



# The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

## General Meeting

Thursday, October 21  
Shepard Garden and Arts Center  
7pm General Meeting

### The Saga of Sibbaldus Slide presentation by Ron LeValley

Sibbaldus was the genus of the blue whale when it was first named. This presentation will review the biology of this fascinating and beautiful animal. Blue whales are the largest known living animals on earth. The largest blue whale ever recorded was a female who weighed 190 tons and measured 110', 2" long. Blue whales have the largest mouth in the history of the world and can take the biggest bites ever known, which is why they can grow so large. They also have hearts the size of Volkswagens to pump blood to their massive brains and bodies. Blue whales roam all the oceans, but the 2-3,000 whales that occur along the Pacific Coast constitute the world's healthiest population.

Many mysteries remain about the endangered blue whales, including where they mate and give birth. Biologist Ron LeValley will present most of what is known in an illustrated presentation focusing on a recent trip to see the blue whales in Baja California and the effort to save the skeleton of a blue



Blue Whale  
Ron LeValley

recent Baja trip. Ron's talk will also include recordings of the deep, bone-vibrating sounds that emanate from blue whales (great for kids!).

Ron has been photographing nature for over 40 years. He is a founding member of the Mendocino Coast Photographer Guild and Gallery in Fort Bragg. As a professional pho-

### PROP 21: IMPORTANT FOR WILDLIFE AND FOR PARKS

#### The Sacramento Audubon Board fully supports Proposition 21

The Sacramento Audubon Society urges a **YES** vote on this measure by its members to secure a stable and sustainable future for California's State Parks for present and future generations.

**If California voters support Proposition 21** – the State Parks Access Pass – we will have not only a stable funding source for state parks, but a much-needed boost of \$35 million annually for our state wildlife areas and ecological reserves. The measure would give every Californian free day use of state parks in exchange for a new \$18 vehicle license fee, and seven percent of this revenue would go to public lands managed by the California Department of Fish & Game (DFG).

There are 240 of these properties scattered throughout California, totaling almost a million acres and providing habitat for more than 1,275 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and fish, including many that are listed as threatened or endangered. These lands also provide Californians with excellent opportunities to enjoy the outdoors through wildlife viewing, fishing, and hunting.

If you have ever visited Mendota Wildlife Area, Los Banos Wildlife Area, or Yolo Wildlife Area, you have witnessed the rich abundance of wildlife that DFG works hard to preserve. In fact, DFG manages these lands to provide diverse habitats such as seasonal wetlands, permanent ponds, semi-permanent and standing grain, flooded riparian woodlands, and flooded pastures. At Shasta Valley Wildlife Area in Siskiyou County, managed grazing systems have created a diverse mix of shortgrass pasture habitats for both geese and cranes. At Upper Butte Basin Wildlife Area, restored riparian habitat is benefiting a host of neotropical migrant songbirds and a variety of other wildlife. Planting of native willows and cottonwoods at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, enhanced habitat for all wildlife and provided greater opportunities for wildlife viewing.

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whale that came ashore near Fort Bragg last fall. Ron spent many weeks watching blue whales in Baja California over a twenty year period. He will review what is known, and what is not known about blue whales. The presentation will include many slides of the "Mendocino Blue Whale" as well as shots of blues from Ron's

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# Field Trip Findings

**Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands (9/15)** — Leader Chris Conard reported: “On a nice morning 18 of us enjoyed a three-mile walk through the Bufferlands. Migrant songbirds were in moderate numbers, and many were not too visible. Perhaps the best observation was of two groups of Vaux’s Swifts totaling about 10 birds. We had multiple views of Wilson’s, Yellow, and Orange-crowned Warblers, great looks at a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, a couple of Western Wood-Pewees, and lots of good views of Swainson’s Hawks and a cooperative White-tailed Kite and Cooper’s Hawk.”

**Sunrise Area, American River Parkway (9-12)** — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Fifteen birders had 50 species of birds on a morning trip that started out cool and ended up very warm. Highlights included Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Western Tanager, Phainopepla, Nashville Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Wilson’s Warbler and Black-Throated Gray Warbler.”

**Reichmuth Park (9/11)** — Leader Tim Manolis reported: “We had excellent weather, sunny and mild with no wind to speak of. About 20 folks showed up (a bit larger group than I like to have, because it is just about impossible for everyone to see every bird in the often tight confines of the park’s trail system). Migrants were present in modest numbers. Flocking to feed on grapes, Eucalyptus lerps, and other fruits were American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, and Western Tanagers. Warblers seen included Yellow, Orange-crowned, Wilson’s, Townsend’s and Black-throated Gray. Flycatchers seen (beside the ubiquitous Black Phoebe) were Pacific-slope and Willow flycatchers, Western Wood Pewee, and Olive-sided Flycatcher. Good numbers of Hummingbirds, mostly Anna’s but including some Black-chinned and Rufous/Allen’s types, were seen. Foraging overhead were Barn Swallows and White-throated Swifts. A Cooper’s Hawk made a brief appearance, and Wood Ducks were seen in the swampy part of the park. The trip tallied about 40 species in a 2-3 hour stroll around the park.”

