



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, October 17
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Midway Atoll, Home of a Million Albatrosses!

Ron LeValley

In February of 2012, Ron LeValley visited Midway Atoll, part of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument. Much has changed since his last visit in 2001. The Fish and Wildlife Service has greatly improved the condition on the island for the native wildlife. Ron will share his stories of the positive changes that have been made to the refuge along with his pictures of "Wisdom" the oldest wild bird known in the world and the increasing numbers of Short-tailed Albatrosses. He will augment the many bird pictures with images of the increasing number of Green Sea Turtles, the endangered Hawaiian Monk Seal and some of the beautiful underwater inhabitants of the National Monument.

Ron LeValley has been studying and photographing nature for over 45 years. He is a founding member of the Mendocino Coast Photographer Guild and Gallery in Fort Bragg where his work can be seen. As a professional photographer, 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. Best known for the identification and distribution of birds along the Pacific Coast, he also has an extensive understanding of natural history subjects. He served for 8 years as Treasurer of the Pacific Seabird

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SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2013-2014

Saturday, December 7, Daybreak, ARNHA Wildlife Count

Compiler: Bill Avery, 369-0750, 769-3357, e-mail: averyw@csus.edu
Annual census of birds and other wildlife on the American River Parkway.
See further details in write up on page 6.

Saturday, December 14, Woodfords Christmas Count

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

Sunday, December 22, Sacramento Christmas Count

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

Sunday, December 29, Folsom Christmas Count

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

Sunday, January 12, 2014, 3rd Annual Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

Compiler: Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277
Contact: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Other Christmas Bird Counts:

Saturday, December 14, Auburn Christmas Count

Compiler: Deren Ross, (530) 885-9740, derenross@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, December 15, Stockton Christmas Count

Compiler: Jim Rowoth, (209) 956-2648, rowoth@sbcglobal.net

Monday, December 16, Benicia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island) 870 5207, spskua2@comcast.net
Compiler: Robin Leong, (707) 643-1287, robin_leong@netzero.net

Monday, December 30, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, ERPfromCA@aol.com

Wednesday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

Compiler: Murray Berner, (707) 224-5897, vireocity@hotmail.com

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit
<http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm> .

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

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Field Trip Findings

Sacramento Bar (9/8) — Leader Paul Cordero reported: “We had a great mix of beginning and experienced birders out to enjoy a Fall migration outing. A focus of the trip was identifying birds by ear and we were treated to the calls of Phainopepla, Spotted Towhee, Bewick’s Wrens, Acorn Woodpeckers and Oak Titmouse. We saw few raptors, but a highlight was an Osprey eating a fish. The highlights of the trip were a couple of mixed flocks of warblers including many Yellow Warblers, a few Black-throated Grays, Townsend’s, Wilson’s, and Orange-crowned Warblers.”

North Bay Hotspots (9/7) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Fifteen birders enjoyed a great, but warm day of birding some of the area’s best sites. Our first stop was American Canyon Wetlands, and this consumed the better part of the day as it was so productive. While shorebirds were the most abundant group of birds over all, the bird of the day was Willow Flycatcher, of which we tallied an incredible 10 birds. It is most often seen as just a single bird. Some in the group said they had only seen one before this. In the same area where the flycatchers were, we also had Yellow and Wilson’s warblers, as well as Common Yellowthroat. Chestnut-backed Chickadees were also seen here, and some in the group also saw Pacific-slope Flycatcher. I will quote from *The Shorebird Guide* by O’Brien, Crossley and Karlson to help illustrate another of the highlights. We were eating lunch at a picnic table adjacent to the mudflats where there were many “peeps” (Western and Least Sandpipers). At one point they flushed up and “With uncanny synchrony, several thousand shorebirds swirl(ed) about, twisting and turning as one entity — truly one of nature’s awe-inspiring spectacles.” We all exclaimed with “oohhs” and “ahhs” at the sight.

Our second stop was Scagg’s Island Road off of Highway 37. It wasn’t too active over all, but we did add 3 more Willow Flycatchers to the list. And we spent considerable time trying to get everyone views of a well hidden Great Horned Owl.

