

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 67 • NO. 9

NOVEMBER 2015

General Meeting

Thursday, November 12, 2015 (2nd Thursday)
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Why We Bird
David C Rice

In December 2013, Golden Gate Audubon Society published a book written by our guest speaker, *Why We Bird*. It contains stories from David Rice's birding trips up-and-down California for the past forty years that illustrate some of the reasons we all go birding. The book also references other books about birding (as opposed to birds). It has blurbs from Ted Floyd (editor of *Birding* magazine), ornithologist John Sterling, and the late Rich Stallcup. The illustrations are by Robin Pulich, a local birder and hummingbird rehabilitation expert. You can read David's vignette about listening to Sandhill Cranes on the website, www.whywebird.com.

David Rice has a junior Audubon pin on his bulletin board but did not buy a pair of binoculars and start birding until his mid-twenties. When he wanted to know more, he took Joe Morlan's bird identification classes in San Francisco and joined the Golden Gate Audubon Society. He is a knowledgeable birder, but adds that he's not an expert. His birding resume includes censusing for two breeding bird atlases, co-leading a Golden Gate Audubon Society (GGAS) birding backpack trip to Lassen Volcanic National Park for thirty-plus years, and finding at least 150 birds in each of California's 58 counties. He was on the board of directors of the GGAS in the 1980s, and is a co-author of the Alameda County *Breeding Bird Atlas*. He works as a psychologist in private practice and lives in Berkeley.

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, Program Chair

ONLINE DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP NOW AVAILABLE

Beginning November 1, you can now charge donations to SAS on your credit card or via PayPal on the SAS website. You may make either one-time or recurring monthly donations in any amount at www.sacramentoaudubon.org/payments.html. The Board of Directors would like your help in raising \$15,000 for Education and Conservation projects in 2015-16. Please donate generously.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2015-2016

Saturday, December 5, Daybreak, ARNHA Wildlife Count

Compiler: Bill Avery, 369-0750, 769-3357
e-mail: averyw@csus.edu (email preferred)
Annual census of birds and other wildlife
on the American River Parkway.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CBC DATES

Saturday, December 19, Woodfords Christmas Count

Coordinator: Tim Fitzner, 870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net
Compiler: Andi Salmi, 691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Sunday, December 27, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422, e-mail: mcudney@aol.com

Sunday, January 3, 2016, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610, e-mail: conardc@gmail.com

Saturday, January 9, 2016, 4th Annual Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

Compiler: Mara Weston, 208-3222, mara_weston@yahoo.com

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts,
visit natureali.org/cbcs.html.

MEMORIES FROM NATUREFEST!

This fabulous event was held on Sunday, October 4 at Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Almost 1,100 attendees enjoyed live animal shows, kids activities, demonstrations, guided nature hikes, and food/treat vendors in the beautiful Nature Center area. We'd like to extend a big thank you to the event exhibitors and we're pleased so many of you turned out and had a great time! We hope to see YOU at NatureFest next October!

NatureFest promotes science and nature education and outdoor recreation, and is an excellent opportunity to learn more about local organizations that support our community. For photos of creatures large and small, 2-legged and 4, go to sacnaturecenter.net/naturefestphotos.html.

Field Trip Findings

Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River (10/14) — Leader Craig DeMartini reported: “Twelve of us had a very nice walk along the American River, seeing 43 bird species. Our day started with an Osprey perched on a cable over the river. Along the banks we saw Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Green Heron, Spotted Sandpiper, Killdeer, Common Merganser, Double-crested Cormorant, and Mallards. A Belted Kingfisher caught and ate a small fish. The most numerous bird of the day was the White-throated Swift; several dozen continuously chattered overhead, zipping over and under the Hazel Avenue bridge. We were reminded to appreciate our common birds by a visitor from Texas who was thrilled to see our White-throated Swifts, Acorn Woodpeckers, and even our Bushtits. Our trip concluded back at the parking lot where the Osprey was now eating a fish.”

William Pond Park (10/11) — Leader Larry Hickey reported: “Nine of us enjoyed an early fall morning at the William Pond Park section of the American River Parkway. Fortunately for me we were joined by John Huls and Frank Gray, two excellent birders and experienced trip leaders, who helped us identify and understand what we were seeing and hearing throughout the morning. The morning started with good views of a large flock of Cedar Waxwings and a few Western Bluebirds. We were pleased to see and hear the return of our wintering birds in large numbers, including singing White-crowned Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets. Patricia, who drove down from Grass Valley to join us, spotted our best raptors of the morning, a White-tailed Kite and two young Red-tailed Hawks circling right above us. We had good views of our common shorebirds, Spotted Sandpipers and Greater Yellowlegs, and admired other common birds, like the large number of Turkey Vultures that seemed to be able to fly effortlessly in a completely calm, clear and windless sky and the many “chi-cago” calls of the California Quail.”