**Point Reyes for Vagrants (9/5)** — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “While high winds on Outer Point Reyes kind of put a dampener on the birding during mid-day, all in all everyone had a good time. We began

the morning at Five Brooks, where winds were calm and birding was good. Bird activity was high and included Western Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, 4 species of warbler, 3 species of vireo, Winter Wren and Hairy Woodpecker, among others. Although birding was relatively slow on the Outer Point, we did record Pacific and Common Loons, and Pigeon Guillemot on the water; and some good finds in the trees including several species of warbler, including Hermit, one or two selasphorus hummingbirds, and a Barn Owl, as well as 2 Great Horned Owls. After lunch, we decided to head inland to Shollenberger Park in Petaluma, having heard of some rarities being sighted there. We were not disappointed. Besides numerous shorebird and waterfowl species, we found at least 3 Pectoral Sandpipers, 1 Pacific Golden-Plover, and an unexpected Solitary Sandpiper. Over all, 13 of us tallied about 105 species for the day.”

**Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands (8/29)** — Leader Chris Conard reported: “We had a nice morning with 15 participants. It was an average to good day for migrants, with 3 Pacific-slope Flycatchers, 3 Warbling Vireos, a Violet-green Swallow (rare for this location), 2 Orange-crowned, 3 Yellow, 2 Black-throated Gray, 2 MacGillivray’s, and 10 Wilson’s Warblers, 6 Common Yellowthroats, 2 Western Tanagers, and 4 Blue Grosbeaks. A few of us toured the available shorebird habitat after most of the group left, but aside from a Lesser Yellowlegs and good looks at Least and Western Sandpipers, there were no standouts, like the previous day’s 5 Snowy Plovers.”

**Bodega Bay (8/28)** — Leader Andi Salmi reported: “Our group of 15 enjoyed a sunny, breezy day at Bodega Bay, with a stop at Shollenberger Park. Ed Harper provided expert ID help as we viewed Least and Western sandpipers, Whimbrel, Willets, and Marbled Godwit, among others. We studied gulls at Doran Beach, viewing Western, Ring-billed, California and Heerman’s gulls. A highlight there were at least 8 Snowy Plovers. At Bodega Head we enjoyed repeated views of Ca Gray Whales lolling in the surf, and a River Otter at Campbell Cove. Shollenberger Park had Bonaparte’s Gull, many stilts and avocets and a Ruddy Duck still in breeding plumage.”

**Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area/Davis Wetlands (8/22)** — Leader Frank Gray Reported: “Our group had a good morning birding, although birding was somewhat slower than last year at this time due to less areas being inundated. Nonetheless, there was a good variety of species in varied habitats. Highlights included a great close-up look at a Sora, which provided great photo opportunities. Wilson’s Phalaropes and a large flock of Long-billed Curlews were among species of note at the Davis Sewage Ponds. An adult Least Bittern that was reported in the prior two weeks didn’t appear at the Yolo Bypass, nor did some Baird’s Sandpipers. We went to the heron/egret rookery on Road 103 near the end of the trip and viewed large numbers of Cattle Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Herons, and other species there. A good time was had by all.”

**Marin County Shorebirds (8/21)** — Leader Dan Williams reported: “Our day started out foggy and cool, but pleasant. Our first stop at Rush Creek Wetlands in Novato was very slow with only a few of the most common shorebirds present, so we pressed on to Inverness and Point Reyes. At Abbotts Lagoon the tide waters were a bit high, and shorebird numbers were again rather low, but early returning dabbling ducks (Shovelers, Pintail, and Green-winged Teal) were interesting to see, as well as a few Surf Scoters, and a few Heermann’s Gulls among the thousands of Californias. Our next stop was the Drake’s Bay Oyster Farm where we were finally able to track down a few Godwits, Willets, and peeps. From there we decided to try the Estero Trail after a kayaker mentioned she saw many shorebirds in that vicinity from the water.

Sure enough there were thousands of Marbled Godwits and Willets, as well as several Semipalmated Plovers, and a few Spotted Sandpipers, and Whimbrels. This was supposed to be a shorebird trip, but the songbirds along the Estero Trail stole the show, with lots of Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Pygmy Nuthatches, Brown Creepers, and Wilson’s Warblers all giving us close views. A Hairy Woodpecker, a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, a Hutton’s Vireo, a Red-breasted Nuthatch, and a Wrentit also put in appearances along this trail which we will probably all be visiting more often now!”

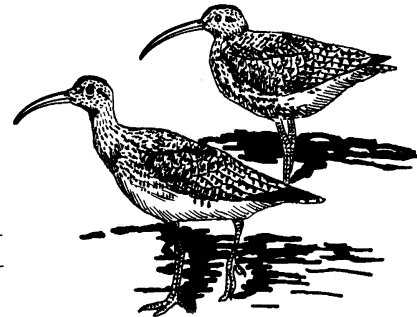
Pete Hayes

# Field Trips

## Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Mark Cudney, 987-2422, mcudney@aol.com, for trips through October 3rd. From October 4th on, call the scheduler Cathie LaZier, 457-6882, empid@earthlink.net.

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.



