

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 69 • NO. 3

MARCH 2017

General Meeting

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Assembly Room, 7pm

Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls
Paul Bannick

Award winning photographer Paul Bannick is presenting a new program featuring video, sound, stories from the field and several dozen new images from his brand-new book: *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls*. Paul uses intimate, yet dramatic images, to follow owls through the course of one year and in their distinct habitats.

Paul will show us the four seasons on territory, as each stage in an owl's life is chronicled through rare images: courtship, mating, and nesting in spring; fledging and feeding of young in summer; dispersal and gaining independence in fall; and, finally, winter's migrations and competitions for food.

His program shows how owls use the unique resources available to them in each habitat to face those challenges. All 19 species found in Canada and the United States are featured in photos, video and narrative throughout his book, with a special focus on the Northern Pygmy-Owl, Great Gray Owl, Burrowing Owl, and Snowy Owl.

Owl is a stunning follow-up to Bannick's bestselling title, *The Owl and the Woodpecker*, giving bird lovers yet another gorgeous photographic tribute, engaging natural history, and a compelling call to preserve the habitats that sustain these most iconic of birds.



Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Carmichael. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions. To keep up with current happenings follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/Sacramento Audubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

Sally Walters Schmoldt, President and Program Chair

BOBELAINE IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

Many areas of Bobelaine have been flooded and are inaccessible. However, also due to high water levels and water leaking through the levees, 50 feet of additional materials (screen, rock and gravel) are being placed at the base of the levee at the end of Laurel Ave (which is the access road to Bobelaine). This will create a barrier that will stretch several thousand feet in each direction.

California Audubon

How you can help our environment and birds, right now

If you'd like to get more involved this year, links to these suggestions can be found at ca.audubon.org.

1: Subscribe to their e-newsletter. Audubon California News comes to your email inbox every month with updates on their activities throughout the state, as well as other important conservation news.

2: Sign up to be a climate volunteer. California has an incredible opportunity to pass the most comprehensive climate policy the United States has

California Audubon continued on page 7

BIRD AND BREAKFAST AT EFFIE YEAW, MARCH 18-19

Bird and Breakfast - Traditional Event -- Saturday, March 18 at 8am

Bird and Bagels - Family-Friendly Event -- Sunday, March 19 at 8am

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and Sacramento Audubon are once again teaming up to offer a special weekend of morning birding trips coupled with wonderful breakfast fare.

This event, held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael, starts with Bird Walks guided by some of our best local birders. For weeks in advance, these guides scout the Nature Study Area so they will be able to point out nests and local rarities. After the Walk, you will join fellow birders for wonderful food and hot coffee to help raise money for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. No extensive birding experience is necessary--this event caters to all levels.

On Saturday the Bird Walk will be approximately 90 minutes long, followed by the traditional casserole breakfast buffet provided by some of the best cooks among ARNHA Board members and Nature Center volunteers. Participants can also bid for attractive baskets and experiences in the silent auction.

On Sunday, guests can choose to join either a Family Bird Walk, a one hour walk appropriate for children 6 and older, or a longer, 90-minute, Adult Bird Walk open to those ages 12 and above. The Sunday event features an extensive continental breakfast, including a lovely selection of bagels and delicious fruit.

BIRD AND BREAKFAST continued on page 7

Field Trip Findings

Cosumnes River Preserve (2/12) — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “Trip canceled per website report that all trails and parking lots are under 1–12 feet of water. Most roads into and around the Preserve are closed due to flooding.”

Merced and Mariposa County Grasslands (2/11) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Ann Burris, reported: “13 hearty birders braved a cold breezy day. Some of the highlights were: 11 Bald Eagles, 2 Golden Eagles, 12 Ferruginous Hawks, Merlin, Prairie Falcon, Loggerhead Shrike, Hooded Mergansers and Mountain Bluebirds. We were only able to cover half of the 30 mile route due to road and a bridge washouts. We had a really fun day with a great group of birders.”

Robinson Road, Rd. 113 and Bird’s Landing (2/10) — Leader Mark Sawyer reported: “Trip cancelled due to road closure.”

Colusa NWR (2/8) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Trip canceled due to rain, stout winds and flood warnings.”

Michigan Bar Area (2/5) — Leader Chris Conard reported: “Eleven of us enjoyed a day with strikingly clear views of the Sierra, especially the snow covered Crystal Range, including Pyramid Peak. The birding was slow at times and we failed to find Lewis’s Woodpeckers, which are mostly absent from our region this winter, but we still had many highlights. Among those were a good diversity of waterfowl, a distant pair of Bald Eagles sitting side by side, a Bald Eagle trying to catch a coot on a pond along Meiss Rd, three to four Ferruginous Hawks, an island in the Cosumnes River occupied by 30 Wilson’s Snipe, a Prairie Falcon, a couple Loggerhead Shrikes, a Phainopepla repeatedly chased by a mockingbird, close views of Lark Sparrows, and a large flock of Red-winged and Tricolored

blackbirds at the Park and Ride when we returned to the vehicles at the end of the trip.”