Putah Creek Preserve (10/10) — Leader Ben Graber reported: “It was a pleasant day, but not super birdy. The highlights were a Yellow Warbler, a Black-throated Gray Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, an unidentified Empidonax flycatcher suspected of being a Least, and a Great Horned Owl.”

Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek (10/7) — Leader Lea Landry reported: “Five birders joined me for a walk on the mostly shady trails near Lake Natoma. The beautiful weather did not bring many birds, but fantastic views of a male Hooded Merganser and Rufous-crowned Sparrows made the morning a treat.”

Solano County Bay to Valley (10/4) — Leader Dan Williams reported: “We had a beautiful and interesting day to say the least in Solano, and as it turned out Sonoma County. We started at Dan Foley Park in Vallejo where there wasn’t a cloud in the sky and it felt more like late spring than mid-autumn. Green Herons put on quite a show, chasing each other along the shore and across Lake Chabot. The woods were crawling with migrants and new winter arrivals. There were several gorgeous Townsend’s Warblers, as well as Yellows, Orange-crowns, Wilson’s, and Yellow-rumps in the redwoods and cottonwoods, while Red-breasted Nuthatches and Brown Creepers called away, and White-crowned, Golden-crowned, and Fox Sparrows came and went across the path. An Osprey twisted its way high overhead, as did a Wilson’s Snipe which was a bit of a surprise.”

Solano Lake/Putah Creek (10/3) — Leader Mark Sawyer reported: “Five participants saw 50 species of birds. Highlights included Red-breasted Sapsucker, Red Breasted Nuthatch, Phainopepla, Black-throated Gray Warbler and RED NAPPED SAPSUCKER!!!!” (Later confirmed by photos.)

River Bend (10/1) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Three birders joined me for what was a relatively slow birding morning, but we managed good looks at some of the small passerines. Vinegar Weed was still in bloom.”

Discovery Park (9/27) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “The trip was as usual fairly interesting. Eleven of us saw 41 species in the cool morning before the heat set in. Personal favorites were the Sooty Fox Sparrow, the Black-throated Gray Warbler and the Red-breasted Nuthatches. Always nice to walk in this remnant of the river riparian habitat as much of it was many years ago.”

Monterey Bay Coastal and Pelagic Trip (9/26-27) — Leader Mark Cudney reported: “Unusually large 4-5 foot swells greeted 24 intrepid sea-birders on Saturday morning. We steered immediately to

a pod of Hump-Backed Whales which had been feeding on a large anchovy school for several days near Moss landing. Birds were sparse along the way because “chumming” is no longer allowed in the Marine Sanctuary. As the boat approached the whales the sea became alive with hundreds of birds attracted by the whales. Numerous Sooty, Pink-footed, and Black-vented shearwaters, Black and Ashy Storm-Petrels were present. The whales put on quite a show surface feeding so close to the boat that some participants were momentarily frightened by the whale’s sudden and close appearance. As the day wore on we were greeted by an extremely large flock of Black-footed Albatross which continuously circled the boat, perhaps remembering years past when we were allowed to throw popcorn off the back of the boat as an attractant. A few birders and the leader stayed at the front of the boat, occasionally getting drenched. However; they got to see rarities such as Flesh-footed Shearwater, Least Storm-Petrel, South Polar Skua, and Scripps Murrelet. The group obtained great looks of Rhinoceros Auklets, Cassin’s Auklets, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers and Arctic Tern. Land-birding the next day started fast with an alternate plumage Blackpoll Warbler—unusual as we are more accustomed to seeing the drab fall-plumaged bird. We ended the day with a great study of numerous shorebird species at Moonglow Dairy.

Search for Fall Rarities (9/26) — Leader Chris Conard reported: “Our trip started with a stop at Lake Nicasio for a reported Ruff and Red-throated Pipit. Frustratingly, the Ruff flushed just as we arrived (we probably saw it flying away) and the pipit was a no-show. A Prairie Falcon and a Merlin may have accounted for these birds’ skittishness. We had much better luck with a male Cape May Warbler at Nunes Ranch at Point Reyes, a briefly seen Tropical Kingbird and two Wandering Tattlers at the Fish Docks, as well as spouting and diving whales (probably humpbacks) and many Sooty Shearwaters far out to sea from the trail at Chimney Rock.”

Bushy Lake/Cal Expo Floodplain (9/23) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: “Nine of us started walking from the parking area and immediately encountered a

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Field Trips



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 Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882 for trips through November 1. From November 2 through December 13, contact the scheduler Maureen Geiger, mkaygeiger@gmail.com, 444-0804 or 281-6652. (Note change of Maureen's email address.)