Whimbrel  
Stephen D'Amato

**Saturday, October 2, 7am**  
**Point Reyes for Vagrants**  
**Leader: Chris Conard, 203-1610**  
**conardc@gmail.com**

Chris is an expert birder who can sort out that confusing fall warbler. Be prepared for several miles of walking. Bring lunch and liquids for a full day of birding. Meet Chris 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, October 3, 7am**  
**Bodega Bay**  
**Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207**  
**spskua2@comcast.net**  
**Mark Martucci, 833-6722**  
**matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Join Tim and Mark for a full day of birding and fun, exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and raptors. Bring lunch, water and warm clothes. Meet 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 good trip for newer and more experienced birders.

**Wednesday, October 6, 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, looking for water birds, and watch the trees and shrubs for resident wrens and towhees, as

well as returning migrant sparrows, flickers, kinglets and others. Vinegar Weed, an interesting native plant, may be in bloom. We'll check out the pond area for grebes, herons and blackbirds, before returning through the park area where we may find bluebirds and warblers. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east and it runs into the park. Trip will end before noon, and there is a park entrance fee of \$5 per car if you don't have a County Parks Pass. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

**Saturday, October 9, 8am – noon**  
**Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek**  
**Leader: Lea Landry, 638-1141**  
**llandry@softcom.net**

This morning walk will include riparian habitat, ridge trails and a good view of Lake Natoma. Lea will be looking for both woodland birds and waterfowl. There may be some short steep climbs on the trail, and if the rains come it may be muddy, so wear appropriate footwear. Bring liquids and snacks if you wish. Lea usually finds a nice variety of birds on this trip, which is suitable for both beginning and experienced birders. Meet Lea in the parking lot of the Snowberry Creek Equestrian Staging area, (Shadow Glen Stables), about ¼ mile east on Main, from where Main and Sunset Avenues meet in Orangevale.

**Sunday, October 10**  
**Meet at Arena Blvd at 8:35am or**  
**Bobelaine Sanctuary, 9am – Noon**  
**The Quotable Naturalist**  
**Leader: John Huls, 284-7021**  
**johnhuls@sbcglobal.net**

Aldo Leopold, Donald Culross Peattie, E.O. Wilson...the list of inspirational natural history writers is very long. Bring some of

your favorite quotes to share as we check out the flora and fauna of Bobelaine in the early fall. The leisurely walk will begin at 9am, but you are encouraged to meet at 8:35am for voluntary carpooling 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 lot. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. Or you can meet the group in the Bobelaine parking lot at 9am. Take Highway 99 north toward Yuba City; about 2 miles north of the Feather River bridge turn right on Laurel Ave. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. This is a joint trip with the Sacramento Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

**Saturday, October 16, 7:30am**  
**Discovery Park**  
**Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804**  
**mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net**

This park at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers is a great place for a fall walk. Join Maureen to look for migrants, early winter arrivals and resident species generally found in the park such as red-shouldered hawks and white-tailed kites. Other possibilities include sparrows, hawks, woodpeckers and bluebirds. This will be a walking trip and end before noon. There are no restroom facilities along the way. On I-5 from downtown, take the Garden Highway exit and turn left/east onto Garden Highway. Take the first left onto Natomas Park Drive, and the first right onto Capital Park Drive. Parking is permitted on either side of the Drive.

*Field Trips* continued on page 4

*Field Trips* continued from page 3

**Sunday, October 17, 7am SHARP!  
Putah Creek Preserve**

**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722  
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Join Mark for some excellent birding, a morning walk along the levee road looking for our wintering riparian birds. Meet Mark at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders alike.

**Saturday, October 23, 7am SHARP!  
Hope Valley – Alpine County  
Fall Foliage Birding**

**Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458  
naturestoc@aol.com**

Autumn Color explodes in mid October at Hope Valley. Join Dan to enjoy the fall foliage and to look for resident and specialty birds that include: Sooty (Blue) Grouse, Williamson's Sapsucker, Stellar's Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Chickadee, Townsend's Solitaire, and Cassin's Finch. Some of the terrain is hilly, so wear sturdy shoes and dress in layers. A camera is a recommended addition to your pack. Bring water and lunch. FRS radios would also be helpful on this trip. Meet Dan at the north end of the Raley's parking lot in El Dorado Hills. 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. Meet at the far north end of the parking lot. We will leave at 7am sharp!

**Saturday October 23, 3:30 pm  
Sandhill Cranes and Other  
Wintering Birds of the  
Sacramento Valley**

**A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip**

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

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 parking lot 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

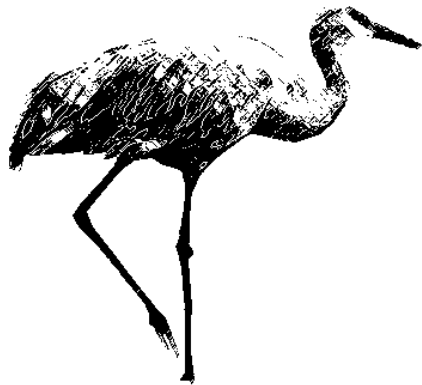
Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars, scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; 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.

**Sunday, October 24, 7am  
Bodega Bay**

**Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471  
shoppe01@earthlink.net**

Join Scott for a full day of birding around Bodega Bay, taking in a variety of habitats. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and raptors. Bring lunch, water and warm clothes. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take the West Capitol Ave exit. Turn left, and the Park and Ride will be on your immediate left. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike.