Mather Lake (2/4) — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: “Eleven souls braved the chance of showers to identify 50 species. Signs of early spring were suggested by large numbers of Tree Swallows showing breeding behavior as well as Bushtits spotted as individuals instead of in a flock. Nesting White-tailed Kites were spotted also. Sparrows were well represented by Lincoln, Fox, Song, White-crowned and Golden-crowned. All expressed a very good morning of birding.”

Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach (2/1) — Leader Sally Walters reported: “We had 33 species and 6 participants. Good looks at 3 complicated and tiny Lincoln’s Sparrows. The wintering Merlin was perched in 3 different locations. Cool and overcast.”

Yolo/Solano Big Day (1/29) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “It was a beautiful day in the field for 12 participants, especially considering all the rough weather we had been having. We had some setbacks, species count wise, the main one being that the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area was closed. We normally rely on the Bypass for certain species that are hard to get at other locales. But we still ended up with 102 species, only one fewer than last year. Highlights included 7 Burrowing Owls along Rd 104 just east of Davis, close views of a Rough-legged Hawk perched on a fence post on Robinson Rd and 4 Short-eared Owls working fields on Rd 30 east of Davis, our last bird of the day.”

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley — 1/28 and 1/29 — Leader Mike Savino reported: “The last two SAS/SOSC crane tours of the season were both cold but clear

and sunny days. Twenty people joined us on Saturday and eight on Sunday. Finding cranes in late January can be frustrating and Saturday proved the point. We went to Woodbridge Road which usually has a good show. This time, however, it was a wipe out. Perhaps the abundant January rains provided the cranes so many alternative roosting sites that they abandoned the Woodbridge Road area. Therefore on Sunday we tried Staten Island which rewarded us nicely; not a big fly in but big and close enough to satisfy our guests. Of course we had the “surprise” bonus of spectacular close-up views of a pair of Great Horned owls just before they took off for the night. There was also a long-lasting, colorful sunset background to hundreds of loud geese and a few swans that flew over. This added to a very pleasant Sunday evening ending of the crane tours for this season.”

Bushy Lake (1/28) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: “As soon as we left the parking lot, birds were everywhere. Along the fence a flock of White-crowned Sparrows were active. Behind us in the pond were Wood Ducks, Buffleheads and Mallards. We had to change our route as there were trees blocking our old route. Bushy Lake was full of water and very few ducks were present. Our best bird of the day was Say’s Phoebe. We had a total of 37 species. All 12 people had a fun morning.”

Birdwatching for Kids at Humbug Creek, Folsom (1/28) — Leader Mara Weston reported: “Eleven birders (including 6 children) joined me for a walk along Humbug Creek. A Peregrine Falcon perched near our meeting spot was a great way to start the morning. We also enjoyed seeing Ospreys, a pair of Hooded Mergansers, and a Virginia Rail. We ended a wonderful trip with a total of 33 species.”

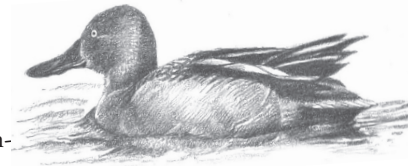
Findings continued on page 6

2016-2017 WOODFORDS CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Woodfords CBC, December 21, 2016 Compiler Dan Brown reported: “22 participants endured and enjoyed snowy conditions to tally 75 species which is about average. We want to thank all who participated and a special thank you to the folks at the Woodfords store and folks at Mud lake for their hospitality. New species for the count were Snow Goose–2 and of course, Woodhouse’s Scrub Jay–57. Highlights were, 1 Goshawk, found by Tim Fitzer et al and 1 Northern Pygmy Owl that Craig Swolgarrd and Gary Fregien found at Indian Creek Reservoir after most of us headed for home! Way to go guys! Too bad we all missed that one!”

“Species seen which are not commonly found on the valley floor included Cassin’s Finch, White-headed Woodpecker, Black-billed Magpie, Townsend’s Solitaire, Mountain Bluebird, Mountain Chickadee, Pygmy Nuthatch, Steller’s Jay, Dipper and that Goshawk! The Woodhouse’s Jay was split from the Scrub Jay last year. It’s a dimmer blue and dingier gray, with almost no necklace, a straighter bill, and higher-pitched calls. Think about signing up next year to enjoy or endure a nice trip in the snow and great new birds.”