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.

Sunday, November 1, 8am

NOTE: Change to Daylight Savings Time
Spenceville Wildlife Area
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 761-1124
offleash56@yahoo.com

This scenic recreational area of rolling hillsides, streams, reservoirs and ponds offers a variety of wildlife. Join Richard as he searches this foothill area for wintering waterfowl, raptors and passerine species. The trip involves moderate hiking; wear appropriate footwear and layered clothing. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and dress for changeable weather. 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 past the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just after the Shell Station, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Sunday, November 1, 3:30pm—sunset

NOTE: Change to Daylight Savings Time
Sandhill Cranes and Wintering Birds
Cosumnes River Preserve/Delta area
Trip by Save Our Sandhill Cranes, Inc
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Our Sandhill Cranes are back! And your SOSOC leaders will also be looking for the wide variety of waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors who feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta. After birding the boardwalk at the CRP Lost Slough Wetlands, we'll drive along Desmond Road, and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island to see flocks of cranes coming in to roost. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars, snacks and water if you wish. Meet at the CRP Visitor Center for a brief presentation of Sandhill Crane behavior,

biology and status prior to the trip. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road, (Exit #498); go left (east) about 1 mile 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.

Saturday, November 7, 8am
Sutter's Landing Regional Park
Ben Graber, 844-8682
bgraber984@gmail.com

Join Ben to visit a newer birding destination for SAS. He will lead a low-key trip along the American River Parkway to find the common and resident species of this landmark area of Sacramento. This time of year, many species are possible with wintering raptors, shorebirds and songbirds. This is a great trip for beginners and experienced birders as well. The trip will end before noon and is located close to downtown Sacramento. Bring liquids and be prepared to walk several miles in the Parkway. From Business 80 heading east (towards Cal-Expo), exit on E Street, turn left onto E and then right on 28th Street which dead ends at the Park. Heading west on Bus 80, also take the E Street exit; turn right onto E Street, then right again onto 28th Street and proceed to the Park.

Sunday, November 8, 8am
Sacramento Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Andi Salmi, 508-7192
andisalmi@yahoo.com

Andi will be looking for the enormous flocks of ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way south. This is also a good place for raptors, and Bald Eagles can be found

here regularly. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. 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. Please note there is a \$6 day use fee for each vehicle at the refuge. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike.

Wednesday, November 11, 8am
Putah Creek Riparian Reserve
Leader: Bill Bianco, 372-3318
or 889-4849
biancowm@yahoo.com

This UC Davis Reserve along the banks of the Putah Creek can be a wonderful place to find migrants this time of year as well as wintering passerines and resident species. Join Bill for a leisurely morning walk on this easy trail west of UC Davis. This trip is good for beginners and those already familiar with the excellent birding on the Creek and will end before lunch. From I-80 near Davis, take Hwy 113 north and exit on Hutchison Drive. Turn left and at the first round-about, stay right, passing new student housing, and at the second round-about go west onto Hutchison Drive. At 1.3 miles turn left onto Hopkins Road. About 1 mile south on Hopkins you will find a parking lot on the left and the entrance to the Reserve.

Saturday, November 14, 8am
Ponds near Cal-expo and Costco

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

American River Parkway

Leader: Jane Taylor, 587-3366

tg.taylor@att.net

Please hope for rain to fill the ponds in the Exposition Blvd area of the American River Parkway! We will search for birds typical of late fall, such as waterfowl, passerines, raptors, herons and egrets, including Hooded Mergansers, Wood Ducks, crowned sparrows, California Quail, Wild Turkey and Merlin. If target ponds lack water, we will consider alternatives. Plan to walk 3 to 4 miles and wrap up by noon, so bring liquids and snacks, if desired. From Capital City Fwy, take Exposition Blvd (exit #9A) west toward Costco; turn left/south on Tribute Road and follow around the bend. Park on the left side of Tribute in the eastern-most lot just before the Capital City Freeway. Heavy rain or high winds cancel.

Sunday, November 15, 12:30pm

Flood and Waverly Roads in the Afternoon

Leader: Linda Pittman, 715-1876

pittmanl@frontiernet.net

(email preferred)

The Flood/Waverly rolling grasslands in eastern San Joaquin County are excellent for wintering raptors. This year, we'll be leaving later and looking for Short-eared Owls in addition to eagles, Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, falcons and other open country birds. Meet at the Galt Park and Ride. From Sacramento, take Hwy 99 south to the Twin Cities Rd/Hwy 104 exit (#277); turn left (east) on Twin Cities Rd, cross the freeway and turn right (south) on Stockton Blvd. The Park and Ride is just south of Twin Cities Rd. Bring snacks and liquids. Bring FRS radios and scopes if you have them. Note: there are no restrooms in this area! Heavy rain and wind cancels.

