager**, and we had to content ourselves with only hearing **Black-headed Grosbeaks**. A quick check of the sewer ponds at the wastewater treatment plant produced good numbers of peeps, a **Black-necked Stilt** family, and a flock of **Wilson's Phalaropes**. Perhaps the bird of the outing was a perched **Golden Eagle** that has been around the property for the past few days.

### Stone Lakes NWR, (7/30)

Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Paul Miller reported: Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is known to be an excellent place to bird in the winter, but who knew it could be so satisfying in July? Twelve of us enjoyed several hours walking and rolling the accessible trails with wonderful looks at 4 **Swainson's Hawks** in a variety of plumages including a juvenile, what looked like a **Hooded Oriole** family likely nesting in the palm trees at the headquarters building, and assorted other species of birds. An **Orange-crowned Warbler** was a nice surprise. Possibly best of all, however, were at least 5 **Monarch Butterflies**

seen very close working the large number of narrow-leaved milkweed in a long swath of the north-east end of the Refuge.

### Bear Creek Dragonflies, (7/31)

Leader Tim Manolis reported: Perhaps the poorest showing of any trip I have led there. We just managed to get 10 species, and numbers were very low for just about every one of them. At least one of the species in relatively good numbers was one of the main target species, **Desert Forktail**, here at the northern extent of its range in California. We also had modest looks at a flying **Red Rock Skimmer**, but all the other targets (**Giant Darner**, **clubtails**, etc.) were MIA. Two possible reasons for this. The trip was later in the season than I usually run it (e.g., in 2018 it was on July 15 and we had 23 species, and in 2019, it was on July 21 and we had 20 species). The drought may also play a factor. The creeks were hardly running, they were actually a series of puddles with lots of dried stream bed (probably some underground flow going on). Three people came out for the trip.



Swainson's Hawk. Photo by Daniel Brown

### Foothill Summer Birds, (8/4)

Leader Nicole Barden reported: The morning started with perfect walking weather as our group of eight arrived at the Sweetwater Creek pullout. A sign greeted us at the trailhead, warning us about a recent Mountain Lion sighting. We quickly started hearing and seeing some favorite resident birds. As we approached the water, we were delighted to see a male **Hooded Oriole** fly over and a short while later its mate was also seen. The day was quickly warming up as we were watching a group of 25 **Turkey Vultures** sitting on the ground and circling overhead. We were happy to find a young **Turkey Vulture** with a black head. While counting the **Great Egrets** dotted along the water, one of our excellent spotters located a **Green Heron**,



Blue Grosbeak. Photo by Daniel Brown

crouched and still, while hunting on the shoreline. Following the winding trail back through the chaparral, we saw three **Wrentits** cross the trail just ahead of us. After hearing **Wrentit** singing throughout our walk, it was nice to get a look at them and it was a first look for at least one person in the group. As we approached the end of the trail, we heard an **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, who then decided to sit in the tree directly above us, giving us great looks. At that point it was very hot, and we were grateful for cool drinks and air conditioning on the way home. Other highlights include **Black-chinned Hummingbirds**, **Belted Kingfisher**, and **Phainopepla**. Overall we had 34 species, which seemed pretty good for such a warm day. Please check out our ebird checklist to see what else we found and see some photos: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S116332432>

### Napa and Sonoma County Marshes, (8/6)

Leader Dan Williams reported: About a dozen of us had glorious weather and some very nice birding (and aquatic mammaling!) in the North Bay area. American Canyon Wetlands from Eucalyptus Drive out to near the Napa River provided some quality views of hundreds of shorebirds. **Marbled Godwits**, **Willetts**, and **Black-necked Stilts** created a pleasant cacophonous background while we sifted through the dozens of **Long and Short-billed Dowitchers**, **Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers**, and peeps; one particularly accommodating mud patch briefly held ALL THREE of **Least**, **Western**, and one **Semipalmated Sandpiper** which was an awesome opportunity for study. At the furthest north extent of our stroll along the San Francisco Bay Trail, we were afforded good scope views of some early returning bay waterfowl: **Canvasback**, **Lesser**



**Scaup**, and **Bufflehead** floated and loafed near the exposed muddy spits which were loaded with gulls and plovers. A raspy **Caspian Tern** gave us a few nice close fly-bys and multiple **Ospreys** drifted overhead occasionally wheeling and plunging in spectacular fashion. A trio of **River Otters** frolicked and chirped away near this point, and surprisingly a **MINCK** suddenly popped up on shore and dripped dry in the sun for several minutes giving us stunning views in the scope. On the hike back to Wetlands Edge Park we were further treated to a young **Peregrine Falcon** diving at a couple of young **Red-tailed Hawks**, a small group of **Black-crowned Night-Herons** in the reeds, and a **White-tailed Kite** over the parking lot. It turned out the main portion of Shollenberger Park was bone dry, so after taking a brief lunch break there, we headed down the road a bit to the Ellis Creek Facility / Shollenberger Park Extension. Lots of eclipse plumage ducks were a fun challenge there, with **Cinnamon Teal**, **Shoveler**, and **Gadwall** mixed in with the throngs of **Mallards** and **Canada Geese**, and the ever-increasing **Mute Swans**. **Marsh Wrens** and **Common Yellowthroats** chattered away in the cattails, a few **Green Herons** passed back and forth across the ponds, and a nest box full of some baby **Barn Owls** was a nice way to finish the day. 80 species all told punctuated with lots of great highlights!