Field Trips



Redhead
Daniel Kilby

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, for trips through April 2 contact the scheduler Sonja Sorbo, ssgasdoc@yahoo.com, 390-8463. For trips from April 3 contact the scheduler Carla Barbaro, cbarbaro@comcast.net, 717-8808.

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ridesharing/carpools. Participants are, however, encouraged to voluntarily share rides. 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 can be helpful on all trips. Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader. In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER contact the trip leader for trip status.

NOTE: Because of all the recent flooding it is especially important to contact the trip leader for the status before the trip. Fieldtrips along the American River, the Yolo Bypass and Cosumnes River Preserve are particularly in jeopardy.

Wednesday, March 1, 8am
Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach
American River Parkway
Leader: Sally Walters Schmoltdt
710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com

Join Sally for her monthly bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the American River. Sally will be looking for migrants and resident breeding birds, wrens, towhees, and other small passerine birds. From Highway 50 take Howe Ave north to Fair Oaks Blvd. Turn left onto Fair Oaks and cross over the American River. Turn right on Carlson Ave, which is the first stop light past the American River bridge. Continue on Carlson Ave to its end, at Glenn Hall Park. Meet on top of the levee. This will be a fairly easy walk, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, mud, and rock cobble. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Saturday, March 4, 8am
Bucks Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway,
El Dorado Hills
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen for a leisurely walk through this riparian habitat and look for resident and wintering species such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds, warblers, marsh birds and sparrows. In this varied habitat, there is always the possibility of unusual finds. Meet at the southeast corner of Silva Valley Parkway and Serrano Parkway. To reach this spot, on Hwy 50, pass the El Dorado Hills Boulevard exit, and take Exit #31 to Silva Valley Parkway. Turn left onto the Parkway and continue to the light at Serrano Parkway. Make a u-turn at this light and immediately park on the right. This is the trailhead.

Family Friendly Trip!!!
Sunday, March 5, 8:30am
Beals Point, Folsom Lake
Leaders: Sandra Steurer, 580-8398
sasteurer@yahoo.com
WendyMoney, 205-3194
wendydoug@msn.com

This is a great spot for family members of all ages and early March is a good time to find a nice variety of birds. Join Sandra and Wendy on a 1 to 2 mile walk in the oak woodlands with views of the lake. Recently, in addition to expected species, specialty birds such as Phainopepla, Rock Wrens, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow have been found. The trip will end before noon. Meet in the parking lot of the Beals Point unit of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area



Whimbrel
Stephen D'Amato

(turn left as you enter the parking lot, to park near the first row). The entrance to Beals Point is on Oak Hill Drive off Auburn-Folsom Rd, about 2 miles south of Douglas Blvd and about 3 miles north of Greenback Lane. The entrance fee is \$12 per car, or you may use a state (not county) park pass. There will be an optional picnic after the walk. Each person can bring a sack lunch and beverage. If weather is not on our side, we may go to a nearby family-friendly restaurant.

Sunday, March 5, 6:30am
Arrowhead Marsh and the Martin
Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline
Leaders: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net
Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Arrowhead Marsh and MLK Jr. Regional Shoreline, encompassing much of San Leandro Bay, is an extremely productive birding area. It is well known for Ridgway's Rails, lots of wintering ducks and hundreds of shorebirds during the falling tides. It has also produced rarities and hard to find species such as Nelson's and Swamp Sparrows. We will likely spend most of the day there. However, time permitting, we may visit other nearby locations. Bring lunch and liquids, and dress for possible cold early morning temps. Meet Scott and Mark at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Tuesday, March 7, 8am
Lake Solano/Putah Creek
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 947-7573
burris.nellieann@gmail.com

This is a great area to find a variety of woodpeckers, Phainopepla, Brown Creeper, Barrow's Goldeneye and many other late wintering birds. Meet Tim and Ann at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

(north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride exit a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip, which will end in the late afternoon.

Saturday, March 11, 8am
Bushy Lake, Cal Expo Floodplain
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 973-9841
mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident species and Wood Ducks are a good possibility on the lake. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. Bring water and sunscreen. This is a great trip for beginners.

Sunday, March 12, 8am
Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley
Leader: Craig Swolgaard,
530-334-3023, cswol@sbcglobal.net

This trip has been rescheduled from the rained out one of January 8th. The day will focus on wintering raptors. A published study found that California's Central Valley is one of the richest wintering areas for raptors in the country. The trip will begin at Meiss and Dillard Roads and end at Clay Station and Dillard Roads following a 33 mile loop used

survey route in a past study. Many species of raptors have been found along this productive drive during the winter months,

including Golden Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, White-tailed Kite, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and Burrowing Owl. This is also a good area to find Mountain Bluebirds in winter and has potential for other vagrants. Meet Craig at the small public parking lot on Highway 16 and Sunrise Blvd at 8am. We will car pool to try and keep the car numbers down, as some of the route uses pullouts on a busy highway. Bring a spotting scope if possible. Trip may go into early afternoon so water and food may be a good idea.

