

# The Observer

## Sacramento Audubon Society



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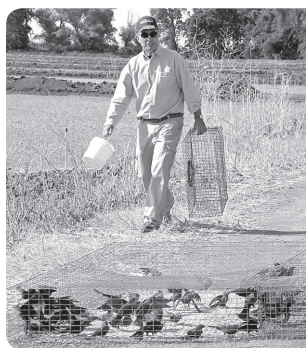
MARCH 2015

### General Meeting

**Thursday, March 19, 2015**  
**Effie Yeaw Nature Center**  
**Assembly Room, 7pm**

The Tricolor: California's Amazing Blackbird  
 Bob Meese

A near-endemic California bird, the Tricolored Blackbird was listed as endangered under the California Endangered Species Act in December, 2014 due to an on-going population decline. Through a multimedia presentation that includes still images, videos, and digital sound files, Dr. Meese will explore the tricolor's field identification, natural history, and conserva-



Dr. Meese at work with Tricolored Blackbirds

tion status. Drawing on his extensive work with the species, Bob will illustrate the tricolor's extraordinary foraging and breeding habits, explore the relationship between insect abun-

dance and reproductive success, and give recommendations for sustaining the species for the long term.

Bob Meese has worked at the Information Center for the Environment in the Department of Environmental Science and Policy at UC Davis for over 20 years. He has been conducting research

*General Meeting* continued on page 7

### BIRD AND BREAKFAST AT EFFIE YEAW MARCH 21 AND 22

**Traditional Event – Saturday, March 21 at 8am**

**Family-Friendly Event – Sunday, March 22 at 8am**

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and Sacramento Audubon are 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, good coffee and other fun 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, you can choose to join either a Family Bird Walk, a one hour walk with children 6 or over welcome, or a longer, approximately 90-minute, Adult Bird Walk open to those ages 12 and above. The Sunday event features an excellent pancake breakfast prepared by the Carmichael Kiwanis, and a nature-themed craft activity for children.

Mendocino-based Discount Binoculars will be available on Saturday showing a wide range of binoculars and spotting scopes. They feature over 25 styles of binoculars and scopes, made especially for birding, to compare and test.

This event often sells out. Reservations are required. Call 489-4918 for information, questions and to make reservations or register online at: [www.sacnaturecenter.net/birdandbreakfast15.html](http://www.sacnaturecenter.net/birdandbreakfast15.html).

### THE 18TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT! HALFTIME HIGHLIGHTS

As of mid-afternoon on Sunday, February 15, (eastern U.S. time zone) we have received checklists from 116 countries, including Australia, Kuwait, Iceland, India, South Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Turkey, and many more. Below are the top 3 countries by numbers of checklists submitted along with their species tallies.

Country	Number of Species	Number of Checklists
United States	620	42,862
Canada	227	4,029
India	589	3,119

Last year participants tallied more than 40% of the world's bird species and we're wondering if we might reach 50% this year. It will be quite a challenge! (The final count date was well past press time but maybe counters were able to add new species.)

**GBBC** continued on page 8

## Field Trip Findings

**Discovery Park (2/14)** — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “We had a wonderful morning with 15 of us seeing and counting about 43 species of birds for the GBBC. Highlights included a Pine Siskin (uncommon) and a Varied Thrush – a species which, of course, is almost common everywhere this year. The River still produced 2 Goldeneyes, and in the park, White-crowned and Golden-crowned sparrows were still present. Most birds were very visible, with many singing. It just seemed like spring!”

**William Pond Park (2/13)** — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “A dozen birders, ranging from beginners to experienced, joined me for this morning walk. We began with Lark Sparrows, then came the undoubted favorite of the trip, a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks actively constructing a nest. Hooded Merganser and Ring-necked Duck were life birds for some, and the Great Blue Heron rookery was another favorite. We totaled 48 species on the trip.”

**Yuba County Wetlands (2/8)** — Leader Richard Barbieri reported trip was rained out.

**Mather Lake (2/7)** — Leader Wayne Blunk reported trip was rained out.

**William Pond Park (2/4)** — Leader Larry Hickey reported: “The William Pond section of the American River Parkway is always productive, but it seemed especially so on this overcast mid-winter morning. Five of us were treated to extensive views of cooperative Lark Sparrows foraging on open ground just 20 yards away at the outset of our morning walk. Fifteen Great Blue Herons were on their nests, easily seen in the bare trees, and we had good views of a pair of Gadwall on the pond and a Ring-necked Duck in the river. A Downy Woodpecker working away at small galls in an oak tree right next to the path gave us an opportunity to carefully observe it’s vigorous efforts. The morning ended with a pair of Red-shouldered Hawks interacting with each other in a manner that led us to conclude they would soon be nesting nearby.”