White-throated Swift. Photo by Daniel Brown

### Mather Lake Family Trip, (8/14)

Leader Mary Forrestal reported: Fourteen birders, including four children and several beginners, braved the August heat to see what, in addition to the excessive number of **Mute Swans**, could be found at Mather Lake. Raptors were the prize of the day with repeated good looks at **White-tailed Kites**. **Red-tailed**, **Red-shouldered**, and **Swainson's Hawks** were also in attendance. A

cheeky **American Kestrel** also made several appearances. Other highlights included a very noisy **Belted Kingfisher** and a half dozen **White-throated Swifts**. The trip ended without a full circuit of the park, as the heat continued to rise, but with vows to return again in cooler weather.

## Seasonal Sightings July 1 to July 31

Shorebirds save July from being a really slow month like June. They are about a month ahead of songbird migrants, and July has a track record of producing some of the most interesting shorebird records each year. Even though it happens every year, it's an amazing spectacle to see these birds coming through our area, with many of the species having bred in the Arctic. The first songbird migrants, such as **Warbling Vireos**, **Wilson's Warblers**, **Black-throated Gray Warblers**, and **Western Tanagers** were coming through by the end of the month. Back to shorebirds, the most notable finds included a **Snowy Plover** at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife on 7/22, and one at the Woodland WTP on 7/24. A **Stilt Sandpiper** was an excellent find at the Woodland WTP on 7/27-28. A **Franklin's Gull** in breeding plumage was a nice surprise on 7/19-20, also at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area.

Detections of secretive **Least Bitterns** are always a highlight. One was found along the Sutter Bypass west of Bobelaine in Sutter County on 7/1-5, and two were seen at the Davis Wetlands on 7/18. Twelve **Burrowing Owls** (ages unspecified) on a property without public access southeast of Dixon

were reported on 7/7. This month there were only four sites with **Burrowing Owls** reported in the Sacramento Area, with two locations in Sacramento County and only one site in Yolo County. None of the Sacramento or Yolo sites appeared to have produced any young this year.

On 7/13, an adult **Say's Phoebe** was found feeding three full-grown juveniles at the Northstar Park in north Davis. The species seems to be establishing itself as a local breeder, but there are still just a handful of nests in our area. Up to 200 **Common Ravens** were reported in early July staging or roosting on high transmission utility towers north of Keifer Blvd, between Sunrise Blvd and Grant Line Rd. These birds appear to be drawn to the area by the Keifer Landfill. As recently as ten years ago, this species was much harder to come by in our area. A **Varied Thrush** at the William B. Pond access to the American River Parkway on 7/22 by an experienced observer was more than two months earlier than expected. In terms of true songbird rarities, a male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was photographed at a feeder in El Dorado Hills; it was first seen on 7/2 and stayed for about four days. And finally, an **Indigo**

**Bunting** was seen singing along the Sutter Bypass, west of Bobelaine, on 7/1.

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](http://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, Lyann Comrack, Konshau Duman, Chris Dunford, Gil Ewing, Robert Furrow, Josh Greenfield, Cliff Hawley, Marcel Holyoak, Emmett Iverson, Jeri Langham, Cathie LaZier, Andrew Lee, Eric Liskay, Mark Martucci, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Jennifer Schmal, Steve Scott, Jim Thomas, John Trochet, Todd Wills, and Meirun Zhang. Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible. —Chris Conard

## Monterey Bay Festival of Birds September 30 – October 2, 2022

The Monterey Bay has a unique natural landscape and a diversity of birds. The festival features interactive workshops and field trip options throughout the many communities of the Monterey Bay.

<https://www.birdschoolproject.org/festival>



## Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival November 4–6

Tickets go on sale September 5, 2022.

<https://lodisandhillcrane.org>



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

The 2023 Festival is a four-day event, starting on Friday, January 13 and concluding on Monday, January 17. More than 140 events including field trips, presentations, master classes, and special events.

<https://morrobaybirdfestival.org>



## Annual Eagles & Agriculture 2023 Save the Date: January 26–29

Based in Genoa, Nevada and the surrounding area, the festival features wetlands, ranch tours, Bald Eagles, other raptors, Owl tours, and hikes.

<https://www.carsonvalleynv.org/eagles-ag/>

## 2022-2023 Sacramento Audubon Society Board Officers and Directors

Sacramento Audubon Society's Board Officers and Directors for the 2022-2023 fiscal year were approved via electronic and mail-in ballot with voting closing on June 17, 2022.

Bill Weaver was appointed to the position of Director and approved by the Board on July 26, 2022.

Bill Bianco continues to serve as Past-President, a non-elected position.