Tuesday, March 14, 8am

Falcon Crest, El Dorado Hills
Leader: Craig DeMartini, 599-3300
cloudwalk7@icloud.com

We will be scouting the oak woodlands and floodplains of Folsom Lake for falcons, eagles and osprey as well as passerines, woodpeckers and water birds. Early nest builders should be active; last year a Bald Eagle nest was found. Meet at the Falcon Crest turnout parking lot, off Salmon Falls road. From Sacramento head east on Highway 50 towards Placerville. Take the El Dorado Hills Blvd exit #30B, and go north on El Dorado Hills Blvd for approximately 4.5 miles. Cross Green Valley Road where El Dorado Hills Blvd becomes Salmon Falls Road. Continue on Salmon Falls for 3 miles to a large dirt parking lot on the left with a large wooden sign that reads "Falcon Crest". Use caution when turning across oncoming traffic.

Saturday, March 18, 8am
Sailor Bar, American River Parkway
Leader: Ben Graber, 844-8682
Bgraber984@gmail.com

Join Ben for a morning walk checking out the resident birds and looking for early nesters and spring migrants. Meet him at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. This is a good trip for beginners. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, March 19, 8am
Sacramento Bar
American River Parkway
Leader: Paul Cordero,
email preferred,
pkcordero@gmail.com, 454-4061

On this morning walk along the American River, you will see, and hear, a nice variety of resident birds and maybe a few early spring migrants. Paul will focus on finding and identifying birds by ear. This is a great trip for beginning and more experienced birders. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Wednesday, March 22, 8:30am
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

This area of the parkway is excellent for birding and Cathie will be looking for early nesting birds and returning migrants, as

well as blooming wildflowers. This is a very good trip for beginners. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park in Fair Oaks. The trip will end by noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net.

Saturday, March 25, 8am
Teal Bend and Sutter County
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 761-1124
offleash56@yahoo.com

Join Richard on a trip into Sutter County after first exploring the rich habitat at Teal Bend Golf Course. We'll then work our way north through the open grass lands and fields in search of shorebirds, hawks, and any remaining waterfowl that still linger. Meet at the Raley's Shopping Center on Arena Blvd at 8am. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd., go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1.

Sunday, March 26
Beginning Birding Field Trip
William Pond Park

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. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

Sunday, March 26, 7:30am
Mather Lake
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
wayne.blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. The lake and its surrounding grasslands host a wide variety of birds. Great-tailed Grackle and Yellow-headed Blackbirds both nest at the lake. Meet Wayne in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Zinfandel for this morning trip. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, April 1, 7am
Putah Creek Riparian Reserve
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Join Gary on a trip featuring spring migrant and resident birds. As the name implies, this area includes water and riparian habitats, and draws spring migrants and resident



Canvasback
Kirsten Munson

nesters. We can expect passerines including flycatchers, sparrows, thrushes, warblers, woodpeckers and wrens. There will also be forest hawks and river ducks. We will be hiking along Putah Creek on a narrow dirt path for up to a mile. Expect to bird for 3-4 hours. There are tables along the creek for having lunch. Meet at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Sunday, April 2, 8am

Ancil Hoffman Park

Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722

matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Mark will be looking for spring migrants, as well as returning nesting birds, and maybe something unexpected will turn up. This will be a 2 to 4 hour walk. A SAC County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. Meet Mark at the main parking lot across from the golf course. From California Ave in Fair Oaks take the Tarshes Drive entrance and follow it to the golf course area parking lot.

Wednesday, April 5, 7:30am

Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach

Leader: Sally Walters Schmoltdt

710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com

Join Sally for a morning bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the American River. Sally will be looking for migrants and resident breeding birds, wrens, towhees, and other small passerine birds. From Highway 50 take Howe Ave north to Fair Oaks Blvd. Turn left onto Fair Oaks and cross over the American River. Turn right on Carlson Ave, which is the first stop light past the American River bridge. Continue on Carlson Ave to its end, at Glenn Hall Park. Meet on top of the levee. This will be a fairly easy walk, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, and rock cobble. This is an excellent trip for beginners. Sally leads this walk monthly, so join her each month to see the seasonal changes.

Saturday, April 8, 8am till noon

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Leader: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652

mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl as well as raptors. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo

Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A) on your left, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS Radios are helpful on this trip.