**Colusa National Wildlife Refuge (2/3)** — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “A warm January afternoon made birding the beautiful Colusa National Wildlife Refuge all the more delightful. Our group of 20 enthusiastic bird watchers enjoyed more than an hour on the viewing plat-

form watching and discussing a very nice variety of geese, ducks, a few shorebirds, egrets and other expected wetland species. Afterwards the group caravanned around the auto tour loop and saw many of the same duck species, only in greater numbers. A few provided better views such as Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, Gadwall and Mallard. A highlight was the beautiful Hooded Merganser. Always a breathtaking sight! An interesting note was that in the pond at the viewing platform, the predominant white geese were Ross’s by a wide margin; however, on the tour route Snow Geese were the only white geese seen. Sharp eyes found Great Horned Owls, one of which was on a nest. Others pointed out White-faced Ibis, Long-billed Curlew and Red-shouldered Hawk.”

**Birding the Best Places (2/1)** — Leader Tim Manolis reported: “First stop on the American River Parkway was the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. There we saw 5 Barrow’s Goldeneyes (2 pairs, plus a first-year male), drake Hooded Merganser, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, 1st-year Mew Gull, 2-3 Glaucous-winged Gulls, Band-tailed Pigeon (small flock flew over), Barn Owl (in his hidey-hole on the cliff face across the river), and nice looks at a singing Rufous-crowned Sparrow on a fence above the parking lot.

“Second stop was near the Gristmill Access. We eventually saw the drake Red-breasted Merganser that has been hanging out in that area. There were Bufflehead and lots of Common Goldeneyes here as well. A flock of Pine Siskins was feeding on alder catkins along the river’s edge. We met Jeri Langham near the Gristmill Access, where he had a dark Merlin in a tree across the river providing nice, long scope views. He also pointed out the striking, presumed GoldeneyeXBufflehead hybrid swimming in the river nearby. There were quite a few (couple dozen?) Tree Swallows flying about, possibly first-of-the-spring returnees to this stretch of the river. Some of our group split off to follow Jeri back towards his place, where he was able to show them a day-roosting Western Screech-Owl in a duck nest box. All in all, a very pleasant morning’s birding, especially the excellent looks at 3 species of Mergansers, 3 species of Bucephala, and a Bucephala hybrid, to boot!”

**Yolo/Solano Big Day (1/31)** — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Despite breezy conditions for most of the day, which we all agreed cost us several species, we tallied 114 species. The bird of the day was a male Red-naped Sapsucker, which gave us all great views (within 10-15 feet at one point). Other highlights included Barrow’s Goldeneye, Burrowing Owl, many Lewis’s Woodpeckers and Varied Thrushes, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Brown Creeper. White-throated Sparrow was a great addition to the list, seen by a few in the group. And, at the end of the day as the light was fading, one car took a short detour and found a Short-eared Owl. A great day of birding for a group of 13 participants.”

**Lincoln Grasslands/West Placer County (1/25)** — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Things started out a little iffy, as we were socked in by fog but it gradually cleared. Highlights included Cackling Goose, Ferruginous Hawk, a Merlin that allowed a fairly close approach, many Lewis’s Woodpeckers and good views of Rock Wren. But I think the highlight of the day came when we were able to witness an incredible display of 2 to 3 thousand Dunlin, wheeling and turning in flight, changing colors from dark to light in waves as they turned, changing shape as if a single, living organism. I have seen flights of shorebirds do this before, but this was the most spectacular sight I have seen. Everyone was awestruck. Other interesting observations were a Horned Lark enjoying a dust bath, a Downy Woodpecker busily searching for food, and two Common Ravens, where one was feeding the other. Finally, a large colony of Black-crowned Night-Herons were resting among dried bulrushes. We tallied 97 species on a great day for 12 participants.”

**Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa SWR (1/24)** — Leaders Pam and Dan Thompson reported: “We had a great day at Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa SWR. What started out a foggy morning ended up a glorious full day of birding. The 15 participants had great looks at some really amazing highlight birds: Falcated Duck, Eurasian Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Orange-crowned Warbler, Mountain Bluebird, Sandhill Cranes and an entire field full of Snow

*Findings* continued on page 6

# Field Trips



Sharp-shinned Hawk  
Stephen D'Amato

## 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, contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, [offleash56@yahoo.com](mailto:offleash56@yahoo.com), 761-1124, for trips through March 1. For trips from March 2 contact the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, [matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com). After April 5 contact the scheduler Carla Barbaro, [cbarbaro@comcast.net](mailto:cbarbaro@comcast.net), 717-8808.