By the time we got to Shollenberger Park, our last stop, it was getting pretty hot, so we didn’t stay too long. But we did add a single Bonaparte’s Gull, Red-necked Phalaropes and a couple of other species to the list. We tallied about 66 species

and everyone had a great time.”

Alpine County (9/1) — Leader Dan Brown reported: “Eleven of us made the trip up to Alpine County and despite thick smoke from the Rim Fire at times, had a nice day of birding. The bird of the day was 2 Sooty Grouse at Grass Lake, Luther Pass, a life bird for several participants. We lost half of our group due to the smoke at around 11am but the remaining folks continued on and totaled 45 species. Other highlights were, Clark’s Nutcracker, American Dipper, Cassin’s Finch and Red-breasted Sapsucker. Of note, we are seeing more and more Eurasian Collared Doves in Alpine County; today we had them at the Woodfords Store and in downtown Markleeville.”

River Bend Park (8/31) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “It was slow birding on this morning walk at the river; we wondered if the birds were observing the Labor Day holiday. The 10 people who joined me filled in the birdless times looking at Pipe Vine Swallowtail chrysalises, and blooming Vinegar Weed. We did total 33 birds, and the most interesting was a beautifully plumaged Red-shouldered Hawk that flew down to a mud flat along the river bank, paused for a minute, and then pulled out a fish and flew away with it.”

Bodega Bay (8/25) — Leader Andy Salmi reported: “Our group of 8 enjoyed a lovely day of birding at Bodega Bay, where we viewed Brown and White pelicans, and a variety of shorebirds including Least Sandpipers, Marbled Godwit, Willet, Black Turnstone, Surf Bird, Snowy Plover and Long-billed Dowitcher. We also saw Heerman, Western and Ring-billed gulls and several species of cormorant.”

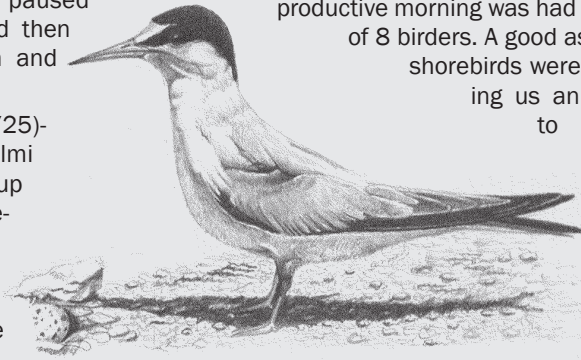
Marin County Shorebirds and Other Surprises (8/24) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Our group varied in size as some joined us in progress and some had to leave early, but at its largest the group had 10 participants. We were greeted by beautiful weather at our first stop at Corte Madera Marsh. Highlights here included a good showing of shorebirds. Among them were 2 Black-bellied

Plovers still in full breeding plumage. We also first heard and then saw several Elegant Terns just off shore. And 2 or 3 people in the group briefly saw a Clapper Rail before it disappeared behind some reeds.

“Our second stop was Five Brooks at Point Reyes National Seashore. It was nearly mid-day by then, not the best time to find passerine activity. But we did manage to find Hairy Woodpecker, Hutton’s Vireo and Townsend’s Warbler among a few other species. We had lunch here before continuing on to Abbott’s Lagoon to finish the day.

“Highlights at Abbott’s included good scope views of a cooperative Rufous/Allen’s Hummingbird that kept returning to the same bush to perch along the trail out to the outer lagoon; an American Bittern that was a bit difficult for some to see at first; Caspian and Elegant Terns side by side; and off shore on the beach side, there were Red-necked Phalarope, Common Murre, Heermann’s Gull and a single Sooty Shearwater. We tallied about 62 species for the day.”