Sunday, April 9, 7:30am

Mather Lake

Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457

wayne.blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident birds. Targeted birds will be Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Black-headed Grosbeaks, White-tailed Kites, Wild Turkey and Green Heron. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Sunday, April 9

Birding By Ear

Improve your birding skills by learning to recognize the songs, calls and chips of our local birds. This trip on the American River Parkway is limited to 10 people to ensure quality listening time, and will be led by Mark Martucci and Paul Cordero, two experienced birders with good auditory skills. Registration is required; email Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net to sign up and learn the meeting time and place.



Wild Turkey
Sharon Wisecarver

**FIELD TRIPS FOR
BEGINNING BIRDERS**

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sundays, March 26 and April 23

Trips are limited to 10 adult participants and registration is required.

These beginner field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on where to look and what important field marks to look for. This walk will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders.

Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 457-6882, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

Join Us For Family Field Trips!

Beals Point, Folsom Lake. On **Sunday, March 5**, at **8:30am**, Sandra Steurer and Wendy Money will lead a trip to this great spot for family members of all ages and early March is a good time to find a nice variety of birds. Join Sandra and Wendy on a 1 to 2 mile walk in the oak woodlands with views of the lake. Recently, in addition to expected species, specialty birds such as Phainopepla, Rock Wrens, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow have been found. The trip will end before noon. See page 5, middle column, for meeting place and leaders' contacts.

Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, West Sacramento. On **Saturday, April 22** at **9am** Ann Burris will lead families on a morning walk along a section of West Sacramento's Clarksburg Branch Line Trail. The paved trail and adjacent pond provide lots of good habitat for a variety of birds. Meet Ann in the parking lot east of Nugget Market off of Lake Washington Blvd. The walk will end by noon. More information, including directions and leader contact information will be in next month's Observer.

There is so much interest in these events that family-friendly trips are being planned for most months. Check Facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon or the SAS website at SacramentoAudubon.org for more details.

Findings continued from page 2

Lynch Canyon, Solano County (1/25)

— Leader Ken Poerner reported: “Eleven folks showed up for a muddy hike at Lynch Canyon Open Space which is owned by the Solano Land Trust. A one mile hike to the reservoir yielded good looks at two Golden Eagles, numerous Red-tailed Hawks, one Burrowing Owl, a Prairie Falcon, three White-tailed Kites, several Kestrels, Western Blue Birds, Say’s Phoebes, and other grassland and woodland species. Thirty total species were observed.”

Beginning Birding Field Trip, William Pond Park (1/22)

— Trip canceled due to weather and park conditions.

Lincoln Grasslands/West Placer County (1/22)

— Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Trip canceled due to wind and weather.”

Flood and Waverly Roads (1/20)

— Leader Mark Sawyer reported: “Trip canceled because of weather.”

Sweetwater Creek (1/17)

— Leader Craig DeMartini reported: “The original Sweetwater Creek destination was unavailable due to muddy conditions created by previous storms. An alternative location was chosen, Falcon Crest, located 3/4 mile to the west on Salmon Falls Road. We were rewarded with a pair of Bald Eagles occupying and vocalizing at the nest they had occupied last year. Another highlight of our day was a pair of Common Loons on Folsom Lake. Seven participants identified 47 bird species on this chilly winter day.”

Sacramento NWR (1/15)

— Leader John York reported: “Two brave souls ventured into the fog to the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. The fog went away soon and we had a beautiful, but windy day. Usual suspects showed at the refuge, thousands of geese but fewer ducks, and even fewer shorebirds. Highlights at the refuge were Bald Eagles, a Shrike, a Red-tailed Hawk that was at eye-level a few yards from the car window, and three gorgeous male Ring-necked Pheasants. On the way home, we went through the Dunnigan Hills only to find that most of the habitat is now planted in orchards. We did see some shrikes and hawks. The best bird of the trip was at the Maxwell Cemetery on the way in, where the Vermillion Flycatcher was showing and John got decent photos.”

Cathie LaZier

THE 20TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT!

As of 9pm on Sunday, February 19, the GBBC has received checklists from 116 countries. There have been 97,410 checklists submitted, 5,047 species seen and 14,269,566 individual birds counted.

Though perhaps not in California, some of the anticipated findings are higher than usual numbers of Bohemian Waxwings in the Pacific Northwest and northern Rocky Mountains. And while some winter finches have been spotted in the East, such as Red Crossbills, Common Redpolls, Evening Grosbeaks, and a few Pine Grosbeaks, there seem to be no big irruptions so far. A few eye-catching Snowy Owls have been reported in the northern half of the United States. Jon McCracken, Bird Studies Canada’s National Program Director, reminds participants in Canada and the U.S. to keep watch for snowies. He says, “The GBBC has done a terrific job of tracking irruptions of Snowy Owls southward over the past several years. We can’t predict what winter 2017 will bring, because Snowy Owl populations are so closely tied to unpredictable ‘cycles’ of lemmings in the Arctic. These cycles occur at intervals between two and six years. Nevertheless, there are already reports of Snowy Owls as far south as Virginia.

eBird advantage:

One added advantage of ebird becoming such an integral part of the GBBC around the world is that so many people from everywhere have used it to submit their lists. If you are planning a trip, trying to find an interesting place to travel, looking for places to bird while on a business trip, ebird makes all this information available to you at ebird.org/ebird/gbbc/places. This is available year-round and not just during the GBBC.