**Sunday, October 24, 3:30pm  
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering  
Birds of the Sacramento Valley**



Another opportunity to visit the Cosumnes River Preserve for Sandhill Cranes and wintering waterfowl. All trip info is same as Saturday's.

**Tuesday, October 26, 8:30am  
Yolo Basin Wildlife Area**

**Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758  
IshIM2000@comcast.net**

Join Marlene in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of

shorebirds and waterfowl as well. Raptors such as peregrine falcon are possible also. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A), on your left, at the beginning of the auto tour. Scopes are helpful on this trip, which is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Trip will end before noon.

**Saturday, October 30, 7:30am  
Spenceville Wildlife Area**

**Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603  
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 Brookfield's restaurant parking lot in Roseville. Take Eureka Road exit off I-80; go right on Eureka and first left at the stoplight (Taylor Road). The restaurant is located behind the Shell gas station.

**Saturday, October 30, 3:30pm  
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering  
Birds of the Sacramento Valley**

Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve for another trip to see the cranes and waterfowl that winter here. All information is the same as the October 23rd trip.

**Sunday, October 31, 8am  
American River**

**between Howe and Watt**

**Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791  
rey\_ality@hotmail.com**

Join Dan at his favorite spot along the Parkway in search of our wintering birds, and get to know an area he knows well. He'll find our resident and wintering birds, and will be looking for uncommon species; he's found a White-throated Sparrow the last three years. There are well worn trails and some that require a little more work, so depending on everyone's ability, he will decide how strenuous the walk will be in the morning. The trip will last until lunch time. From Hwy 50, take the Howe Avenue exit and head north; from Howe, take the first exit before the bridge. To do this, you will need to be in the right-most lane.

Cross La Riviera Drive and enter the Howe Avenue Access to the American River. There is a \$5 fee to park in the lot, or parking is available on La Riviera Drive. This trip is good for beginners and more experienced birders.

**Sunday, October 31, 3:30pm**  
**Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley**

Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve for another trip to see the cranes and waterfowl that winter here. All information same as October 23rd trip.

**Wednesday, November 3, 8am**  
**Isenberg Crane Preserve/Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk**  
**Leader: Dan Tankersley, 606-6518**  
**dtankers@winfirst.com**

Join Dan to look for wintering geese and ducks, including Gadwall, Northern Shovelers, teal and wigeon. In shallow water there may be shorebirds, such as dowitchers, sandpipers, yellowlegs, Dunlin, and maybe some surprises. Our wintering Sandhill Cranes will be back, and the usual herons and egrets will be around. The boardwalk is also a good place to look for the noisy but hard-to-see Marsh Wren, and the cryptic Wilson's Snipe. Meet Dan at the Nugget Market at 8am. Going south on I-5, take the Florin Road West exit; go west to the first signal light, (Greenhaven Drive), and make a U-turn. The parking area for the market will be on the right. This trip will end by noon. Bring FRS radios and spotting scopes if you have them. This is a great trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Thick fog cancels this trip.

**Saturday, November 6, 8:30am**  
**(in Yuba City)**  
**Northern Sutter Co. and Grey Lodge Wildlife Refuge**  
**Leaders: Don Schmoltdt and Sally Walters, 739-6465**  
**BajaOwl@surewest.net**

We will drive around the edge of Sutter Buttes, on Pass Road, West Butte Road, and North Butte Road, and then to Gray Lodge. The focus of the trip will be on raptors and waterfowl. Meet at 8:30am at the mini-mart/gas station at the junction of Hwy 20 and Acacia Ave, about 6 miles west of Yuba City. From Sacramento, take Hwy 99 north to Yuba City, then left (west) onto Hwy 20. Bring lunch and water. Don says to allow about an hour from down-

town Sacramento. For further information, call Don or Sally at 739-6465 or email at [bajaowl@surewest.net](mailto:bajaowl@surewest.net).

**Sunday, November 7, 7:30am**  
**NOTE: Daylight Savings Time Ends Today**  
**Mather Lake**  
**Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457**  
**Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com**

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations, and he usually turns up quite a list of bird species. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident and wintering birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, Wild Turkey, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe and Common Yellowthroat. Meet Wayne in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Eagle's Nest Road for this morning trip. A Sac County Parks Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.



Roughlegged Hawk

**TRIPS FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES!**

Do you know any children or youth who would like to learn about birds and the out of doors? In response to requests for child-oriented birding outings, SAS plans to fill this gap by offering field trips specifically for families with children. Leaders will work with children and youth to present the basics of birding and to show everyone local resident and wintering birds. Binoculars suitable for smaller hands will be available in case the children don't have their own. The first two trips will be during November at Folsom Sate Park near Beek's Bight; the second in January at Discovery Park near downtown Sacramento. Spaces are limited, so reservations will be needed. Please check future issues of the SAS *Observer* or the website at [sacramentoaudubon.org](http://sacramentoaudubon.org) for details or contact Maureen Geiger at 444-0804, [mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net).