Thursday, November 19, 8am

Sacramento Bar

American River Parkway

Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722

matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

On this morning walk along the American River, you will see, and hear, a nice variety of resident and wintering birds. 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.

Thursday–Monday, November 19–22

Central Valley Birding Symposium, 2015

This birding festival is considered one of the best festivals in the country. Birders flock from near and far to enjoy the company of other birders as well as great birders and naturalists in a variety of field trips and workshops. Field trips visit surrounding hot spots to celebrate the diversity of birds wintering in the Central Valley and hear three keynote speeches by top birders on relevant topics. For more information and to register, go to www.cvbirds.org/Symposium.htm.

Saturday, November 21, 8am

William Pond Park

Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882

empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie along the first parking area just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk down to some different spots on the river, where mergansers and goldeneye can be found in the backwaters and wrens and towhees call from the bushes. California Quail, Western Bluebirds and Lark Sparrows may be found in the park area. Trip will end before noon. 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. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Saturday, November 21, 10:30am

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

This family friendly nature walk will be at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers and Wild Turkeys are abundant, but sharp eyes and ears may find Spotted Towhees or Bushtits as well. Reservations are not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalist Jaclyn from the nature center and birder Sheila Green from Audubon. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. This walk is good for beginning adults as well.

Sunday, November 22, 7:30am

King Ranch/Lynch Canyon/American Canyon Wetlands

Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804 or 281-6652, [mkaygeiger@gmail.com](mailto:mokaygeiger@gmail.com)

(Note new email address)

Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277,

kenpoe@sbcglobal.net

Solano County has wonderful birding in a variety of habitats. Join Ken and Maureen

as they drive through the King Ranch looking for burrowing owls, rock wrens, eagles and other raptors; Lynch Canyon for lunch and a short hike into the valley looking for species similar to those at King plus ducks and grebes at the reservoir pond. A possible add on, depending on the tide, will be a visit to the American Canyon Wetlands where we may see myriad shorebirds and ducks in the tidal flats close enough for good looks. This trip will last to mid-afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids. FRS radios will be useful. Meet Maureen at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave exit. Turn left and the Park and Ride will be on your immediate left. Second meeting place in Fairfield at the Safeway just east of the Waterman exit around 8 to 8:15am.

Saturday, November 28

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.

Saturday, November 28, 3:30pm

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering

Birds of the Sacramento Valley

Trip by Save Our Sandhill Cranes

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392



Sandhill Crane
Photo Illustration

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip but ducks, swans and geese, as well as shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of

the delta,

and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center deck at 3:30pm to hear a brief presentation of Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering 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. This is a great trip for beginners.

**Saturday, November 28, 8am and Sunday, November 29, 8am
Lincoln Grasslands Trips #1 and #2!!
Leaders, Team #1: Richard Barbieri
761-1124, offleash56@yahoo.com
Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net**

The grasslands and farmlands surrounding Lincoln provide some of the best winter birding in the Sacramento Valley. Because of the diversity and large area to be covered, back to back trips were offered last year. This year, once again, two teams of experienced field trip leaders will enter a friendly competition to show participants as many birds as possible. Richard and Tim will start Saturday, searching for the largest number of raptors and rarities; Scott and Mark will follow Sunday hoping to produce even better numbers. Both days, they will search the back roads of Placer County for a large variety of raptors, shorebirds, ducks, swans and sparrows plus specialty species such as Tri-colored Blackbirds and Lewis' Woodpeckers. These trips will last into the afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids as well as scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Meet in the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road off ramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight past 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 area.

**Sunday, November 29, 8am
Leaders, Team #2: Scott Hoppe,
835-8471, shoppe01@surewest.net
Mark Martucci, 833-6722,
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

See description above.

**Sunday, November 29, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
See information for November 28th
trip.**

**Tuesday, December 1, 7:30am
Bobcat Ranch, Yolo County
Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652
mkeygeiger@gmail.com (Note new
email address)
Valerie Calegari, 416-7011**

This beautiful 7,000-acre property owned by Audubon California is currently open to the public only for docent-led trips. Join Maureen and Valerie, Conservation Project Director (or the new Ranch Manager) for a rare opportunity to experience this unique property. On the hike through the blue oak woodlands, they will be looking for local and migrant bird species (which may include Golden Eagles, Lark Sparrows and Lewis's Woodpeckers). We will also learn about the restoration efforts taking place and effects of the recent, nearby fire. Clear weather will give us fabulous views of the valley. This outing involves moderate hiking on fairly level ground and should last until lunch time. Bring liquids; a picnic lunch at the Ranch is possible or a return to Winters where there are several good restaurants. There are restrooms at the meeting site. Meet at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento for a 7:30 departure. Alternate meeting place is the parking lot next to Steady Eddy's at 5 E. Main Street (intersection of Main and Railroad) in Winters by 8am. To reach the Park and Ride, from I-80, take the West Capitol Avenue exit, turn left at the light and left into the lot.