BUFFERLANDS BIRD AND NATURE SPRING TOURS

March 18, 9am–Noon, Rookery Tour

Come and experience an up-close view of a nesting colony of herons, egrets and double-crested cormorants. These beautiful birds nest in communal groups, high in the riparian forest. This area has more than 150 nests.

The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Roger Jones at jonesro@sacsewer.com the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

April 22, 8:30am–10:30am, Creek Week – Birds and Blooms Tour

The Fishhead Lake mitigation wetland is a nice example of wetlands created as mitigation for earlier wetland losses. The wetland has both a permanent and seasonal component as well as a surrounding upland buffer. Thousands of waterfowl winter at the wetland and many remain year-round to nest and raise young. Much of the area is planted to native wildflowers that bloom in early spring. California poppies, lupines, owl’s clover, baby blue-eyes, and many others can be seen spreading about the uplands and wetland edges. Visitors will receive a packet of native flower seeds to start their own native garden.

The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Roger Jones at jonesro@sacsewer.com the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

April 25, Noon–2pm, Creek Week – Creatures of the Creek

What lurks in the murky depths of Sacramento’s urban creeks? Join Regional San Bufferlands staff for an introduction to the local fish fauna. We will demonstrate fish sampling techniques in a local lake, practice hands-on (for those that aren’t too squeamish) fish identification, and discuss the natural history of California’s diverse fish communities. In addition, we will be able to view one of the direct consumers of the local fish populations as we spy on a large heron and egret rookery. This tour includes a short half-mile walk and an opportunity to see some of the Bufferlands’ riparian and wetland habitat restoration projects.

The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Steve Scott at scott@sacsewer.com the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

May 20, 10am–4pm, Walk on the Wildside

Highlights local efforts to protect and restore Central Valley habitats. This free family-oriented event includes hiking tours of local wetlands and forests, presentations, a live animal show by Wildthings, Inc, music by Cliff Compton and Mountaintop, children’s hands-on activities, informational exhibits, and more!

For more information: <http://www.regionalsan.com/event/walk-wildside>

SACRAMENTO COUNTY BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 2.0

In the late 1980s and early 1990s Tim Manolis organized a Sacramento County Breeding Bird Atlas and we have all the (unpublished) data from that effort. We decided that it would be great to begin a NEW Sac BBA to document how breeding bird distributions have changed in recent decades.

The new “twist”—connection with eBird

eBird gives us the opportunity to invite anyone who birds the county (whether a little or a lot) to contribute data to this effort. Just note any breeding behaviors on your eBird lists (a full list of the codes is found under the ‘details’ tab on both online eBird and the mobile app).

In addition, check out the new web page on the CV Bird Club site (www.cvbirds.org/birding-resources/sacramento-county-breeding-bird-atlas/) to learn more about the use of these breeding codes (download the pdf) AND stay up-to-date as we make progress.

Chris Conard, Ed Pandolfino

Birding and Nature Events

OLYMPIC BIRDFEST 2017, SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

From **April 7-9** the 14th annual Olympic Birdfest will take place in **Sequim, WA**. This festival provides participants the opportunity to view a wide variety of birds normally seen on the Olympic Peninsula. Field trips are planned for Sequim Bay, Port Angeles Harbor, Ediz Hook, Dungeness Spit, the Elwha River, Salt Creek and at Neah Bay, as well as trips through wooded areas to view songbirds and locate owls in the evening. Boat trips to Protection Island are also planned. The North Olympic Peninsula is widely known as a great place for bird watching. The days of the Olympic BirdFest are timed to overlap wintering birds and the beginning of spring migration.

In addition to the field trips, birders may participate in presentations, workshops and a banquet. There is a pre-festival, three-day, two-night nature cruise to the spectacular San Juan Archipelago with viewing of whales, porpoises, seals, and many sea birds. More information can be found at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 22nd annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 19-25** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California’s North Coast. The Klamath bioregion of California offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats on Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where over 270 species of birds have been sighted. Held at the peak of spring migration, shorebirds abound and special opportunities are planned to see many other species, including Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Snowy Plover and even whale watching. There are field trips, lectures, workshops and boat excursions led by experienced local guides. The featured speaker is Noah Stryker who completed a world big year in 2015 with over 5,000 species. Audubon has a page featuring his travels at Audubon.org/features/birding-without-borders. Further information can be found at www.godwitdays.org or call 1-800-908-WING.