**THE PRIVATE LIVES OF SANDHILL CRANES**

Every winter these large, long legged birds occupy the fields and marshes south of Sacramento, providing great opportunities for any nature enthusiast to view them. But what do you watch for? Join crane biologist, Paul Tebbel, as he tells you all about these fascinating birds and describes how to identify and appreciate the verbal and body signals cranes send to one another. This program is suitable for families, especially for children 10 years of age and older.

This presentation will be at 2PM on Saturday, October 16th at the Sylvan Oaks Library, 6700 Auburn Boulevard, Citrus Heights, 95621, 867.2215 office.

Sponsored by the Sylvan Oaks Branch Library and the Educational Committee of the Sacramento Audubon Society. Further information at [education@sacramentoaudubon.org](mailto:education@sacramentoaudubon.org) or 264-2920

**FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS, 2010-2011**

**Time:** 8am, ending by noon

**Location:** William Pond Park on the American River or similar area

**Available Dates (all Saturdays):** October 9, November 1, January 8, February 12, March 12 and April 9

**Each Trip Limited to 10 participants:** Registration required.

These outings will be geared toward people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. A brief parking lot talk will focus on choice and use of binoculars and a brief overview of birding etiquette and ethics. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the costs of hand-out materials. (If you're a repeat participant and already have the materials no donation is requested.) You do not need to be a member of Audubon to participate.

The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats and will be led by two or more experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Each trip is limited to 10 participants. 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, email address and the field trip date of your choice, or by calling Cathie at 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

## DON'T MISS GHOST BIRD

Sunday, October 24, 7:30 PM, \$5.00  
Movies on a Big Screen at The Guild  
2828 35th St, Sacramento, CA 95817  
<http://www.moviesonabigscreen.com>

### **Ghost Bird**

In 2005, scientists announced that the Ivory-billed woodpecker, a species thought to be extinct for 60 years, had been found in the swamps of Eastern Arkansas. Millions of dollars poured in from the government while ornithologists and birders flooded the swamps to find the rare bird. Down the road, the town of Brinkley - itself on the brink of extinction was transformed by the hope, commerce and controversy surrounding their feathered friend. But continued sightings by expert birders only highlighted the mysterious absence of credible evidence. Now six years later, the woodpecker remains as elusive as ever. *Ghost Bird* brings the Ivory-bill's blurry rediscovery into focus revealing our uneasy relationship with nature and the increasing uncertainty of our place within it. Director Scott Crocker is scheduled to be in attendance at this screening!



## RECENT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON BOARD ACTIONS

Members who have birded Sierra Valley know what a special place it is, and like most special places, it is threatened by development. Gary Fregien, one of our board members, who leads trips to this area, made the board aware of the Feather River Land Trust, a group who is working to conserve these wetlands and steward the ecological and cultural values for current and future generations. They have constructed a bird platform at Maddalena Ranch and they are engaged in a campaign to help protect as much of the wetlands in Sierra Valley as possible. They now have the opportunity to conserve at least 7000 additional wetland acres through purchase and/or conservation easements. At Gary's request, the Sacramento Audubon Board has donated \$1,000 towards this effort. If you would like to make a donation to help protect these wetlands and their fabulous bird life you can send a check to Feather River Land Trust, P.O. Box 1826, Quincy, CA 95971.

A little closer to home, the Sacramento Audubon Board also voted to donate \$5,000 towards the efforts of the Grass Roots Working Group and SARA to obtain adequate, stable, long term funding for our Regional Parks and Open Space System.

## 2010-2011 SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

### CONTACT INFORMATION

- President:** Keith Wagner, 709-2308, [k.wag@comcast.net](mailto:k.wag@comcast.net)  
**Vice-President:** Dan Williams, 714-943-1266, [jaegermaestro@yahoo.com](mailto:jaegermaestro@yahoo.com)  
**Treasurer:** Cathie LaZier, 457-6882, [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net)  
**Recording Secretary:** Jonilynn Okano, 397-1295, [jonilynn@rcip.com](mailto:jonilynn@rcip.com)  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Karen Zumwalt, 402-8732, [kpzumwalt@comcast.net](mailto:kpzumwalt@comcast.net)  
**Past President:** Peter Watkins, 929-6623, [P2Watkins@chw.edu](mailto:P2Watkins@chw.edu)  
**Directors:**  
Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, [spskua2@comcast.net](mailto:spskua2@comcast.net)  
Darrel Mohr, 225-3999, [mohrdd@gmail.com](mailto:mohrdd@gmail.com)  
Linda Pittman, 715-1876, [pittmanl@frontiernet.net](mailto:pittmanl@frontiernet.net)  
Gary Fregein 7008-0636, [calaveri@sbcglobal.net](mailto:calaveri@sbcglobal.net)  
Lea Landry, 638-1141, [llandry@softcom.net](mailto:llandry@softcom.net)  
**Education Chair:** Julie Serences, [education@sacramentoaudubon.org](mailto:education@sacramentoaudubon.org)  
**Conservation Chair:** Keith Wagner, 709-2308, [k.wag@comcast.net](mailto:k.wag@comcast.net)  
**Field Activities:** Andi Salmi, [andisalmi@yahoo.com](mailto:andisalmi@yahoo.com)  
**Membership Chair:** Lea Landry, 638-1141, [llandry@softcom.net](mailto:llandry@softcom.net)  
**Publicity:** Bill Dillinger, 489-4854, [bdill9@comcast.net](mailto:bdill9@comcast.net)  
**Webmaster:** Subhash Chand, 342-2783, [webmaster@sacramentoaudubon.org](mailto:webmaster@sacramentoaudubon.org)  
**Newsletter Editor:** Sharon Wisecarver, 399-1660, [sawise7@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sawise7@sbcglobal.net)

### PROP 21 continued from page 1

At the 14 major wetland wildlife areas in the state (mostly in the Central Valley), DFG emphasizes the production of food plants preferred by waterfowl, striving to assure the availability of adequate quantities of natural waterfowl food throughout the fall and winter months. This helps to support the winter waterfowl migration through the Pacific Flyway.