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (8/23) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “A productive morning was had by our group of 8 birders. A good assortment of shorebirds were present giving us an opportunity to study their plumage and

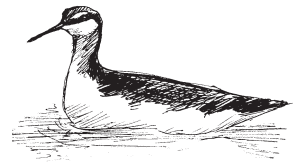


Tern species
Daniel Kilby

behaviors. Among the shorebirds seen were Black-bellied Plovers, Red-necked Phalaropes, Wilson’s Phalaropes, Western Sandpipers, Least Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, and Greater Yellowlegs. About a dozen Caspian Terns were loafing among the Dowitchers. Other good birds seen were numerous White-tailed Kites, a Kingfisher, a Loggerhead Shrike, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and Swainson’s Hawks. A real treat was observing a sleeping Barn Owl perched within a heavily leafed tree situated along the east/west portion of

Findings continued on page 8

Field Trips



Wilson's Phalarope
Kirsten Munson

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, 457-6882, empid@earthlink.net for trips through November 3. After November 3 contact the scheduler Maureen Geiger, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net, 444-0804.

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.

Wednesday, October 2, 8am Bushy Lake

**Leader: Darrell Mohr, 225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com**

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

Saturday, October 5, 8am-11am Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach American River Parkway

**Leaders: Sally Walters and Don
Schmoldt, 739-6465
dschmoldt25@gmail.com**

Join Don and Sally for a morning bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the American River. From Highway 50 take Howe Ave north to Fair Oaks Blvd. Turn left onto Fair Oaks and cross over the American River. Turn right on Carlson Ave, which is the first stop light past the American River bridge. Continue on Carlson Ave to its end, at Glenn Hall Park. Meet on top of the levee. This will be a fairly easy walk, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, and rock cobble. We hope to see returning wintering sparrows and waterfowl, and resident birds including wrens, towhees, Yellow-billed Magpies and kinglets. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

**Sunday, October 6, 8am-noon
Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek
Leader: Lea Landry, 638-1141
llandry46@comcast.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.

Thursday, October 10, 8am Beal's Point, Folsom Lake Leader: Margaret Martin, 599-0181 margaret.martin6@me.com

Meet Margaret in the parking lot of the Beal's Point unit of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, (turn left as you enter the parking lot, to park near the first row). The entrance to Beal's Point is on Oak Hill Drive off Auburn-Folsom Rd, about 2 miles south of Douglas Blvd and about 3 miles north of Greenback Lane. We will look for Rufous-crowned Sparrow and Rock Wren, and enjoy a variety of other birds including bluebirds, woodpeckers, sparrows, hawks, ducks, and grebes. Plan for a mile or two of walking. The trip will end by noon. This is a great trip for beginners and more experienced birders. The entrance fee is \$12 per car, or you may use a state (not county) park pass.

**Saturday, October 12, 8am
The Best of Both Sides
River Bend Park and
William Pond Park
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net**

Meet Cathie at the main River Bend parking lot near the bike bridge. (Follow the main road into the park; after you cross the bike trail (stop sign) go about ½ mile and turn left at the sign "rafting exit, main picnic area" and continue on the road to the large parking area). For the first half of the walk we'll bird across the bridge into William Pond Park, going downstream along the backwaters of the river and checking out the fishing pond. Then we'll recross the river and go upstream into the oak woodland area. We'll finish before noon, but you may want to bring water and/or snacks. As always, this is a great trip for beginners. From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field Road, take Rod Beaudry Drive north into the park, (formerly called Goethe Park). If you come from the William Pond side look for us on the bridge. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, October 13, 7am SHARP! Solano Lake/Putah Creek Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722 matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

The lake is a good area for wintering ducks including possible Barrow's Goldeneye and Hooded Mergansers. Phainopeplas are possible, and Pileated Woodpeckers have been found in the area several times during the last year. A drive up Putah Creek may turn up wintering passerines as well. There is a \$5 per car fee at the Lake Solano campground. Bring lunch and liquids and meet Mark at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From I-80 take the West Capitol Ave exit; turn left at the light; then left again into the lot. Plan on a trip lasting into the afternoon.

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

Wednesday, October 16, 8am

William Pond Park

Leader: Craig DeMartini, 418-4263
cloudwalk7@aol.com

Meet Craig along the first parking area just past the entrance kiosk, for this morning walk looking for returning migrants and resident birds. Along the river 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, October 19, 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, Steller'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!

