

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

September General Meeting

Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 7pm via Webex

The September meeting will be held online via Cisco Webex. To receive a link to join the meeting, email meetings@sacramento-audubon.org. There is no cost to join the meeting and you do not have to be a member to attend. There is a cap of 100 attendees. For more information visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker.

How to Photograph Birds

Presented by William J. Carroll III

William J. Carroll III will be presenting "How to Photograph Birds." He will be discussing tips and his techniques for capturing images of the birds of the Sacramento area. William will be sharing some of his images and the locations where the images were captured.

Living in the Sacramento area for more than 30 years, William discovered the beauty and amazing diversity of fauna of the American River and beyond due to the COVID lockdown. He has been documenting the area's beauty in his photos.

William's photos can be seen on Instagram at [@WJC3Photos](https://www.instagram.com/WJC3Photos).



Great Egret by William J. Carroll III

Brown Creeper in a Spider's Web, and Other Encounters

One outgrowth of staying nearer to home during the pandemic has been taking time to focus on interesting behaviors. While an interesting or novel behavior might not be as adrenaline-boosting as finding a rarity or a lifer, it can be just as memorable. Below are a few observations I thought worth sharing.

On an August 1st visit with Kimya to the South Grove of Calaveras Big Trees State Park, we found a live and struggling Brown Creeper in a spider's web. I didn't have the heart (or lack thereof) to let nature take its course. I didn't see a spider in or near the web,

but it seemed like the web of an orb weaver. I should have looked harder, but once I had the creeper in hand, I was fixated on it and trying to remove the sticky web. The web clung to the bird's feathers and even to some bare skin on its breast where feathers were missing, disconcertingly pulling at the bird's skin as I tried to remove the web. Once fairly free of web remnants, I placed the creeper on the bark of an adjacent tree. It fluttered down but then climbed up and out of view, I hope, to regain its strength. What a tiny bird—less than twice the weight of an Anna's Hummingbird.



Brown Creeper in a spiderweb by Chris Conard

Continues on p. 3

This Month's Suggested Birding

Birding in the Valley in September • Maureen Geiger

Finding birds in the Sacramento area towards the end of summer can be a challenge due in part to the lack of water, so for those months SAS often suggests birding in the mountains or on the coast. The following suggestions are a mix of sites that may still produce good, local birding.

Bucks Creek/Silva Valley Parkway Trail, El Dorado Hills

Experience has shown that walks along this Creek are good any time of the year including resident woodpeckers, nuthatches, bluebirds, towhees, wrens, Green Herons, Common Gallinules, plus possible Hooded Mergansers. Walking along the edge of the Creek in this varied habitat there is always a chance for early migrating birds and unusual finds.

Directions: From Sacramento on Hwy. 50 east, take Silva Valley Parkway, Exit #31, drive north on the Parkway to the light at the intersection with Serrano Parkway. Make a U-turn at the light and park immediately on your right.



Green Heron by Kelly Colgan Azar

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Someone asked recently why SAS so often suggests YBWA as a birding hotspot. One reason is because this can be a spectacular place to bird during fall and winter months. Other wildlife areas can say the same but are not as close to Sacramento. Summer is a somewhat different matter when the basin is mostly dry and dusty. However, flood-up of fields for shorebird migration begins in July by which time shorebird migration is well under way.

Directions: From Sacramento on I-80 west, take the first exit at the west end of the Yolo Causeway, East Chiles/Rd. 32A, Exit #78. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee; then drop down into the Wildlife Area.



Rufous-crowned Sparrow by Alan Schmierer

Spenceville Wildlife Area

This scenic recreational area of rolling oak woodland, streams, reservoirs and ponds offers a variety of wildlife and is, I think, under-birded. Possible birds include Yellow-breasted Chat, Lewis's Woodpecker, Rock Wrens, Rufous-crowned Sparrows and more.

Directions: Because this is a large and complex area with many sites along the way, for detailed directions and descriptions on how to make the most of the day, go to:

<https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/north-of-sacramento/#lincoln-spenceville>.

University of California, Davis Arboretum

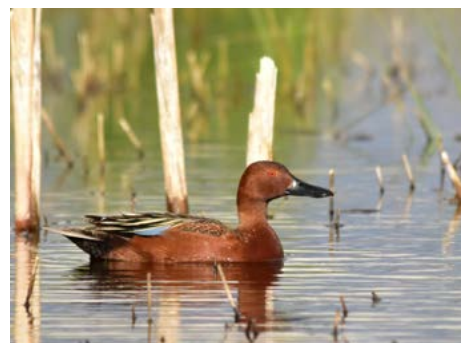
Closer to home, if you would like a shady, pleasant walk in a lovely, varied landscape, the Arboretum is just the ticket. In addition to often well-marked gardens featuring plants from all over the world, this 3-mile loop is mostly level and shady and due to its proximity to the Purah Creek waterway, it feels cooler than the surrounding areas. Close-up looks at residents such as Wood Ducks, Double-crested Cormorants and Green Herons are rewarding, and in September, early migrants might be found.

Directions: From Sacramento on I-80 west, exit at Richards Boulevard/Downtown Davis, Exit #72, bear right, go under the overpass and at the light turn left onto 1st Street; then left onto D Street and into the large parking lot. There are many signs regarding where you can and cannot park, so choose your site carefully. Walk west to the trail into the Arboretum which can be accessed from both sides of the Creek.

Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Stone Lakes, south of Sacramento, is well designed for families with small children as it offers a wide, level cement trail that loops through the Refuge for easy walking. The year-round water supports marsh birds such as Green Heron, Sora, Belted Kingfisher, Song Sparrow and Common Yellowthroat while in the surrounding ag and fallow fields Swainson's Hawks, Red-tails, Mourning Doves and Western Meadowlarks can be found. Several small stands of Narrow-leaved Milkweed (*Asclepius* sp.) have attracted migrating Monarch Butterflies in September.

Directions: From Sacramento on I-5 south, two miles south of the Elk Grove exit, take Exit #504 heading west on Hood-Franklin Road and drive .8 of a mile to the NWR entrance on the left. There is a large parking lot and handicapped accessible restrooms.



Cinnamon Teal by Tom Koerner

Laguna Creek Wetlands, Elk Grove

This wetland sandwiched between housing on the north and south consists of a paved trail meandering along the Laguna Creek. Mostly sunny, the marshy wetlands are bordered by urban plantings including many oaks. Close looks at Common Gallinules, Cinnamon Teal, Snowy and Great Egrets and Double-crested Cormorants are possible and unexpected species always a possibility. This is a good walk for beginners, and is stroller and small child accessible.

Directions: From Sacramento on Hwy. 99 south, exit at Elk Grove Boulevard and head east; pass Elk Grove-Florin Road, and less than a mile later turn left onto Porto Rosa Drive. Follow to Jack Hill Park and the parking area. Restrooms are available in the parking lot.

Brown Creeper in a Spider's Web, and Other Encounters *continued from p.1*

I was recently birding with a small group downstream of the Gristmill access to the American River Parkway when Jeri Langham spotted a Wood Duck eating a mid-sized bullfrog. I didn't know such a large prey item was on the menu, but after a minute or so of positioning and tenderizing, the frog vanished into the Wood Duck's throat.

At a pond on the Bufferlands, I've seen multiple instances of Snowy Egrets hovering above foraging Double-crested Cormorants. One of the ponds has an island where dozens of cormorants gather to loaf, along with about to 15 Snowy Egrets, a few Great Egrets, and the occasional Great Blue Heron. Cormorant flotillas head into the water from the island to forage, and when they find and pursue a school of fish, diving and rushing after them near the surface, sometimes the whole group of Snowies, along with the occasional Great, will fly out, hover over the cormorants, and peck at the water. I haven't seen one successfully catch a fish this way, but it's clear they are trying. Once, a Great Egret was so intent that it ended up in the water with only its head and part of its neck above the surface.



Wood Duck consuming a frog by Chris Conard

The cormorants must not fully swallow all the fish they catch because the Snowies harass them, poking their bills and throats. Once I saw a fish pop part way out of the bill of a cormorant that had been on shore for a few minutes. A Snowy had a brief tussle with it

over the fish, but the cormorant retained it, and then the Snowy ran and probed at the bills of several nearby cormorants before settling down to loafing again.

Chris Conard

Protecting the Trees and Birds of Capitol Park

Recently, Sacramento Audubon was contacted by the California Capitol Historic Preservation Society (CCHPS) asking for our assistance in protecting the trees and birds of Capitol Park.

Here's what CCHPS Volunteer Kate Riley had to say:

The California State Legislature's Capitol Annex Project would dramatically reshape the historic State Capitol. The historic Midcentury Modern Capitol Annex, designed by renowned State Architect Alfred Eichler, would be demolished and replaced with a much larger, glass-sheathed monstrosity. The West Plaza and Capitol Steps of the original restored Capitol – the site of innumerable marches, speeches, and celebrations – would be eliminated by a Visitor Center with a theme-park-style entrance. More than 60 trees, including many massive historic trees, would be removed and others threatened. All at a staggering cost of up to \$1 billion, using General Fund monies sorely needed for our state's infrastructure and economic recovery.

Over the past year, a broad cross-section of opposition to this billion-dollar boondoggle has been growing, including business organizations, environmental and historic preservation groups, and taxpayers associations. Our calls for a reasonable re-shaping



Capitol Dome and Park,
by Nathen Guisande

of the Project – that preserves and modernizes the historic Annex Building, saves over \$500 million and all the trees, and ensures the access and safety of public and employees – have been ignored by the Legislature. "Save the Capitol, Save the Trees" has filed suit in the Superior Court of California on CEQA issues to stop the Project.

"Save the Capitol, Save the Trees" has filed suit in the Superior Court of California on CEQA issues to stop the Project.

Ms. Riley also sent an excerpt of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the project. [This excerpt of the DEIR](#) outlines potential direct and indirect disturbance of nesting Swainson's Hawks, White-tailed Kites, and other native birds.

You can read more about the opposition to the Capitol Annex Project and the suit being filed in this [Sacramento Bee article](#): "Environmentalists Sue To Block Demolition Of The California Capitol Annex." The California Capitol Historic Preservation Society is seeking donations to help fund this lawsuit. Visit <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/news/protecting-the-trees-and-birds-of-capitol-park>.

Bill Bianco

Seasonal Sightings

July 1 to July 31

As expected for July, many of the highlights came in the form of migrant shorebirds, and by the end of the month, the first of the migrant warblers were being reported. In a summer where water is at a premium, consistent water at the Davis Wetlands and the Woodland WTP produced regular reports of **Canvasbacks**, **Redheads**, and **Lesser Scaup** throughout the month, and even a **Greater Scaup** on 7/17 at the Woodland WTP. A UC Davis study team captured a single **Allen's Hummingbird** on 7/23 and 7/30 from a regular study site along Putah Creek between Winters and Davis. **Vaux's Swifts** are quite rare this time of year, so reports along the American River Parkway from Sailor Bar on 7/13 and from the William B. Pond access on 7/20 were a surprise.

Two adult **Snowy Plovers** found at the North Regional Pond near the Woodland WTP on 7/19 were among the most notable shorebird reports. July **Marbled Godwits** are fairly regular in Yolo County, but several at Folsom Pt from 7/13-25, and one at the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (SRWTP) on 7/19 were more unexpected. A **Baird's Sandpiper** photographed on 7/31 at Folsom Pt. was a little earlier than expected. A **Solitary Sandpiper**



Least Bittern by Susan Young

was found at SRWTP from 7/24-26, and several **Willetts** were reported in Yolo County along with one at Folsom Pt on 7/26. Regular **Least Bittern** reports, with up to three individuals, came from the Davis Wetlands throughout the month, and two were found at Wild Wings Park at Cache Creek on 7/24. A **Prairie Falcon** was a nice surprise for the time of year along Meiss Rd on 7/18.

Bank Swallows haven't nested along the American River Parkway for nearly two decades, and now the only site producing good numbers in Sacramento County is Sherman Island, where dispersing birds were found among the swallow flocks toward the end of the month. Rare summer records of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** came from Davis on 7/1 and 7/23, and from Sailor Bar on 7/18. **Dark-eyed Juncos** were reported from Davis on 7/5, with two on 7/21, continuing a recent pattern of breeding season records there; oddly, they have been absent the past two years from breeding sites frequented for about two decades at a few sites at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). **Yellow Warblers** continued at the "Accidental Forest" portion of CRP, with the last of the season noted on 7/27. Early migrant warblers included **Orange-crowned**, **Black-throated Gray**, **Hermit**, and **Wilson's warblers**. From outside the area typically covered here, but certainly worth mentioning, were two **Great Gray Owls** coming to water on private property well south of Hwy 50 and east of Placerville.

To view photos of some of the highlights, visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/bird-sightings, and then click on the highlighted eBird checklists.

The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000-foot contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club listserv (groups.io/g/centralvalleybirds) and in eBird (ebird.org). It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports: Penny Bravo, Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Brent Campos, Lyann Comrack, Andy Engilis, Scott Hoppe, Emmett Iverson, Robin Kulakow, Adam Kucharek, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Barbara Leary, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Lisa Moraga, Jack Parlapiano, Zane Pickus, Ina Rommeck, Jason Riggio, Jim Rowoth, Uday Sant, Steve Scott, and John Trochet. Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

Chris Conard

Central Valley Birding Symposium Will Be Virtual November 19-20, 2021

CVBS is looking forward to sharing the Bird Club's activities from these past 16 months. There are many positive developments that the Bird Club has been involved with recently.

Save the dates for the virtual symposium: Friday, November 19, and Saturday, November 20, 2021. Program information will be posted at <https://www.cvbirds.org/events/symposium/25th-annual-cvbc-symposium/>

Help Protect Wildlife and the Environment

Since 1981 California Fish and Wildlife's CalTIP witness program has been available to the public to help protect the state's wildlife and fish resources.



Poaching incidents have increased in the American River Parkway. We encourage people using the parkway and other recreation areas to report poaching, pollution, and wildlife violations by using CalTIP. The number is 1-888-334-2258 and is available 24/7. Reporting is confidential and you don't have to give your name.

For more information visit <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Enforcement/CalTIP>.

Use CalTIP to report poaching, pollution, and wildlife violations. Call 1-888-334-2258.

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.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members.

Dale Dondero

Kathryn McOmie

Lisa Qing

Jeremiah Tattersall

Maureen Tracy

Thank You For Your Generous Donations!

Sacramento Audubon Society has received a generous bequest from the Estate Of Carol E. Scott

General Fund

Patrick & Nancy Carney, M. Cordova & K. Peters, Craig DeMartini, Regina Gandour-Edwards, Bud Getty, David Harlow, Susan Scott & Ed Harper, Michael J. Harris, Gary & Cary S. Hart, John & Ellen Huls, Peggy Jenkins, Kathy Kayner, Sharon Lenn, Therese Lowrey, Mary Beth Metcalf, Bea Pearson, Beverly J. Spencer, Marilyn And Donald Spiegel, Donald Taylor, Maureen Tracy

Education and Conservation Fund

M. Cordova & K. Peters, Craig DeMartini, Bud Getty, Susan Goodrich, Susan Scott & Ed Harper, Michael J. Harris, Gary & Cary S. Hart, Jeanette Hess, John & Ellen Huls, Therese Lowrey, Joyce A. Mihanovich, Bea Pearson, Deldi Reyes, Vicki Stoffers, Jack & Phyllis Wilburn *donated in Memory Of Ken Poerner.*

Bobelaine Sanctuary

Alice Bauman, M. Cordova & K. Peters, Craig DeMartini, Susan Scott & Ed Harper, Michael J. Harris, John & Ellen Huls, Therese Lowrey, Mary Beth Metcalf *donated in Memory Of Ken Poerner,* Bea Pearson, M. A. Nunes *donated in Memory Of Ken Poerner,* Jane Van Kessel *donated in Memory Of Ken Poerner,* Richard & Salli Warinner, William Woodward, Phil & Janet Zeitman.

Many thanks to all of you for your continued support of Sacramento Audubon and its work in the community. Donations to the Bobelaine Sanctuary are encouraged to help defray the cost of management.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

Your membership supports the SAS mission of conservation, environmental education and protection of the region’s natural ecosystems and diverse wildlife populations. All new members will only receive our newsletter online so be sure to include your email address and check if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

www.sacramentoaudubon.org

membership@sacramentoaudubon.org

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

Date _____

The Observer Newsletter \$35 per address (1 Year) \$ _____

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society, or use your credit card or PayPal on our website at: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Action Alert: Y / N

New members will receive *The Observer* in color, via email (please provide your email address above.) If you would prefer a black and white paper copy mailed to you instead, please email membership@sacramentoaudubon.org

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Please contact President, Bill Bianco, at biancowm@yahoo.com; or 916-372-3318 to find out how the Board Meeting is being held. Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month, except for June, July, and December when no meetings are held. The next meeting is September 28.

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

Field Trip Information

Due to continuing coronavirus restrictions, SAS is not currently offering field trips. Suggested places to bird according to the month can be found on page 2.

See the Latest SAS Action on Facebook 

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

Sacramento Audubon Society
P.O. Box 160694
Sacramento, CA 95816

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit #1827
Sacramento, CA

Address Correction Requested

Dated Material: Please Expedite Delivery



SACRAMENTO
AUDUBON SOCIETY

www.sacramentoaudubon.org
facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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

Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Membership/Subscriptions: Jane Van Kessel
membership@sacramentoaudubon.org
P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

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

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

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

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

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

Sacramento Audubon September Program

How to Photograph Birds

Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 7pm

Presented by William J. Carroll III



William J. Carroll III

The September meeting will be held online via Cisco Webex. To receive a link to join the meeting, email meetings@sacramentoaudubon.org