The \$35 million that Proposition 21 will generate for wildlife lands outside of state parks will go to restoration projects, land management, law enforcement and public safety (more wardens!), public access, and science.

### Vote YES on Proposition 21 in November

## NATIONAL AUDUBON NEWS

### Audubon Welcomes a New President

David Yarnold, Audubon's new President and CEO, took the reins September 1st. A passionate conservationist, as you might expect, Yarnold served as Executive Director of Environmental Defense Fund and President of Environmental Defense Action Fund. Prior to that, he was a Pulitzer Prize-winning editor at the San Jose Mercury News.

Audubon is in the process of updating their website ([www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org)) and the Chapter Services web pages ([chapterservices.audubon.org](http://chapterservices.audubon.org)). What the public is now seeing is the first phase in the ongoing evolution of Audubon's web presence.

The site's new navigation, updated branding and streamlined design will make Audubon information and engagement more accessible and compelling to many audiences, as well as more prominent on search engines. Chapters will be easily found via a dedicated navigation link and a new tool that allows users to enter their zip codes to access local chapters and nearby Audubon facilities. There is also a smoother interface for Audubon magazine.

## General Meeting

continued from page 1

tographer, Ron has compiled an impressive collection (over 70,000 images) of wildlife photographs that he uses for presentations and publications.

Ron is also the founder and Senior Biologist of Mad River Biologists, a biological consulting firm in Eureka, California. Best known for the identification and distribution of birds along the Pacific Coast, he also has an extensive understanding of natural history subjects. He serves as Treasurer of the Pacific Seabird Group and is an Associate Editor of *Western Birds*, the journal of the Western Field Ornithologists. One of Ron's outstanding attributes is sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm with others.

Ron began his career in Sacramento where he grew up and graduated from American River College and Sacramento State College before going on to Humboldt State University for his Master's Degree. He spent almost 20 years conducting an ecotourism business that took him on over 100 excursions to Baja California, to the Galapagos nineteen times, and other places such as the Amazon, the far north of the eastern Canadian Arctic, Southeast Alaska, Australia and Africa.

As part of his website, Ron includes "Outside My Window." "It's a recent photo that I have taken. It usually has some natural history theme (but sometimes not). Much of the reason that I send out these pictures is to increase awareness of the natural world, awareness of the wonderful things just 'outside' our windows, beyond the insulation that much of our daily life imposes on us. If you would like to be added to the email list, go to <http://www.levallyphoto.com/gallery/omw.php>. I also appreciate comments or questions about the photos, and any way you think this effort can be improved. Enjoy the day and... Take the time to look outside your windows!"

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park. 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.

*Lea Landry, Program Chair*

## Birding and Nature Events

### 14TH ANNUAL CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM

Hey, fellow bird lovers! It's time to get ready for the 14th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium to be held at the Hilton in Stockton, November 18-21.

This year for our evening programs we have dynamic photographer and author Paul Bannick giving a program based on his research on "Owls and Woodpeckers of the West". Author of dozens of books and articles and award-winning photographer Moose Petersen will give a presentation on *California's Threatened and Endangered Birds*. Workshops include Jon Dunn on sparrows and Joe Morlan's shorebird ID workshop focusing on loons and grebes. There are many others, ranging from Central Valley Raptors to Beginning Birding and digiscoping to bird sketching.

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! For more information or registration go to the website at [www.cvbs.org](http://www.cvbs.org) or contact Frances Oliver at [hummer52@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hummer52@sbcglobal.net) See you there!

### LODI'S SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

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. In awe-inspiring numbers, and with a prehistoric call, stately gait, and elegant choreography, the Sandhill crane continues to attract and inspire visitors.

For 14 years, Lodi's Sandhill Crane Festival has celebrated the return of the cranes. In collaboration with the City of Lodi, the Festival continues this November 6-8, welcoming an ever-growing circle of friends to share the wonder of the Sandhill crane.

For more information, the phone contact is 800-581-6150 or email [info@cranefestival.com](mailto:info@cranefestival.com). Online information can be found at [www.cranefestival.com](http://www.cranefestival.com) including the program and tour schedules. You may register for a nature tour in advance either online, by phone at 800-581-6150, or by downloading the registration form and mailing it in with your payment to: Lodi Sandhill Crane Association, P.O. Box 1616, Lodi, CA 95241

### GALT, 4TH ANNUAL, WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Mark your calendar now for the 4th Annual Winter Bird Festival, in Galt. It's scheduled for Saturday, January 29, 2011. For more information see their website at [www.ci.galt.ca.us](http://www.ci.galt.ca.us), or call 209-366-7115. More information will follow in next month's *Observer*.

### EAST AFRICA 2011

Ed Harper has announced there are still a few openings for the Tanzania safari he and Susan Scott are leading July 1 - 15, 2011. Drawing on their many years of experience, Ed and Susan have designed a highly productive itinerary. Camps and lodges have been carefully chosen to maximize the wildlife viewing experience. This friendly and inviting country is very safe and has some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities in all of Africa.

Responding to requests, Ed and Susan will offer another safari to Uganda. Tentative dates are from July 19 to August 3, 2011. Special highlights include Mountain Gorilla tracking as well as Chimpanzee tracking. The birding is spectacular with Shoebill and other Uganda bird specialties being high priority.

For more information for prices and itineraries, contact Ed at [calidris@surewest.net](mailto:calidris@surewest.net) or call him at 971-3311 or 704-7954.

## 2010 SACRAMENTO PURPLE MARTIN STATUS IN CALIFORNIA:

### Decline Continues, but at a Slower Rate

Dan Airola and Dan Kopp

With support from Sacramento Audubon, in 2010 we conducted the ninth consecutive year of monitoring of the Sacramento area Purple Martin colonies and continued several conservation actions.

Once relatively common in the Central Valley, Purple Martins declined drastically following the 1970s arrival of the European Starling, an aggressive competitor for cavity nesting sites. Martins that learned to use overpasses and elevated freeways in Sacramento is one of two remaining Central Valley populations. The Sacramento martin population had declined annually since 2004, from 173 pairs to 70 pairs in 2009.

In our just-completed 2010 surveys, we found 68 pairs at nine colonies in Sacramento. Although the decline has continued, the rate of decline (3%) is the lowest that we have seen since it began.

The causes of the recent decline are uncertain. Adult mortality is higher than in other martin populations, and reproduction appears low. Although we have ruled out numerous potential causes, the actual cause is unknown. While a combination of factors is likely at work, we fear that high mortality due to collisions with trains, trucks, and cars may be a major problem. Seven of the nine remaining colonies are in overpasses that cross light rail tracks. The birds frequently perch on the electrical wires above the tracks and collect nesting material on the ground near the tracks. This year we found 5 adults that were killed by trains or cars, and other mortalities likely escaped our detection.

We continued conservation activities including installing wire "nest guards" in the vertical cavity entrance holes in Highway 50 at Redding Ave. The guards reduce nestling fallout by providing a railing at the edge of the hole. It also provides a ladder to allow the young fledglings to more easily return to roost at night at the nest site with their parents during the critical post-fledging period.

We assisted Sacramento Audubon in commenting on several land use projects that threaten martin access to nest holes, perching sites, and nest material collection areas. Through our efforts, and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, a new perch wire was installed near the colony at the California State Railroad Museum to replace an existing powerline used as the main perch site at this martin colony, which will be removed as a part of the Downtown Railyard redevelopment. We hope this success will encourage more sensitive land use planning for other projects in the City of Sacramento, where consideration of martin habitat needs has generally been inadequate.

With assistance from Joe Zinkl and Kevin Thomas, we continued monitoring of Purple Martin nest boxes installed several years ago at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area and last year at the Railroad Museum colony. With help from Ed Whisler and John Mc Nerney, we also placed nest boxes at a stormwater pond in Davis near the Pole Line Rd. overpass of I-80, where martins bred once in 2004.

Developing a tradition of using starling-resistant nest boxes would allow martin colonies to be established in areas with fewer vehicle collision hazards. Although the boxes still have not been used for nesting by martins, the pairs perched on them at the Museum, and a healthy Tree Swallow colony (a martin attractant) has established at the Yolo Bypass boxes.

In short, Purple Martin conservation in Sacramento remains as a substantial challenge, due to low population size, low recent survival and reproduction, and the continued threats posed by vehicle collision and proposed land use projects. Our Purple Martin team is committed to continue working to prevent the loss of this last key Central Valley population. We are grateful to SAS for its support of our efforts to maintain this species!



## PRBO'S 33RD ANNUAL BIRD-A-THON SEPTEMBER 1–OCTOBER 15

It's not too late to contribute or participate in the Point Reyes Bird Observatory's Bird-A-Thon. Each year PRBO's Bird-A-Thon raises over \$100,000 and this year's goal is \$125,000. The 33rd annual PRBO Bird-A-thon, runs each fall from September 1 to October 15. The many projects that PRBO runs and partners with provide essential habitat information for conservation organizations throughout the western U.S. and solid bird-based science that provides an understanding of population status and overall habitat health. For more information, you can check their website at [www.prbo.org](http://www.prbo.org)

PRBO has played a vital role in the bird survey efforts at Cosumnes River Preserve in southern Sacramento County. On Sunday, September 19th, John Trochet, Jeri Langham, Dan Tankersley and I will be birding at Cosumnes River Preserve. We will cover as much of the Cosumnes River Preserve's nearly 40,000 acres as we can in one day, from tule marshes, valley oak riparian forest, wetlands and ag lands on the Valley floor, to blue oak woodland and open grasslands in the low foothills. We are hoping to tally 110 species or more.

We are asking for pledges on a per species basis, or, if you chose, you can donate a fixed sum.

There are two ways that you can donate:

Online at <http://www.firstgiving.com/cosumnesbirds2010>

Or by check. Checks should be made out to PRBO and mailed to me:

Chris Conard  
2405 Rio Bravo Circle  
Sacramento, CA 95826

Thank you for considering a donation to this important organization.

All the best, Chris Conard



## SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these  
new members:

Judith Flynn	Gail Schifsky
Margo Lira	Connie Schwartz,
Candy Miller	Jo Anne Stone
Lynda Parker	Barbara Ziel

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Paul Beach, Julie Haas, Ed Harper, Laurie Isbell, Connie Schwartz, to the **General Fund**.

Michelle Cordova, Stanley Ford, Susan Fregien, Julie Haas, Ed Harper, Thomas Manning, Candy Miller, M.A. Nunes, Geilan Topozada, Barbara Ziel, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Mary Ann Bristow made a donation in memory of Catherine Ann Drake.

## 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 held on October 26, 2010 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

## SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS FOR 2010

**November 18** - Jess Morton, *Our Birds and Baja*

### 2011

**January 20** - Andy Engilis, *Birding in Chile*

**February 17** - Scott Crosbie, *Yellow-billed Magpies* (Tentative Date)

**March 17** - Ed Pandolfino, *Raptor Survey*

**April 21** - Ben Sacks, *Central Valley Red Fox* (Tentative Date)

## 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.

## 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

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Observations* continued from page 10

south Sacramento. This distinctive species is rare at low elevations in winter and very unexpected at other seasons.

We are now featuring photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (<http://sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html>).

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit [www.cvbirds.org](http://www.cvbirds.org) and click "Listserv" for details. With nearly 100 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want to thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Chad Aakre, Dan Airola, Peter Armstrong, Dan Brown, Jim Dunn, Todd Easterla, Kevin Guse, Steve Hampton, Scott Hoppe, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Jim Laughlin, Susie Nishio, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino, Kathy Parker, Ron Pozzi, John Sterling, Kevin Thomas, Mike Thompson, John Trochet, Liz West, Ed Whisler, and Dan Williams.

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

*Chris Conard*

# Seasonal Observations

**August 1 to August 31**  
**Rare and Unusual Bird Reports**  
[www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

Reports of good numbers of the expected migrant songbirds were overwhelmed by excellent shorebird reports. The only rare warbler was a **Northern Parula** seen and heard by several observers on the Cosumnes River Preserve's (CRP) Tall Forest survey on 8/22. A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** found on 8/15 at CRP near the Accidental Forest was the first for Sacramento County in several years (a few days earlier, on 8/12, a mountain lion on the river bank was well seen from a canoe near this spot!). Up to three **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** were reported from the Sutter NWR off of Hughes Rd from 8/7-20. Before we delve fully into the shorebird reports, an adult **Glossy Ibis** reported along Rd 102 southeast of Woodland on 8/27 deserves our attention.

There were impressive shorebird reports from multiple sites in the Sacramento area. A **Snowy Plover** was found at the Lodi WTP on 8/7-8 and five were at the Sacramento WTP on 8/28. **Marbled Godwits** were reported in good numbers from multiple sites, with "dozens" among a **Long-billed Curlew** flock at Sherman Island on 8/23. There were **Solitary Sandpiper** reports from the Lincoln WTP on 8/11 and the Davis Wetlands on 8/29-30. A **Sanderling** was found at the Woodland WTP on 8/21, one was at the Sacramento WTP and adjacent Bufferlands on 8/17, and an impressive 15 were reported from Sherman Island

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on 8/23. The only Sacramento County **Semipalmated Sandpiper** report was a juvenile at the Sacramento WTP on 8/10, but at least 18 individuals were reported in Yolo County this July and August! **Baird's Sandpipers** were widely reported

in Yolo County (with up to seven at the Woodland WTP on 8/23), the Lodi WTP and Lincoln WTP, but missed entirely in Sacramento County. A **Pectoral Sandpiper** was at the Woodland WTP on 8/19 and a **Stilt Sandpiper** was found at the Davis Wetlands on 8/26-28. The excellent shorebird conditions at Woodland WTP came at a high price, perhaps from a biotoxin in algae: there were many sick and dead shorebirds among the feeding flocks.

Other highlights included a **Least Bittern** at the Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA) on 8/14, the continuing **Least Terns** at the Sacramento WTP through 8/24, an early **Red-breasted Sapsucker** at CRP on 8/8, a continuing **Bell's Vireo** at YWA into at least the first week of August, a **Say's Phoebe** about two weeks early along the American River Parkway near the Nimbus Hatchery on 8/26, and numerous **Red-breasted Nuthatch** reports throughout the region. An interesting older report involved a **Steller's Jay** found on 6/12 near Elk Grove-Florin and Gerber Rds in

## Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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

**Internet Address:** [www.sacramentoaudubon.org](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org)

**Membership/Subscriptions:** Lea Landry, 11054 Autumnwind Lane  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670  
(916) 638-1141, e-mail preferred: [llandry@softcom.net](mailto:llandry@softcom.net)

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

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

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