**Saturday, December 5
American River Natural History
Association Wildlife Count
Compiler: Bill Avery, 369-0750 or
769-3357
averyw@csus.edu (email preferred)**

Join fellow birders for this annual census of birds and other wildlife on the American River Parkway. Contact compiler Bill Avery for details.

**Sunday, December 6
Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River
Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311
calidris@surewest.net**

Join Ed for an informative walk along the American River and a chance to sharpen your identification skills. Ed is a great birder who will be looking for any interesting or unusual birds, with emphasis on tricky identification of the many gulls that winter on the River near Nimbus Dam. Herring, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, California, Ring-billed and Mew Gulls are all possibilities. Spotting scopes will be very useful, and be sure to bring your field guides for this

intensive study. NOTE: This trip is limited to 15 participants, and registration is required. To register and for details, please contact Maureen Geiger at 444-0804 or mkeygeiger@gmail.com. (Note new email address.)

**Sunday, December 6, 7am
Bay Area Birding
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net**

We will be exploring some popular birding spots around San Francisco Bay. Possible destinations include Arrowhead Marsh, Hayward Shoreline and, time permitting, Palo Alto Baylands. The Bay has a lot to offer in terms of diversity of shorebirds and waterfowl, and Scott will be watching posts and checking conditions to choose the best locations. Bring lunch, liquids and dress for possible cooler Bay Area weather. 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. Rain cancels.

**Saturday, December 12, 8am
Robinson Road Area
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 947-7573
Burris.nellieann@gmail.com**

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes, and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento, take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance 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.

**Sunday, December 13, 9am-Noon
Davis Wastewater Treatment Plant and
Yolo County Landfill Area, Yolo County
Leader: Steve Hampton, 956-0949
stevehampton@gmail.com**

Many birders find identification of gulls to be fairly daunting. Steve will help unravel the mysteries of sorting through some of the gulls which can often be found in a Yolo County locale famous for good

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Field Trips continued from page 5

numbers of wintering gulls. Curlews, other shorebirds, and ducks are also possible. Meet at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 9am. From Sacramento, take I-80 to west to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again to the Park and Ride behind Ikeda's Market. From there we will proceed to the best place from which to view the gulls.

Sunday, December 13
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

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flock of House Finches, White-crowned Sparrows and Northern Mockingbirds. As we progressed into the field, goldfinches started appearing out of the thistle patches. Around the edge of Bushy Lake the vegetation has grown to a height that makes it difficult to have a good view of the lake. There was very little water in the lake and there were no Wood Ducks on the water. The road behind Cal Expo is lined with trees and a few trees had warblers flitting around, such as Wilson's, Yellow, Black-throated Gray and Yellow-rumped. We had a total of 30 different species of birds."

Point Reyes for Vagrants (9/20 — Leader Dan Williams reported: "We thought we'd escape the late summer heat on the coast, but found 90 degrees and day-long brilliant sunshine at the Point. We started at the Bear Valley Earthquake Trail. Band-tailed Pigeons, Pygmy Nuthatches, Warbling and Hutton's Vireos, Townsend's, Black-throated Gray, and the newly returned Yellow-rumped Warblers, White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Fox and Chipping Sparrows, Purple Finches, and Pine Siskins gave us a good kickoff to our day list.

Next we headed to the Outer Point where we paused at Mendoza Ranch for a lone Pectoral Sandpiper and a

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Birding and Nature Events

LODI SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

The 20th annual Sandhill Crane Festival will be held **November 6-8**, at Hutchins Street Square, 125 S Hutchins Street, Lodi. Long before Lodi existed, Sandhill Cranes descended into the rich delta wetlands at the end of a long migratory journey, some from nesting grounds as far away as Siberia. As they greeted California's earliest explorers, these magnificent birds darkened the skies over winter marshes. In awe-inspiring numbers, and with a prehistoric call, stately gait, and elegant choreography, the Sandhill Crane continues to attract and inspire visitors.

For 20 years, Lodi's Sandhill Crane Festival has celebrated the return of the cranes. In partnership with the City of Lodi, the Festival continues this November, welcoming an ever-growing circle of friends to the community to share the wonder of the Sandhill Crane . . . and so much more.

Admission is free and there will be the usual great wildlife tours, workshops and presentations, an art show, live animal displays, family activities, and an exhibit hall with vendors and displays. (Stop by the Sacramento Audubon table.) Learn more about the event and register for tours at www.cranefestival.com or call (800) 581-6150. Tours fill up quickly so register or call early!

CALIFORNIA SWAN FESTIVAL

Celebrating the abundant local and migratory wildfowl of the Northern Sacramento Valley, the California Swan Festival, being held in **Marysville, November 13-15**, offers workshops, presentations, field trips and educational programs catering to bird and nature enthusiasts of all ages and levels of interest. This year's keynote speaker is Brian L Sullivan from Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

The star of the weekend is the tundra swan, recently arrived from the Arctic to its over-wintering grounds in the Central Valley and concentrated in the wetlands and rice fields of Yuba and Sutter Counties, which provide a brilliant green backdrop to the thousands of white swans feeding and preening. Arriving in the tens of thousands and in close-knit family groups, they make a spectacular show for bird watchers and photographers.

Parking and entry to the Swan Festival are free, as are a wide range of workshops and presentations on wildlife education, natural sciences, ecosystem management and photography. Vendors are on site, specializing in wildlife information and goods. More than 35 field trips are offered at affordable prices and hosted by experts. Registrations has already begun so hurry to caswanfestival.com.

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD SYMPOSIUM

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 19th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium **November 19-22**, at the Stockton Hilton Hotel. Please come and help us kick off this year's CVBS!

Thursday night's Keynote speakers are Ed Harper and Ed Pandolfino and Friday night's keynote program is presented by Steve N.G. Howell on *Shift Happens: Rare {Vagrant} Birds in North America*. Saturday night's keynote program is presented by Kate Marianchild on *Our Magnificent Valley Oaks; Hubs of their Habitats*. Workshops include programs by Steve N.G. Howell, Jon Dunn, Dan Airola; and a photo workshop by Bob Steele.

Our field trips always turn up exciting birds. Add in the always entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, the wonderful display of art and gifts for yourself or others at the Birder's Market and the camaraderie of hundreds of like-minded folks, and you know you'll have a good time! There's something for everyone interested in birds.

For further information on the line-up of speakers, workshops, and fieldtrips and registration check out our website at: www.cvbsreg.org. or call (209) 369-2010.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

A great trip for families, youth groups and newer birders, this is an opportunity to work on duck identification as well as other wetland birds.

Stop by the Cosumnes River Preserve and check out Ducks In Scopes, where docents have a row of scopes set up, including lower ones for children, giving you good views of the many colorful ducks and other wetland birds. A microscope and hand lens provide close-up looks at 'Duck Soup', dishes of water dipped from the pond full of sand fleas, dragonfly nymphs, and other squiggly things that provide the protein the birds are feeding on. The Preserve is a quick drive from Sacramento—south on I-5 to Twin Cities Road; left (east) on Twin Cities for 1 mile; then right (south) on Franklin Blvd. The viewing area is in the first parking lot on your right as you drive into the preserve. Come any time between 10am and 2pm, on the following dates:

November: Saturday 11/14 and Sunday 11/29

December: Sunday 12/6 and Saturdays 12/12, 12/19 and 12/26

Then, start the New Year off right and join us on Friday, January 1, 2016.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Saturday, November 28, and Sunday, December 13

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, (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.

Happy
Thanksgiving



OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We have one upcoming winter event on the calendar where we will need volunteers to help staff our table. You do not need to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding and talking to people about our field trips. You would be working with an experienced volunteer.

On Saturday, January 23, 2016, SAS will have a table at the Galt Winter Bird Festival. If you can work morning or afternoon for a few hours, please contact Bill Bianco at biancowf@yahoo.com, or call 372-3318.

OCTOBER'S LATE OBSERVERS

Tony Gallegos, our wonderful point man at Carmichael Printing, replied to our question of why October's issue was so late. He responded quickly, "I checked into it and found out there was a delay on the Post Office's end which will happen on occasion. Because you pay a lower price for postage it does not get priority at the Post Office and 1st class does which may have happened in this case. The postage you pay can take anywhere from 5-7 work days to receive. Hopefully this won't happen often." Thanks Tony, I guess we're lucky we usually get the newsletter on time.

Findings continued from page 6

snoozing Great Horned Owl. A few Yellow Warblers darted around in the highest branches of the cypresses, but overall migrant numbers were low here and everywhere on the Point with such clear skies and warm temps making good travelling weather.

The Fish Docks and the road to Chimney Rock were our most fruitful areas of the day. On our way down to the parking lot we paused where two birders were scoping through the terns on Drake's Bay and informed us they had just picked out 2 Common Terns among the Elegants. After picking them out, we turned to see a coyote prancing along the ridgeline behind us just in time to see it then pounce and devour a vole! Very cool Nat Geo-ish moment. Then we were treated to a Ferruginous Hawk gliding down the road, and pausing on a fencepost below us.

Snorting elephant seals, Pacific and Red-throated Loons, Clark's and Eared Grebes, Brown Pelicans, Heermann's Gulls, Common Murres, all 3 Cormorants, and an Osprey were what we observed on Drake's Bay. The trees along the way to the Fish Docks were rather quiet save a few warblers we had already seen, a

rather surprising amount of newly arrived Red-breasted Nuthatches, and a Say's Phoebe. When we got to the end of the low trail, the farthest pier sheltered 2 Black Turnstones and 2 Wandering Tattlers which were thoroughly enjoyed by all.

A final stop at Drakes Beach and Monument gifted us a roosting Barn Owl, several calling Pacific-slope Flycatchers, a flock of Quail, a single Ruddy Duck, a Kingfisher, and a calling Virginia Rail along the estero, and a pair of Red-necked Grebes out past the busy birdless beach. All in all a very nice day which yielded us 102 species and glowing tans."

Fall Migration "Wild Card" Trip (9/19) — Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Dan Tankersley, reported: "The 15 participants on this trip included 5 people from the Napa area. We had a good day with beautiful weather. Dan and I decided to go to Bodega Bay for our main destination. The biggest highlight here was finding 4 Tern species. We heard Elegant Tern fairly early, and then saw them about mid-day, as a Caspian Tern flew by. Later we saw a couple of Forster's Terns, and then at Porto Bodega, we found 2 adult and a juvenile Common Tern. Other highlights

at Bodega included a single Surfbird out at Bodega Head, both Ruddy and Black Turnstones, and at Owl Canyon, we had Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Townsend's and Yellow Warbler, Swainson's Thrush and Hutton's Vireo. After being diverted away from Doran Park because it was full, we decided to head inland, with our final destination being Ellis Creek in Petaluma. Lots of birds here at the main pond. Highlights were great looks at several Sora out in the open, a Green Heron, and some Semipalmated Plovers. It was a great group of people, and we all had a great time."

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk (9/19) — Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Cathie LaZier, reported: "This morning was a regularly scheduled nature walk at Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Three adults and Cathie Lazier and I spent a couple of hours walking the trails. It was pretty hot and late enough so it was pretty quiet. We had very few birds but did lots of plant ID. Best birds were 14 Lewis's Woodpeckers that flew over mid-morning."

Pete Hayes

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON FUTURE PROGRAMS

2015

December No meeting

2016

January 21 Ron LeValley, *Our Changing Oceans*

February 18 Maya Khosla, *Black-backed Woodpeckers*

March 17 Eric C Hansen, *Giant Gartersnake*

April 21 Ed Harper, *Birding Alaska*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Bill and Nancy Bittner, Michael Eaton, Laura Harding, Monte Ikemire, Alan Kilgore, Mary O'Gara, Dixie Robinson, Rick Skenen, Peter Thomas, Jane Van Kessel, Jon Wato, Patricia Wells and Dan Williams made donations to the **General Fund**.

Joseph Easley, Michael Eaton, Stanley Ford, Debara Johnson, John Huls, Monte Ikemire, James Joye, Alan Kilgore, Susan McIntire, M A Nunes, Mary O'Gara, Joyce Rietz, Jane Van Kessel, Dan Williams and Liz Williamson made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

The Board of Directors would like your help in raising \$15,000 for Education and Conservation projects in 2015-16. Please donate generously.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT TESTING BIRDERS

Vanderbilt University is conducting a research project testing birders funded by the National Science Foundation. They want birders of all experience levels, from beginners to experts. If you are interested in participating please go to the website: expertise.psy.vanderbilt.edu/

This project is a collaboration of members of the multi-institutional Perceptual Expertise Network (PEN) and the Temporal Dynamics of Learning Center (TDLC). The project is led by Vanderbilt University's Category Laboratory (CatLab), directed by Dr. Thomas Palmeri (thomas.j.palmeri@vanderbilt.edu).

There are many kinds of experts. Some people are expert at solving physics problems, playing chess, making medical diagnoses, or performing athletic movements. We focus on perceptual experts. Birders and ornithologists, as well as radiologists, mycologists, firefighters, and other specialists are noted for their remarkable ability to accurately and rapidly recognize, categorize, and identify objects and events within their domain of expertise. Understanding the unique abilities of experts can have important real-world implications for enhancing the development of expertise in the workplace.

ABA YOUTH CAMP REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

Registration for 2016 ABA Young Birder Camps, held in Colorado and Delaware, is now OPEN! We expect all programs to fill quickly, so if you are thinking of attending, reserve your spot now! Some scholarships are available. More information and registration can be found at events.aba.org/aba-young-birder-camps/.

FALL AND WINTER NATURE CAMPS FOR KIDS AT EFFIE YEAW

Fall camp dates for ages 5 (one class) and 6-11: November 23 and 24

Winter camp dates for ages 5 (one class) and 6-11: December 21-23 and 28-30

Get ready for animal adventures, hikes, storytelling, survival skills, art and more! This season's camps are sure to thrill!

View FALL camp descriptions and dates at sacnaturecenter.net/fallcamps15.html.

View WINTER camp descriptions and dates at sacnaturecenter.net/wintercamps15.html.

Seasonal Observations

September 1 to September 30 Rare and Unusual Bird Reports www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

During the hot days of summer, many of us long for September. Not only does it promise cooler weather, but the arrival of the first **Greater White-fronted Geese**, **Sandhill Cranes**, and **White-crowned Sparrows**, to name a few. It also is one of the best times to turn up unexpected species. This month, a **Glossy Ibis** was photographed at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) on 9/18; another surprise was a clearly seen **Black Rail** along Babel Slough on 9/14.

There were excellent shorebird reports, including four **Snowy Plovers** at the Woodland WTP on 9/4. There were a handful of **Willet** and **Marbled Godwit** reports from YBWA and a **Solitary Sandpiper** was photographed along the River Walk at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 9/19. The shorebird report of the season was a

Black Turnstone photographed and seen by many from 9/15 through 9/22 at the Woodland WTP; a **Red Knot** was at the same location on 9/17. A juvenile **Ruff** was found and photographed at YBWA from 9/20-24 and a **Sanderling** was at Beals Point, Folsom Lake, on 9/10. **Pectoral Sandpiper** reports were few, with one at Yolo County Rds 45 and 95B on 9/6, one at CRP along Desmond Rd on 9/13-14, and another at YBWA on 9/17.

The breeding **Least Terns** continued just into September, with one adult and one juvenile still present at the Sacramento Regional WTP on 9/4. "Several" **Chimney Swifts** were reported among a large flock of swifts along Babel Slough, including **Vaux's** and **White-throated**, on 9/13. A **Short-eared Owl** was reported along Cherokee Ln in Galt on 9/27 and there were two **Common Poorwills** found on the lower CRP: one on 9/12 and another on 9/21.

A **Least Flycatcher** was an excellent report from CRP on 9/16 and single **Dusky Flycatchers** were reported from CRP on the same day as well as along Michigan Bar Rd on 9/18. The first **Golden-crowned Kinglet** reported this season was at Yolo County's Grasslands Regional Park on 9/21. Rare warblers included a female or immature **American Redstart** found at the Gristmill access to ARP on 9/8 that may have been the same bird first found there on 8/30. A **Northern Parula** was found along Babel Slough on 9/5 and another was reported from Putah Creek and Mace Blvd on 9/11. A **Blackpoll Warbler** was found along Putah Creek downstream of Pedrick Rd on 9/12 and a **Black-and-white Warbler** was found at Ancil Hoffman Park on 9/22, the same site where one was seen by many last fall, and two were reported at the UC Davis Arboretum on 9/29-30. Following on last month's flurry of **Green-tailed Towhee** reports, one was photographed along

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Patricia O'Brien

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://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon)



Putah Creek between Davis and Winters on 9/6. A **Black-chinned Sparrow** found and photographed along Babel Slough on 9/30, continuing into October, was very unexpected and an extremely rare bird for the Valley floor. **Chipping Sparrows** were reported at a feeder near Hazel Ave north of the American River on 9/18, at CRP on 9/21, and at Ancil Hoffman Park on 9/23. **Brewer's Sparrow** reports came from Arcade Creek near American River College on 9/14 and Michigan Bar Rd on 9/18. Among the few **Pine Siskin** reports was one from Lost Slough at CRP on 9/6.

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

Keith Bailey, Elliot Chasin, Lisa Couper, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Ted Gilliland, Steve Hampton, Scott Hoppe, Afton Kern, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Eric LoPresti, Mark Martucci, Michael Perrone, Ron Pozzi, Mark Sawyer, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, Kevin Thomas, and John Trochet.

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

Chris Conard

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 _____

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Email _____

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

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 November 24, 2015 at 7pm. The new address for the Board meetings through November is Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room, 601 Munroe St, Sacramento, 95825. There is no meeting in December.

Minutes of Board Meetings through April 2015 can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to Board Minutes.

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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

November 12, 2015 (2nd Thursday)

David C Rice: *Why We Bird*, Books For
Sale and Signing

At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm



David C Rice