**President:** Paul Miller

**Vice President:** Eric Johnson

**Treasurer:** Harriet Saeck

**Recording Secretary:** Mary Forrestal

**Corresponding Secretary:** Nancy Gronert

**Director:** Anthony Asay

**Director:** Taylor Florence

**Director:** Susan Goodrich

**Director:** Jane Van Kessel

**Director:** Bill Weaver

**Past-President:** Bill Bianco

## Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza in the Pacific Flyway

H5N1 has been detected in Sacramento, Placer, Plumas, Solano, Colusa, Butte, Glenn, Sonoma, and Siskiyou counties. The following information is from Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds. (<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/avian-influenza-outbreak-should-you-take-down-your-bird-feeders/#>)

There has been confusion about whether people should take down their feeders to stop the spread of this disease among wild birds. We checked with Dr. Julianna Leno, who directs the USDA APHIS National Wildlife Disease Program, and we've compiled the following summaries of key points regarding H5N1, especially among songbirds and other feeder visitors.

### Low Risk of Avian Flu to Songbirds

There is currently very low risk of an outbreak among wild songbirds, and no official recommendation to take down feeders unless you also keep domestic poultry, according to the National Wildlife Disease Program. We do always recommend that you clean bird feeders and birdbaths regularly as a way to keep many kinds of diseases at bay.

We also always recommend that you follow any recommendations put out by your state government, such as the recent request to take down feeders in Illinois. We will update this page as the situation develops.

### How do we know songbirds are at low risk?

USDA APHIS has a strong, multiyear surveillance program that routinely samples wild birds, including flocks of songbirds (and other species such as Rock Pigeons and Mourning Doves that are often around humans), for the presence of avian influenza. So far in 2022, they've detected the H5N1 strain in 2,044 wild birds, with 49 detections in songbirds (see below for a list of species). Latest info about the outbreak. Avian influenza does not affect all types of birds equally. The "highly pathogenic" part of the term H5N1 refers specifically to the severity of the disease in poultry, not necessarily in other bird species. For example, waterfowl often carry and transmit bird flu, but rarely get sick from the disease (even from H5N1 strains). Raptors are much more sensitive to the disease than waterfowl. Domestic poultry are extremely susceptible to H5N1 and spread the disease easily, leading to up to 100% mortality of affected flocks.

Songbirds are much less likely than waterfowl to contract avian influenza and less likely to shed large amounts of virus, meaning they do not transmit the disease easily. (See Shriner and Root 2020 for a detailed review in the journal *Viruses*.)

According to a separate study in the *Journal of Wildlife Diseases*, "...although passerines and terrestrial wild birds may have a limited role in the epidemiology of IAV [avian influenza A viruses] when associated with infected domestic poultry or other aberrant hosts, there is no evidence supporting their involvement as natural reservoirs for IAV." (Slusher et al. 2014)

For these reasons, it is unlikely that bird feeders will contribute to an outbreak among songbirds.

### What to do if you find a sick or dead bird:

Avoid handling sick or dead birds. Additionally, keep pets (including pet birds) away from sick or dead wild birds.

To report a dead bird, please call the toll-free California West Nile virus dead bird call center at (877) WNV-BIRD (968-2473). Operators are available from mid-April through mid-October. At any time of year, you can also report dead birds online.)



## SAS NEW MEMBERS

*Please welcome these new members:*

Alice Bauer and Isaiah Reeves  
Sylvia Bauer  
Jessica Bender  
Joseph Borkovich  
Gary Fuller  
Janice Kelley  
Mary McGrath  
Geraldine Nicholson  
Janice Oriley  
Autumn Perry  
Tamra Ruxin  
Diane Thompson

## Thank You For Your Generous Donations!

### General Fund

Pamela Bone, Joseph Borkovich,  
Betty J. Cooper, Robert L. Garcia,  
Susan Goodrich, John & Ellen Huls, Barbara  
Jeffus, Lynn S. Johnson,  
Joyce A. Mihanovich, Patricia Morehead,  
Jerry and Sue Schaar,  
Susan Scott & Ed Harper, Diane Thompson,  
Phyllis Wilburn (*In Memory of Jack Wilburn*)

### Education and Conservation Fund

Susan Goodrich, Gary & Cary S. Hart  
John & Ellen Huls, Susan Scott & Ed Harper

### Bobelaine Sanctuary

Marian Ashe  
Susan Goodrich  
John & Ellen Huls  
Jeffrey & Bunkie Mangum  
Mary Beth Metcalf  
Susan Scott & Ed Harper

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://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, September 27, 2022.**

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found at [sacramentoaudubon.org/board-minutes](https://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>

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Sacramento Audubon Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit. #94-1615830

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*White-tailed Kite* Daniel Brown

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Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Send all copy to the Editor. Observations must reach the Seasonal Observations Editor by the 8th of the month.

*The Observer* is published by the Sacramento Audubon Society, monthly, January through December, except June and August, when we publish abbreviated editions.

### *September General Meeting*

**CalTrout: Fish and Bird Management and Conservation**

Thursday, September 15, 2022 at 7pm via Zoom