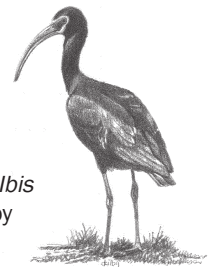
POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

Save the dates of **April 28-30** for the Bay Area’s best birding and nature extravaganza! Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. For more information and to sign up for their email newsletter, visit pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. Tickets are scheduled to go on sale on February 17, and all proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

Bird and Breakfast continued from page 1
Scouting and youth groups may be eligible for a scholarship to pay for event admission. For more information about scholarships, please contact the Effie Yeaw Nature Center at (916) 489-4918.

Mendocino-based Out of This World Optics, will be on-site Saturday showcasing a wide range of binoculars and spotting scopes for sale. They feature over 25 styles of binoculars and scopes, made especially for birding, to compare and test. This event is the perfect time to shop for new birding equipment!

Bird and Breakfast Weekend often sells out. Reservations are required. Call 489-4918 for information, questions and to make reservations or register online at www.sacnaturecenter.net/birdandbreakfast.html.



White-faced Ibis
Daniel Kilby

California Audubon

continued from page 7

ever seen. If you want to be a part of history, join them by signing up to volunteer. Some of the examples of being a climate volunteer include:

- Attending an in-district meeting with your elected official
- Using your social network to spread the word
- Making calls to your elected official
- Hosting a dinner party to share the Audubon science
- Writing a letter to the editor of your community paper
- And more!

3. Make a difference for California birds. Your donation to Audubon California will help protect birds and habitat throughout the Golden State.

Further information on ways to help can be found at the bottom of the page ca.audubon.org/ways-give.

Even if you aren’t interested in signing up for emails the ca.audubon.org site is full of current and past events important to our state and communities. Some are about laws being considered or already passed or funding for the state’s resources. Other news includes in-depth articles about our state’s birds, wildlife and bio-regions.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Julie and Fred Andrews, Jon Beck, Lucy Boehm, Bruce H Bostick, Lisa Couper, Peggy Cranston, Carol Edwards, Marcia Ferkovich, Barbara Flanigan, Taylor Florence, Kathryn M Griffin, Larry Hickey, Terrence Kopp, Alison Rood, Patsy Schiff, and Sandy Serpa made donations to the **General Fund**.

Milton Briggs, Peggy Cranston, Carol Edwards, Tom Graham, Chris Hurley, Len and Rita Marowitz, Beverly Sales, and Sandy Serpa made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Thank you for your continued support of Sacramento Audubon and its work in the community.

Mission Statement

Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

- Promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds;
- Promote the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach;
- Provide, encourage and support environmental educational opportunities; and
- Provide proactive leadership in the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

SAS OUTREACH

YOUR CHANCE TO HELP AND HAVE FUN TOO

Spring events are on the calendar and we need volunteers to work at our table. You do not need to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding, and talking to people about our field trips and SAS and you would work with an experienced volunteer.

Your help would be appreciated at one of the following event.

- Wildlife Art Festival: Saturday and Sunday, July 22 and 23

If you can work a 3 or 4 hour shift at one of these events, please contact Bill Bianco at biancwm@yahoo.com, or 372-3318. Thanks to all volunteers present and future!

Help Birds With Native Plants

Let's Make Habitat!

Search this database sponsored by National Audubon to find native plants for your zip code. At audubon.org/native-plants you enter your zip code for a list of plants, trees and shrubs for your area. If you also enter your email address they will send you a copy of the plants you've selected. You can filter it to give you only the types of plants and/or the birds that you particularly want in your yard. Or filter it by plant resources which includes nectar, fruit, caterpillars, butterflies, and nuts. The tab Local Resources includes other Audubon groups, native plant societies, local native plant nurseries and online native plant nurseries. At the bottom of the page helpful articles include:

- Things to Consider Before Hitting the Nursery: Doing a little homework before you go to the nursery will help make the transition to native plants easier.
- Why Native Plants Are Better for Birds and People: Bird-friendly landscaping provides food, saves water, and fights climate change.
- Bird-Friendly Plants FAQ: Got questions? We have answers.

As a further reward for creating bird-friendly planting you can share your success with the Plants for Birds sign for your yard. Spread the word about the power of native plants and help grow a better world for birds.