Sunday, October 20, 1:30pm

Family Friendly Nature Walk

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Ancil Hoffman Park

www.sacnaturecenter.net

Everyone is welcome to this joint Effie Yeaw/Sacramento Audubon nature and birding walk. Meet in front of the Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman County Park, at California Avenue and Tarshes Drive. There is a \$5 entrance fee to the park, or you can use your Parkway Pass or Nature Center membership card.

Sunday, October 20, 7am

Bodega Bay

Leaders: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471

Mark Martucci, 833-6722

Scott: shoppe01@surewest.net

Mark: matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Join Scott and Mark 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.

Wednesday, October 23, 9am

Mather Lake

Leader: Sheila Green, 813-1470

raeshei@aol.com

Mather Lake is a great local birding location, with a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, Wild Turkey, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron and Pied-billed Grebes. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, October 26, 4:30pm to 9pm

Northern Saw-whet Owl Mist Netting and Banding near Chico

Leader: Linda Pittman, email preferred

pittmanl@frontiernet.net, 715-1876

Participants must RSVP

The trip is limited to 10.

This is a rare chance to observe an owl research project in action. You will learn about the migratory ecology of the Northern Saw-whet Owl in the Sierra Nevada foothills with avian ecologist Dawn Garcia and her banding crew. Mist-netting and banding will be conducted at the reserve where Dawn is researching owl migration. This study is now in its 9th season! Participants will observe owl banding and data collection and may have an opportunity to release one of the owls! Confirmation and additional information will be provided to participants.

Saturday, October 26, 3:30pm

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley

Sponsored by Save Our Sandhill Cranes

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Our Sandhill Cranes are back! They, as well as a variety of ducks, swans, geese, and 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 and for families.

Sunday, October 27, 7:30am

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 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.

Sunday, October 27

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 people per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

Sunday, October 27, 3:30pm

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley

Sponsored by Save Our Sandhill Cranes

See information for Saturday's Sandhill Crane trip.

**Monday, October 28, 8am
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1290
dtankers@winfirst.com**

The Colusa NWR is another great location in the Central Valley to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be many duck species and plenty of Snow, Ross's, Greater White-fronted and possibly a few Cackling Geese as well as other wetland birds. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well, and we can expect many raptors with the possibility of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We will spend a good amount of time on the main viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through riparian habitat next to the main viewing pond. We will then take the short auto tour and finish our outing with a return visit to the platform. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Weather permitting, there should be ample photo ops. Scopes and FRS radios will be helpful on this trip. Meet Dan 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. Rain, strong wind, or thick fog cancels. Bring snacks and liquids as the trip will end in the very late morning to very early afternoon.

**Saturday, November 2, 8am
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 migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, Wild Turkey, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe and Common Yellowthroat. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd. take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

**Sunday, November 3, 8:30am
BKS Preserve, Sacramento County**

**Leader: Frank Gray, 723-5249
Fgray4birds@aol.com**

Join Frank for our third annual trip to this 338 plus-acre preserve in the Natomas Basin. It is open to the general public only for rare guided trips and run by the Natomas Basin Conservancy. Properties there were converted from farmlands to marshland and upland habitats, mostly in the last decade. This provides multi-species habitat mitigation via a Federal and State-overseen Habitat Conservation plan. There will be chances to see many marshland and other bird species, as well as to learn about mitigation actions for plants and wildlife there. Tour of the preserve will be on foot, possibly at least a mile of walking on dirt roads. Later we expect to visit one or more birding sites in North Natomas. Locations will be determined before the trip, based upon water availability and other conditions. Mosquitos and no restrooms are possible.

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. The trip will probably be over by noon or early afternoon. Pouring rain cancels.

**Wednesday, November 6, 8am
Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk and Woodbridge Road
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net**

Our Sandhill Cranes are back for the winter, joining swans, geese and a wide variety of duck species. Yellowlegs and Wilson's Snipe will be in the shallower water, and other shorebirds are possible. We'll walk the CRP boardwalk loop first; then drive along Desmond Road for more views of waterfowl. Then we'll drive to Woodbridge Road, making a couple of birding stops. Meet Cathie 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. Secondary meeting place is the CRP Visitor Center parking lot about 8:30 am. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. FRS radios and spotting scopes are helpful if you have them. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

**Saturday, November 9, 8am
Bushy Lake
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com**

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

**Sunday, November 10, 7am
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

The Colusa NWR is another great location in the Central Valley to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be many duck species and plenty of Snow, Ross's, Greater White-fronted and possibly a few Cackling Geese as well as other wetland birds. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well, and we can expect many raptors with the possibility of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We will spend a good amount of time on the main viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through riparian habitat next to the main viewing pond. We will then take the short auto tour and finish our outing with a return visit to the platform. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Meet Mark 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.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY TRIP DATES

Sacramento Audubon is merging education activities with Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael as a way of maximizing efforts to serve families with children who would like to be out of doors and enjoy nature walks.

Beginning this fall, family friendly trips will be offered on Saturdays at 10:30am for odd months (such as November) and Sundays at 1:30pm for even months (such as October). The next date is **Sunday, October 20**, with **Saturday, November 16**, and **Sunday, December 15** following.

Reservations are not needed. Simply show up at Effie Yeaw Nature Center at the appropriate day and time and walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge.

General Meeting continued
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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 to other places such as the Amazon, the far north of the eastern Canadian Arctic, Southeast Alaska, Australia and Africa.

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, Program Chair

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD SYMPOSIUM

On November 21-24, 2013, the Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 17th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium at the Stockton Hilton Hotel, in Stockton. Please come and help us kick off this year's CVBS! Come meet the CVBS board and staff members! Reconnect with old friends and meet new ones! Take advantage of the delicious hors d'oeuvres buffet and No Host Bar on Thursday night.

This year the Thursday night keynote is double-Ed, with speakers Ed and Ed (Harper and Pandolfino) discussing trends in bird populations in the Central Valley. Friday night's keynote program is by Kimball Garrett on "Avian Invaders in California." Few areas of North America are as prone to the release and establishment of non-native bird species as California. Whether introduced purposefully or by accident, these avian immigrants include some of our most familiar bird species (think House Sparrow, European Starling and Rock Pigeon), a whole suite of additional species whose status is ever-changing, and a seemingly never-ending parade of escapees that send us running for our foreign field guides when we encounter them.

Don't miss the Saturday night keynote program "Birds of the Sierra Nevada" with Ted Beedy, Ed Pandolfino, and Keith Hansen! Ted, Ed, and Keith will take you on a virtual transect of the range from the oak savanna in the west, through serene conifer forests of the west side, up into the majestic alpine regions, and down the steep eastern escarpment to the pinyon/juniper woodlands and open steppes of the Great Basin.

See and hear the stunning diversity of birds that make the Sierra their home and learn which birds are in decline and which are expanding and increasing.

Also on Saturday, Susan Schneider will present a fascinating program "No Birdbrains Here", exploring bird learning and intelligence, from everyday foraging, to learning through observing, to tool use. Dawn Garcia will share data about the secretive Northern Saw-Whet Owls in her program, "Migration Patterns of Northern Saw-Whet Owls near Forest Ranch, CA". Join Andy Engilis for an up close look at Central Valley birds at his specimen workshop.

Hands on events include Bob Steele's workshop for photographers, bird sketching with artist Keith Hansen, a carving seminar for beginners with Jim Burcio, and Beginning Birding with Jim Gain. Don't miss "Seeing Rare Birds in California: Why our state list is the largest in the US at 652 species and you can help find more" by Joe Morlan and a Flycatcher ID Workshop with Jon Dunn.