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ride-sharing/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.

### Sunday, March 1, 7am

**Highway 37 and Schollenberger Park, Petaluma**

**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722  
[matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com)**

From the West Sacramento Park and Ride, Mark will lead the group towards Petaluma, with various birding stops along Hwy 37. Moving on to the Petaluma area, he'll look for Blue-winged Teal and a variety of other waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, Common Yellowthroat and the occasional rail and possibly a Peregrine Falcon. Bring lunch and liquids and layered clothing. Meet Mark at 7am 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. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

### Sunday, March 1, 3:30pm

**Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley**

**A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon trip**

**Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392**

Our Sandhill Cranes will be leaving soon to migrate to their nesting grounds. Don't miss this opportunity to see them, as well as a variety of ducks, swans, geese, and shorebirds. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center deck at 3:30pm to hear a brief talk about Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll walk the Lost Slough Wetlands trail for views of the cranes, waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable

weather and bring binoculars. Scopes are helpful. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at [www.cosumnes.org](http://www.cosumnes.org). This is a great trip for beginners and for familie

### Saturday, March 7, 8am

**Lake Solano/Putah Creek**

**Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris**

**Tim: 870-5207, [spskua2@comcast.net](mailto:spskua2@comcast.net)**

**Ann: 947-7573**

**[burris.nellieann@gmail.com](mailto:burris.nellieann@gmail.com)**

This is a great area to find Pileated Woodpecker, Phainopepla, Brown Creeper, Barrow's Goldeneye and many other late wintering birds. Meet Tim and Ann 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.

### Saturday, March 7, 9am

**Nature and Birding Walk**

**Cosumnes River Preserve**

Not an Audubon trip, but a great walk for beginning birders, this monthly First Saturday morning walk at the CRP is led by docents who will share information about the preserve, and help you identify the various birds and plant life. This time of year waterfowl are still abundant and spring is arriving on the preserve. Meet at the Visitor Center. Further directions and maps are available at [www.cosumnes.org](http://www.cosumnes.org).

### Sunday, March 8, 7am

**NOTE: DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME**

**Golden Gate Park, San Francisco**

**Leader: Ron Storey**

### Co-coordinator:

**Mark Martucci, 833-6722**

**[matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com)**

Meet Tim at the West Sacramento Park and Ride, (from Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot), at 7am. Alternate meeting place is the boathouse at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park at 9am. We will bird around Stow Lake, including the island in the middle of the lake. After birding Stow Lake we will drive to Middle Lake and the surrounding area. We will then drive to the Sutro (Cliff House) area to look for ocean going birds. If there is a rare bird (i.e. Rustic Bunting) in the area our plans will change after our walk around Stow Lake. You can expect to see Townsend's Warbler, Pygmy Nuthatch, and Brown Creeper at Stow Lake. On past trips Ron has found both turnstone species, Wandering Tattler, Surfbird, and Red-throated Loon, not to mention the rarities Tufted Duck and Orchard Oriole on this field trip. Bring a lunch and dress in layers. This is a great trip for beginners and experienced birders. Heavy rain will cancel.

### Thursday, March 12, 8am

**Mather Lake**

**Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661**

**[Markawyer3383@yahoo.com](mailto:Markawyer3383@yahoo.com)**

Mather Lake is fast becoming one of the area's most popular birding locations, with quite a list of bird species. Join Mark to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, American Bittern, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe and Common Yellowthroat. If you bring your camera Mark may give you some photog-

*Field Trips* continued on page 4



*Field Trips* continued from page 3

raphy tips as well. 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.

**Saturday, March 14, 8am**  
**Wolf Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary,**  
**North Natomas**  
**Leader: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652**  
**mkgeiger@comcast.net**

This is a little known 60-acre wetlands created when an area of open pasture in Rio Linda was used as a borrow pit to provide dirt for levee improvements in the North area of Sacramento. Mid-March should provide a good variety of species in the open water and wetland perimeters which have been planted with native riparian shrubs and trees. Maureen will walk the perimeter and explore the different habitats along the way. On a recent visit, two Beavers were seen napping in the sun on top of their lodge near the middle of the pond. This trip will last until late morning and will involve walking on a fairly good, flat trail which may be muddy depending on rainfall. From Sacramento take I-5 north, then follow Hwy 99/70 north 1.1 miles. Take the Elkhorn Boulevard exit 525B and, turning right, continue 3.1 miles, cross Steelhead Creek, and make an immediate right turn on Sorrento into a large, unpaved parking lot. You will see a sign for the Walter S Ueda Parkway in the parking lot.

**Sunday, March 15, 6am**  
**North Bay Birding**  
**Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471**  
**shoppe01@surewest.net**

We will be exploring the area north of San Francisco, known as the North Bay. Scott will most likely concentrate on locations surrounding the Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area. This area is known for high concentrations of shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors. Likely stops will include American Canyon Wetlands, Huichica Creek and Hudeman Slough. But the itinerary could change depending on reports and conditions. This trip is designed for the adventurous, so be prepared for a full day of birding and fun. Bring lunch, liquids and layered clothing, as weather can be unpredictable in the Bay Area. Meet Scott 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.

**Wednesday, March 18, 9am**  
**Effie Yeaw Nature Center**  
**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, as well as more experienced birders. 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, ARNHA membership card or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Saturday, March 21, 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.

**Saturday, March 21, 9am-12pm**  
**Bufferlands Rookery Tour**  
**Roger Jones, 875-9174**  
**jonesro@sacsewer.com**

Not an Audubon trip but a wonderful chance to 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 the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

**Sunday, March 22, 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 25, 8am**  
**Upper Sunrise Park**  
**Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758**  
**Ishim2000@comcast.net**

Meet Marlene at the north end of the Nimbus Fish Hatchery parking lot for this morning birding trip, and expect to walk at birder's pace on an even level trail for about 2 miles. We may see migrants, ducks, and raptors. From Hwy 50 go north on Hazel Avenue; turn left on Gold Country Blvd and the hatchery is on your right. This is a good trip for beginning birders.

**Saturday, March 28, 8am**  
**Back Roads of Sierra Foothills**  
**Leader: Richard Barbieri, 761-1124**  
**Offleash56@yahoo.com**

Join Richard for a drive through the back roads of the Sierra foothills, east of Lincoln, an area comprised of dense stands of blue oak woodland, grasslands and seasonal creeks. We'll be mostly in Placer County and also in southern Nevada County. Bring lunch and water as the trip will last into the afternoon. Meet Richard at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

**Sunday, March 29, 7:30am**  
**Mather Field Park**  
**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.

**Wednesday, April 1, 8am**  
**Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach,**  
**American River Parkway**  
**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 will lead this walk again at the end of the month; come with her and see the seasonal changes.

**Saturday, April 4, 7am**  
**Caswell Memorial State Park**  
**Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636**  
**calaveri.gary@gmail.com**

Caswell Memorial State Park is about an hour south of Sacramento. Located along the meandering Stanislaus River, this riparian woodland with low shrubs and vines provides lush cover, nesting and foraging habitat, and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant bird species. Several species of swallows, sparrows, woodpeckers, thrushes and warblers are resident here in spring and summer. Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks nest here, and soaring Swainson's Hawks are regularly seen. California Thrasher and Wrentit, uncommon on the valley floor except in riparian habitats, have been seen here. Meet at the Park and Ride on the east side of Hwy 99 near the Sheldon Rd exit. Take Hwy 99 south from Sacramento to the Sheldon Road exit; cross over the freeway and go to the second signal light; turn right on East Stockton Blvd and proceed about a ¼ mile to the lot. Bring food and water and plan to spend several hours on the nature trails. Trails are level, but may be damp. There is a day use fee at the park.

**Saturday, April 4, 9am**  
**Nature and Birding Walk**  
**Cosumnes River Preserve**

Not an Audubon trip, but this monthly First Saturday morning walk at the CRP is good for beginning birders. Spring is arriving on the preserve, and the docents will share information about the preserve and help you identify the various birds and plant life. Meet at the Visitor Center. Further directions and maps are available at [www.cosumnes.org](http://www.cosumnes.org).

**Sunday, April 5, 7am**  
**Folsom Lake SRA-Granite Bay**  
**Leaders: Scott Hoppe and Mark Martucci**  
**Scott: 835-8471,**  
**shoppe01@surewest.net**  
**Mark: 833-6722**  
**matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Join Mark and Scott in exploring this diverse area of Folsom Lake. We will be hiking some of the many trails here in search of resident birds and early migrants. The area is known for Rock Wren, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Phainopepla and migrant warblers and vireos. A Bald Eagle pair has nested on an island in the lake so they are also a possibility. The trip will involve hiking of 2 to 3 miles over hilly terrain. We will likely end around mid-day or early afternoon, but bring a lunch. Please note, there is a \$12 per car fee, as this is a State Park. Meet at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

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**ON A GRAVEL PATH**

Emerging from a riparian wood, I stood upon a sandy bluff dotted with brush and chamomile. A whirlwind-shaped column of vultures spiraled over far-off grassy banks.

Flying upriver, a flock of white pelicans appeared. Reaching their darker kin, they intertwined: black, then white; then white, then black and so on until all the birds were counted.

After a time the pelicans began to leave the spiral, bright shapes dwindling into welcoming skies.

*Steven Dee Smith*

Poetry inspired while birding at Bobelaine

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**Wednesday, April 8, 7:30am**  
**Mather Field Park**  
**Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457**  
**wayne.blunk@gmail.com**

Celebrate Spring at Mather Lake with Wayne. There should be a good variety of singing and nesting birds, and Wayne will help you locate them. Meet 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 11, 7 am**  
**Putah Creek Preserve**  
**Leader: Ben Graber, 844-8682**  
**bgraber984@gmail.com**

Join Ben for this great trip exploring Putah Creek. This is one of several "Migrant traps", where this time of year a variety of migrating songbirds, including some rare ones, make their biannual appearance. Along the creek, we can expect to see a variety of warblers and flycatchers in addition to some more common resident species. Western Tanagers and Lazuli Buntings have been found here on previous trips. This is a great trip for more experienced birders and an opportunity for beginning birders to brush up on their warbler and flycatcher identification skills. We will be walking about 2 or 3 miles over varied terrain, so bring liquids and snacks. For those with the patience for more birding, and more of Ben's alleged sense of humor, there will be an optional extension to Solano Lake and Monticello Dam for Phainopepla, Rock Wren, and several species of woodpeckers. If you do join us for the Solano Lake portion, there is a \$5 parking fee. Meet Ben 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.

**Sunday, April 12, 7am-noon**  
**Pine Hill Preserve Birding**  
**Leader: Chris Conard**  
**Pre-registration is required through**  
**Pine Hill Preserve**  
**Contact Graciela Hinshaw,**  
**ghinshaw@blm.gov**  
**www.pinehillpreserve.org**

The preserve was established to protect rare native plants in El Dorado County that occur only on the specialized soils of the Pine Hill area. It stretches from Folsom Lake in the north to Hwy 50 in the south and contains more than 4,000 acres. We plan to visit newly acquired land in Kanaka Valley, with a mix of oak woodland and chaparral. We'll look for California Thrashers, Sage Sparrows, migrating warblers, and, on a clear day, great views of the Sierra and the surrounding geography. Be prepared for three miles of moderate walking.

**Thursday, April 16, 8am**  
**Sweetwater Creek**  
**Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris**  
**Tim: 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net**

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*Field Trips* continued from page 5

**Ann: 947-7573,  
burris.nellieann@gmail.com**

At this favorite spring hotspot you should find wild flowers in bloom and hear the song of the Yellow-breasted Chat. Other possibilities are Lazuli Buntings, Wrentits, California Thrashers, migrating hummingbirds, and colorful warblers. Meet at the Bella Bru in the shopping center on the northeast corner of El Dorado Hills Blvd and Highway 50. From Hwy 50 east take Exit #30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the shopping center on your right. This will be a half day trip and is a good one for beginners.

**Saturday, April 18, 8am**

**William Pond Park**

**Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266  
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com**

This area of the American River Parkway offers a variety of habitats and can turn up some surprises. Dan will be checking the backwaters of the river and the fishing pond as well as the developed park area for late wintering birds and migrants. Meet him just past the entrance kiosk for this half day trip. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east and it runs into the park.

## **VOLUNTEER TRAINING CLASSES OFFERED AT WILDLIFE CARE ASSOCIATION**

The busy season at WCA is quickly approaching and in order to prepare they are going to be holding a training class for volunteers interested in working in their baby bird nursery. The class will be held every Saturday at 1pm at the facility starting March 7th through April 25th.

Due to space constrictions, the classes will be by RSVP only, so if you are interested in attending, please email their volunteer coordinator at [wca\\_volunteers@yahoo.com](mailto:wca_volunteers@yahoo.com) with your name, phone number, and the date you would like to attend the class.

They also have a facebook page with photos of the many birds they've helped, an 'ahhh' video of a baby squirrel munching an apple, and other helpful information. You do not have to sign in to view their wonderful work, just go to [www.facebook.com/pages/Wildlife-Care-Association/437260003007349](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Wildlife-Care-Association/437260003007349).

*Findings* continued from page 2

Geese. The Black-crowned Night-Heron rookeries at Gray Lodge and Colusa were big highlights as well."

**Evening Crane tours to Woodbridge Road (1/24, 25 and 31)** — Coordinator Mike Savino reported: "These popular trips by the Save Our Sandhill Cranes organization have sometimes had dozens of participants. Driving from the Cosumnes Preserve to Woodbridge Road on the 24th, we saw well over a thousand geese in a field, mostly Snows with some Ross's and Greater White Fronts. In spite of fog and overcast, the cranes arriving at sundown landed close by a group of about 20 magnificent, majestic, tall Greaters. Clear scope views of these beauties had many visitors exclaiming with awe. On the 25th conditions were much better, but cranes were few, landing about 150 yards away, but within scope view. Spirits were raised by a singing Meadowlark perched nearby. We got a good scope view of a Great Horned owl and then watched a coyote loping through a field about 200 yards away. While the cranes were few and at a distance, the serenading of the Meadow lark, the views of the coyote, the owl and the fly overs of geese, swans and cranes all contributed to a wonderful outing. On the 31st the cranes seem to be staging in different places in preparation for their northward migration. About a dozen cranes came in before dark with only a few close enough to get a good look. Our guests seemed to have a good time nonetheless."

**Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (1/20)** — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: "Fog cleared in time for our tour. Most of the usual duck species were seen. Of the geese species, flocks of Snow Geese were seen in fly-over formation, and Greater White-fronted Geese were seen resting on the rice checks. We had a very close view of an American Bittern standing near the loop road. It did not fly off as is usually the case. A Virginia Rail made a very brief appearance."

**Beginning Birders Walk, Cosumnes River Preserve (1/18)** — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "Fog, flu and a dead battery eliminated some of our beginning birders but the remainder were enthusiastic and we totaled 40 species in our 3 hours of birding. Focusing on waterfowl, we spotted 9 species of ducks and 3 species of geese, and enjoyed

close looks at the feet of coots as they crossed the pavement. A scope look at a male Kestrel was a nice end to the morning."

**Flood and Waverly Roads (1/18)** — Linda Pittman, co-leader with Mark Martuccci, reported: "Foggy conditions made the search for raptors and other birds challenging. On the way to Waverly Road, our group of 10 had Varied Thrush and American Robins in orchards, then Lewis's Woodpeckers and a heard-only Phainopepla at the Calaveras River crossing. Searching the fence posts and as much of the grasslands we could see on Waverly Road, we were able to see Ferruginous and Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, Prairie Falcon, Horned Larks and Loggerhead Shrike. On the trip back up Waverly Road, the fog lifted a bit and revealed Burrowing Owls, Long-billed Curlews, more Ferruginous Hawks, a few shorebirds, two Bald Eagles (one adult and one sub-adult). Despite the fog and limited visibility, we found most of the expected birds in the Flood/Waverly area and had a nice day."

**Robinson Road, Road 113 and Bird's Landing (1/17)** — Leader Jenner Junghans reported: "Nine birders enjoyed a half-day of birding along Robinson, Flannery and McCormack roads in rural Dixon. The weather was overcast and chilly, but it was an excellent day of birding. Approximately two miles down Robinson Road from Hwy 113, where Robinson Road makes a sharp turn to the right, roughly 50 Mountain Plovers were seen hunkered down in the short grass. Everyone in the group got great looks at the plovers through scopes and enjoyed the surprise of 26 Long-billed Curlews that flew in and landed in the same field. American Kestrels and dark phase Red-tailed Hawks were plentiful and two Burrowing Owls were seen in two different locations along Robinson Road. The group spotted three Ferruginous Hawks, two that hung out together, and we had a possible sighting of a Rough-legged Hawk, but were unable to relocate the bird to confirm its identification. Say's Phoebes, Loggerhead Shrikes and Western Meadowlarks were frequently seen. The pond along McCormack Road had water in it for the first time in the last few years and produced Snow Geese, Gadwall, Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, Mallard and Northern Pintail."

*Pete Hayes*



*General Meeting* continued from page 1

on Tricolored Blackbirds for 10 years and banding them for 8 years. Through intensive monitoring and focused research, he has helped to identify over 100 new colony locations, banded nearly 57,000 birds, and has documented a strong relationship between reproductive success and insect abundance. Bob's work has taken him from San Diego County to Butte County, with a focus on the Central Valley from Kern County to Glenn County. Prior to his work with tricolors, Bob served as a member of the Peregrine Falcon recovery team for the Colorado Division of Wildlife and is currently a member of the World Commission on Protected Areas, an international network of protected area experts that is administered by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), with members in 140 countries.

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](http://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).

## FUTURE DATES OF FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

**Location:** William Pond Park, American River Parkway,  
**Sunday, March 8**

**Trips limited to 10 adult participants: Registration 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. Trips are limited to 10 adult participants and registration is required. Register via email to Cathie at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net), (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at (916) 457-6882, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

## Birding and Nature Events

### OLYMPIC BIRDFEST 2015, SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

From **April 10-12** the Olympic Birdfest will take place in Sequim, WA. The festival offers a most spectacular setting where you can visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet are also offered. Join the Birdfest Pre-trip on April 8-9, which is two days exploring northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders. More information can be found at [www.olympicbirdfest.org](http://www.olympicbirdfest.org).

Immediately following BirdFest, there is a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 12-14, 2015. Cruise registration can be found separately at [www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon](http://www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon).

### GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 20th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 16-21** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. The northern coast 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. Further information can be found at [www.godwitdays.org](http://www.godwitdays.org) or call 1-800-908-WING.

### POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL!

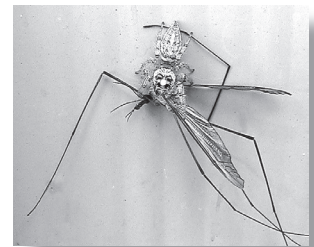
Save the dates of **April 24-26** for the Bay Area's best birding and nature extravaganza! Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. The keynote speaker will be Steve Howell: *SHIFT HAPPENS: Rare (Vagrant) Birds in North America*.

For more information, visit [www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org). Tickets are scheduled to go on sale February 20, and all proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

### FAMILY-FRIENDLY TRIPS

Sacramento Audubon has joined with the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael to offer birding/nature walks as a way of maximizing efforts to serve families with children who are looking for outdoor experiences.

The family friendly trips will be offered on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 10:30am. The trips are listed with our regular field trips, and on the Effie Yeaw website, [www.sacnaturecenter.net](http://www.sacnaturecenter.net). Reservations are not needed. Simply show up at Effie Yeaw Nature Center at the appropriate day and time and walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. Our next trip takes place on April 18, followed by May 16. There will be no third Saturday trip in March because of the Bird and Breakfast event on March 21.



Jumping Spider (female *Thiodina hespera*) eating a crane fly  
The correct photographer for this photo from last month's *Observer* is Tim Manolis.

## SAS OUTREACH HELP WANTED!

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 you would work with an experienced volunteer.

**Saturday April 11**, Return of the Swainson's Hawks, Sutter's Landing Park

**Thursday, April 16**, Sacramento State Earth Day

**Saturday, April 18**, Wildflower Wonders, California Native Plant Society

**Saturday, April 18**, Creek Week, Carmichael Park

**Saturday, May 16**, Walk On The Wild Side, Beech Lake

**Saturday, May 30**, North Laguna Creek Park, Elk Grove, Sacramento Start program

If you can work a morning or afternoon shift on one of the above days, please contact Cathie LaZier at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net), or 916-457-6882.

**GBBC** continued from page 1

Along the Pacific Coast there have been good numbers of Asian birds spending the winter. Some of the strong Pacific storms in the fall may have blown a few birds off course, and once on the North American landmass it seems that some species wandered south. A Rustic Bunting in San Francisco has been a star attraction for a few months now, and has been counted for the GBBC—the first ever for San Francisco and one of very few for California.

Once again, India has been a lot of fun to watch during the GBBC! Indian birders have been abuzz on Facebook and other social media to promote the count and their great efforts are showing. This year we are seeing 598 species and 3,096 checklists (a huge increase over the 500 species and 1,184 checklists at this point last year!)

For more information about the final GBBC results, visit [gbbc.birdcount.org/](http://gbbc.birdcount.org/).

*Marshall Iliiff, eBird/GBBC, February 15, 2015*

### 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.



**SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION  
ON FACEBOOK**

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

## Seasonal Observations

**January 1 to January 31**

**Rare and Unusual Bird Reports**

[www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

**Band-tailed Pigeons**, **Steller's Jays**, **Varied Thrushes**, and **Pine Siskins** continued in high numbers into the New Year, breaking some local CBC records. Among the interesting waterfowl were the continuing **Falcated Duck** at Colusa NWR that remained into February and a male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** photographed at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) north of Desmond Rd on 1/29. The female **Red-breasted Merganser** below the Nimbus Hatchery continued on 1/1-4, with one female reported at Folsom Lake on 1/9. A male **Red-breasted Merganser** near the Gristmill access of the American River Parkway was reported from 1/22 into February, often displaying to a female **Common Merganser**. A **Surf Scoter** was found off Sherman Island in the San Joaquin River on 1/1, with six on 1/19. The **Red-throated Loon** continued on Folsom Lake through the month and a **Red-necked Grebe** was reported there on 1/9.

The most interesting raptor report was of a light morph **Harlan's Hawk** near Yolo County Rds 97 and 25A on 1/30. **Mountain Plovers** are rare away from their regular haunts in Solano County south of Dixon, so 18 found along County Line Rd at the Yolo-Colusa boundary west of I-5 on 1/29 were a nice surprise. An adult **Iceland Gull** (a state review species) photographed downstream of Nimbus Hatchery on 1/2 would be a first confirmed record for Sacramento County if accepted by the CBRC. The only **Glaucous Gull** reported in January was an adult at the Davis WTP on 1/4.

A **Long-eared Owl** was found in CRP's Tall Forest on 1/2 and the long-staying male **Costa's Hummingbird** in South Sacramento was last reported on the same date. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was a nice find at Lake Solano on 1/28. A **Hairy Woodpecker** along Lake Natoma between Young Wo Circle and Parkshore Drive from 1/27 into February, when two were reported on several occasions, was a good find for Sacramento County.

A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was reported at Babel Slough on 1/1, the continu-

ing **Hammond's Flycatcher** at William Land Park was present through at least 1/2, and a "**Western**" (**Pacific-slope/Cordilleran**) **Flycatcher** was found at the SRWTP Bufferlands on 1/5. A **Canyon Wren** reported along upper Lake Natoma below the Folsom Rodeo Grounds on 1/4 was one of just a few reports for the location, and a **Townsend's Solitaire** at Gates Canyon in Solano County on 1/4-5 was unexpected. The **Black-and-white Warbler** found on 12/27 along Babel Slough Rd was reported through 1/24. Interesting sparrow reports included two **Vesper Sparrows** along Meiss Rd on 1/30, a **Swamp Sparrow** at the Lost Slough Wetlands of CRP on 1/5, and another **Swamp Sparrow** at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area from 1/23 into February. A **Cassin's Finch** in north Davis from 1/3-7 was a nice surprise, as was a male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** at Sutter's Landing north of downtown Sacramento along the American River on 1/18, and an **Evening Grosbeak** in Woodland on 1/16.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site ([sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/](http://sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/))



## SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these  
new members:

Anne Rogers Bowlus

Melissa Gates

Colleen Pedroza

Heather White

Randall Williams

### 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 31, 2015 at 7pm, at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

## 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

Lea Landry, Membership Chair, llandry46@comcast.net  
11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

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.

## YOUR SUSTAINABLE BACKYARD

### CREATING A LIVING LANDSCAPE WORKSHOP

**When:** Saturday, March 28, 8am-3pm  
(come at 7:30am for breakfast)

**Where:** UCD Campus, Med Sci Hall Bld C, Room 180. Free parking, map sent after registration

**Cost:** \$45 includes parking, light breakfast, lunch and a special tour of the Häagen-Dazs Honey Bee Haven Garden and opportunity to purchase bee boxes for your landscape.

**Why:** Habitat for insects and animals is growing scarcer. Making your garden into a living landscape is an important way to create places of refuge for wildlife while adding biological diversity to your city. The goal of the sustainable gardener is to reduce pesticide use, select plants carefully and provide food and shelter for wild creatures, which helps tie our gardens to the larger landscape around us.

Topics to Include:

- Plants that provide "refugia" for wildlife
- Attracting birds to your landscape
- Not-so-common beneficial insects
- Green roof applications
- Less toxic methods of pest control

Join the California Center for Urban Horticulture for this workshop to learn how to create a living landscape. Garden enthusiasts and Master Gardeners welcome.



recentsightings.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. It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Roger Adamson, Dan Airola, Brent Campos, Ashley Casey, Terry Colborn, Lyann Comrack, Lily Douglas, Chris Dunford, Ken Ealy, Leo Edson, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Cory Gregory, David and Denise Hamilton, Steve Hampton, John Harris, Cliff Hawley, Jim Holmes, Clay Kemf, Dan Kopp, Alan Krakauer, Jeri Langham, Jolie Lipsig, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Ron Pozzi, Steve Scott, Charles Smith, John Sterling, Kirk Swenson, Craig Swolgaard, John Trochet, Bruce Webb, Deb Weston, and Sharon Wisecarver.

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

*Chris Conard*

For registration go to  
[ccuh.ucdavis.edu/public/ysb-series/ysb-2015/ysb-creating-a-living-landscape](http://ccuh.ucdavis.edu/public/ysb-series/ysb-2015/ysb-creating-a-living-landscape)

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*White-tailed Kite* Dan Brown

### Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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Sacramento, CA 95826  
203-1610, e-mail preferred: [conardc@gmail.com](mailto:conardc@gmail.com)

**Editor:** Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, [sawise7@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sawise7@sbcglobal.net)

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

**March 19, 2015** with Dr. Bob Meese,  
*The Tricolor: California's  
Amazing Blackbird*  
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm



*Tricolored Blackbird*  
Linda Pittman