FUTURE SAS PROGRAMS

2017

- April 20** Steven T Callan, *The Game Warden's Son*
- May 18** Joe Ferreira, *Asian Nature Transect: Enjoying the Wildlife of India, Bhutan and Thailand*

Seasonal Observations

January 1 to January 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

During an historically wet January, many of our favorite locations were partially or completely under water for much of the month. It is perhaps fitting that several of the most interesting reports were of waterfowl. Four **Trumpeter Swans**, a mix of adults and juveniles, were reported among **Tundra Swans** north of Knight's Landing off of Hwy 45 on 1/5, and at least one continued there through 1/7. Four adult **Trumpeter Swans** were reported farther north and to the east of Arbuckle, along Lodi Rd from 1/7-9. An eight-mile stretch of the San Joaquin River is visible from East Sherman Island Rd in extreme southwestern Sacramento County (the far side is Contra Costa County). A flurry of reports from this stretch began on 1/26, with a male **Long-tailed Duck**, found again on 1/27 and even heard "yodeling." That bird was not refound after the second day, but on 1/29, a male **Tufted Duck** was found

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S FIELD TRIPS SPONSORED BY: SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY AND EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| Beals Point, Folsom Lake
Leaders: Sandy Steurer and Wendy Money | Sunday, March 5 |
| Family Nature Walk
Location: Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael | Saturday, March 18 |
| Family Nature Walk
Location: Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael | Saturday, April 15 |
| Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, West Sacramento
Leaders: Ann Burris | Saturday, April 22 |

For more information and directions to events at Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael, visit sacnaturecenter.org.

Other events are sponsored by Sacramento Audubon. For more information, visit sacramentoaudubon.org or [facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

SAS NEW MEMBER

Welcome to these
new members:

Rosario Chaidez	Terrence Kopp
Barbara Flanigan	Julia Macrobbe
Daniel Griffin	Anne Rhea
Cam Ha	Patsy Schiff
Hayley Crews Photography	Carolyn Vogt

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on March 28, 2017 at 7pm. Board meetings are held at the Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room, 601 Munroe St, Sacramento, 95825.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to 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. Please include your email address if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List for letter/email writing on conservation issues.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Mara Weston, Membership Chair, mara_weston@yahoo.com
7708 McClintock Way, Sacramento, CA 95828-4321

Date _____ *The Observer* Newsletter \$25 per address \$ _____

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

Send address changes to our Membership Chair to help keep down our costs.

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



Observations continued

by many and continued into February. Two **White-winged Scoters**, very rare inland, were found the same day, and also continued into February. **Greater Scaup**, approaching 1,000, were reported from the river, along with many thousands of **Snow, Ross's**, and **Greater White-fronted Geese** in the nearby fields.

A **Least Bittern** photographed at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on 1/2 was a nice find, especially for winter, and before this site was completely flooded for the rest of the month. Up to five **Mountain Plovers** were reported east of Davis along Rd 30, beginning on 1/2 and continuing for much of the month. **Caspian Terns** are fairly rare in winter, so a report of six at the Sacramento Bypass on 1/11, and a single in the vicinity of Lake Natoma and the Nimbus Hatchery from 1/15-21 were notable.

Wintering **Hammond's Flycatchers** are rare, but, along with Pacific-slope/"Western," account for the bulk

of locally found "empids" in winter. A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was found and photographed at William Land Park on 1/11 and another was found and photographed at West Pond in Davis from 1/11-14. Three **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** at Bridgeway Island Pond in West Sacramento on 1/15 were notable for the season, with at least one continuing through the end of the month. A **Townsend's Solitaire** was a nice find at Lower Cache Creek Regional Park from 1/15-26. A **Sage Thrasher**, first reported on 1/27 near Rds 25A and 96B, was seen by many into February, but had apparently first been spotted about a week earlier. A second **Sage Thrasher** was found on 1/30 along Rd 89, north of Rd 16. A gorgeous **Red Fox Sparrow**, first detected on 1/3 along the American River Parkway between Howe and Watt, was photographed and reported almost daily into February.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web

site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html).

The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000' contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve (cvbirds.org) and in eBird (ebird.org). It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Roger Adamson, Dan Airola, Stuart Angerer, Keith Bailey, Dan Brown, Andi Burnett, Terry Colborn, Matt Davis, Lily Douglas, Todd Easterla, Leo Edson, Gil Ewing, Kevin Guse, Steve Hampton, Andrew Johnson, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Ed Pandolfino, Pam Pappone, Jim Rowth, Ben Sandstrom, Kirk Swenson, and John Trochet.

Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

Chris Conard

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White-tailed Kite Dan 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 monthly January through December, except June and August, by the Sacramento Audubon Society.

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

Thursday, March 16, 2017

Paul Bannick:

*Owl: A Year In The Lives of North
American Owls*

At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm