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. Come and join us to bird, learn, and just have fun! To look over the line-up of speakers, workshops, and field trips or register, check out our symposium website at www.2013cvbs.org/

29TH ANNUAL ARNHA WILDLIFE COUNT DECEMBER 7, 2013

The ARNHA Wildlife Count was originally organized as a fund-raising Bird-a-thon in 1985. Jack Hiehle provided the impetus and organization to get it going. He then maintained the momentum and records through its transformation into an annual Wildlife Count in 1993. The count is utilized by the Staff of Effie Yeaw and ARNHA to follow the population trends of various species of wildlife in the American River Parkway as well as their affect on other aspects of the Parkway.

Twelve teams (including 1 team with 5 counters in canoes) participated in the 2012 Wildlife Count on December 1, tallying 115 bird species. The count was 7 species greater than 2011. This may be explained, in part, by varying weather conditions from year to year. Unusual bird species observed in 2012 included Red Crossbill and Great-tailed Grackle (first

time on the list), Greater White-fronted and Cackling Geese, Lesser Scaup, Common Loon, Cattle Egret, Peregrine Falcon, Sora, Chipping and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, and Tricolored Blackbird. The California sea lions sent a single representative this year. 5 coyotes were seen, compared with none found last year. The deer population appears to be moderate, with 67 seen.

This 2013 wildlife count will be the first in which all birds of each species will actually be counted. Team leaders will work with team members to tally the totals for each species seen. Team leaders will report their team's observations in eBird. It will be important also to enter number in party, miles travelled and duration for each eBird entry. Mammals and other species will be included in the Comments section under Data and Effort. More details will be provided to Team Leaders. This change in data

management will retain all the information used in previous years, add more information on abundance within species and will make the information more accessible to everyone.

Folks who are interested in participating in the 2013 Wildlife Count can email their name, email address and phone number to Count Coordinator, Bill Avery (369-0750; 769-3357; averyw@csus.edu). Unless you have a specific area of the Parkway you're interested in, your name will be provided to the Team Leaders who need more participants on their teams. The Count starts about 7am, finishing by 3 pm. Saturday, December 7th. Different leaders have different start times and specific meeting places.

Bill Avery
ARNHA Count Coordinator

YOUR DUES AND DONATIONS AT WORK

The Sacramento Audubon Board has voted to make the following donations:

- \$1000 to support the Central Valley Bird Club's Symposium, www.2013cvbs.org
- \$500 as a sponsor of Effie Yeaw Nature Center's Nature Fest, to benefit their education programs, www.sacnaturecenter.net
- \$200 to Altacal Audubon in support of their Northern Saw-whet Owl Research Project; for more information go to www.birdbling.blogspot.com
- \$300 to Plumas Audubon in support of their Flammulated Owl Research Project; for more information go to www.plumasaudubon.org
- \$250 as a sponsor of the California Swan Festival in Marysville
- \$250 as a sponsor of the Lodi Crane Festival, www.cranefestival.org

We donated two books, *Birding the Sacramento Region* and *Biking and Hiking the American River Parkway*, with a copy of our Sac Audubon 2014 calendar, to both the Fair Oaks Harvest Festival Silent Auction and to the Lodi Crane Festival Silent Auction.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2013

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Saturday, October 27th and Sunday, December 8th

Time: 8am

Each Trip: Limited to 10 participants

Registration required.

These outings are 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.

The 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. An optional brief session at a picnic table afterwards will cover field guides, smart phone applications and optical equipment.

Register via email to Cathie at 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 (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

INTRODUCTION TO BIRDS OF THE SACRAMENTO REGION

Dates: October 16 - November 2

Instructor: Chris Conard

Cost: \$135 (all proceeds go to Splash's environmental education programs: sacsplash.org/)

Wednesday Classes: October 16, 23, and 30, from 6:30 to 8:30PM

Saturday Field trips: October 19, 26, and November 2, starting at 8AM and running 4 - 6 hours.

Over 300 species of birds are found in the Sacramento region's wetlands, riparian forests, grasslands, oak woodlands, and chaparral. Over the course of three evening classes and three Saturday field trips, this class will introduce you to all of the commonly encountered birds, with a special emphasis on those that are challenging to identify

We expect to observe and become familiar with over 100 species during the field trips. Additional emphasis will be given to migration and seasonality, vocalizations, behavior, how and where to look for birds in the Sacramento area, birds in relation to their habitat, and conservation. Other topics will include optics, recording and documenting your observations, and resources for improving birding skills. For more information go to the Splash web page: sacsplash.org/event/introduction-birds-sacramento-region

SALUTE TO SONGBIRDS EXHIBIT AT EFFIE YEAW

The Effie Yeaw Nature Center has unveiled a newly refurbished and expanded "Salute to Songbirds" exhibit that offers mountains of intriguing data about the life, times and hazards facing our avian neighbors.

The exhibit features dozens of panels, kiosks and dioramas highlighting hands-on, do-it-yourself experiments, colorful illustrations, and numerous "kid magnets," with several focusing on birds' nests. "It may be the first time that school children have sat in a human-made, child-sized nest surrounded by giant fabric eggs while wearing fabric songbird wings," says Marilee Flannery, former EYNC director who led construction of the original exhibit and oversees the renovation.

Visitors can play a keyboard that lets them hear the songs of Song Sparrows, robins and Warbling Vireos, among others. They can inspect a bird's feather and see how it changes color when moved under the light. And they can take away a leaflet telling them how to be a responsible cat owner and help save the songbird population.

Saving songbird populations is a major focus of the exhibit, in the face of recent studies indicating many species are declining in number. Visitors who enter the exhibit room are greeted by an overhead arch featuring colorful flags of western hemisphere countries that must collaborate on hosting such familiar species as hummingbirds, orioles, tanagers, warblers and thrushes. They migrate north each spring to breeding grounds in the United States and Canada, then fly south to spend the bulk of the year in Mexico, Central or South America or the Caribbean.

The overriding cause of species decline is loss of habitat. Dioramas and information panels counsel providing food, water, and shelter for the songbirds while they are nesting in your area, support for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Partners in Flight conservation program, and even suggest drinking shade-grown coffee, which comes from Latin American forests that are said to be more hospitable to wintering birds than coffee grown on unshaded farms.

Pete Hayes

Birding and Nature Events

EFFIE YEAW NATURE FEST, OCTOBER 6

The annual Nature Fest will be held from 10am-3pm, on October 6th at Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael. There will be free parking and kids up to the age of 12 are admitted free. Adults are \$3 per person. The Nature Fest is a full day of nature related activities, demonstration and hands-on opportunities. All proceeds will benefit the Nature Center Education programs. There will be vendors and Sacramento Audubon will definitely be included. The Nature Fest is a community service of the American River History Association. The Nature Fest website is sacnaturecenter.net/nf2013.html for more information and to look at the schedule of events.

LODI SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

The 17th annual Sandhill Crane Festival will be held November 1-3, at Hutchins Street Square, 125 S. Hutchins Street, Lodi. For 17 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 their community to share the wonder of the Sandhill Crane . . . and so much more. Admission is free and there will be 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.

FIRST ANNUAL SWAN FESTIVAL, NOVEMBER 8-10

This November birders and nature lovers have the opportunity to attend the California Swan Festival, a brand new wildlife festival featuring field trips and a wide array of programs and other activities. Last year's announcement stated, Co-hosted by local rice farmers and land owners, these tours will focus on finding Tundra Swans, as this tract is one of the best locations for seeing swans in California. Ducks, geese, cranes, shorebirds, white pelicans, herons, egrets and raptors including bald eagles are also commonly seen in this area, known as District 10. The area contains 23,000 acres of rice fields and restored habitat not normally open to the public. This is an excellent example of rice farming for wildlife habitat.

The main venue is in Marysville, just north of Sacramento, and the Festival occurs November 8-10. Many Sacramento Audubon and other Central Valley field trip leaders are involved with the Festival, and there will be a large variety of trips available to choose from. Other family events will take place too, plus vendors, exhibits and more. To participate, visit the Festival's website at: yubasutterchamber.com/index.php/calendar/swan-festival.

2014 SAS CALENDAR

The first ever calendar of the Sacramento Audubon Society is now on sale for \$10. Watch for it at our General Meetings and area festivals. It features beautiful bird photos taken by SAS photographers Dan Brown, Chris Conard, Ed Harper, Linda Pittman, Dan Tankersley, Keith Wagner and Lon Yarbrough. The full-color calendar is also sold on our website at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/calendarorder.html, for \$10 plus shipping. Some local Wild Bird stores and booksellers are also carrying it.

The calendar lists many local bird festivals and highlights a different bird each month. Proceeds from the calendar will be used to support the wildlife conservation work and education programs of the SAS. Look for the calendar now and please don't limit yourself to just one—think of friends and family, one in every room, and gifts for the holidays. Help support our programs.

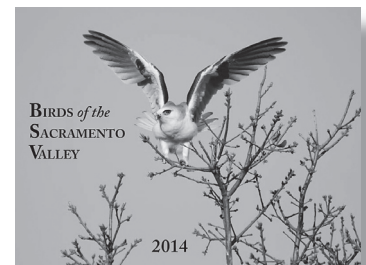
Findings continued from page 2

the auto loop. A casual scan would have easily missed the bird. It was a good day."

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area (8/18) — Cathie LaZier, co-leader with Maureen Geiger, reported: "In spite of the heat, 6 birders joined us on this afternoon trip. Flooded fields produced White-faced Ibis, Greater Yellowlegs, California and Ring-billed Gulls, dowitchers, phalaropes and peeps, and a lone White Pelican. Ann Burris brought us up to date on the workings of the preserve, fallow fields, wild and white rice, and plans to extend waterways to approximate the former natural water flow. We also found Caspian Terns, Loggerhead Shrike, and Great Horned and Barn Owls. We were unable to watch the bat fly-out from the parking lot, as we were asked to leave by game wardens, but some of us were able to view the bats flying out as we drove back to Sacramento on Hwy 80. Maureen has filed a complete bird list on E-bird."

Mather Lake (8/17) — Eleven birders joined Cathie LaZier and Tim Fitzer (subbing for Wayne Blunk) on this morning walk at Mather Lake. Highlights were a female American Kestrel that was hunting and caught a vole, carried it to a nearby tree and ate it, and Caspian Terns catching fish in the lake. There was the usual variety of birds for this location, American Bitterns, Pied-billed Grebes, Common Gallinules, Red-shouldered Hawks and White-tailed Kites. Tim has filed the complete list of birds on e-bird.

Pete Hayes



White-tailed Kite
Cover Photo by Dan Brown

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Roger Dunstan Gibbe Parsons
Lotus Fong Francesca Scalpi
Susan McIntire

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 October 29, at 7pm, at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Jeanne Conry, Ed Harper, Michael Harris, Marie Heid, Debera Johnson, Patricia Wells and Barbara Ziel, to the **General Fund**.

Valerie Brown, Elaine Everest, Kimberly Hardiman, Ed Harper, Marie Heid, Debera Johnson, Thomas Manning, Joyce Mihanovich, Candy Miller, Barbara Mohr, Maggie Nunes, Carmen Pereira, May Jean Ralph and Liz Williamson to **Conservation and Education**.

Tim Fitzer made a donation to the General Fund in memory of Ed Greaves.

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

llandry46@comcast.net

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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



White-faced Ibis
Daniel Kilby

Observations continued from page 10

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

Mark Ackerman, Gil Ewing, Claire Gallagher, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Scott Hoppe, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, William Rockey, Jim Rowoth, John Sterling, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, Ed Whisler, Brian Williams, and Dan Williams.

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

Chris Conard

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.

Seasonal Observations

August 1 to August 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

The summer doldrums in our area fully break in August, with good movement of migrant shorebirds and songbirds. This August produced a few highlights in both categories. Summering waterfowl included two **Redheads** and a **Lesser Scaup** at the Woodland WTP, a **Canvasback** at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 8/14, and the continuing **Snow Goose** at CRP. The **Glossy Ibis** found last month at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) was reported through 8/1. Ed Whisler noted a remarkable occurrence on 8/4: a **Peregrine Falcon** flushed a roosting **Double-crested Cormorant**, killed it in midair, and carried the much larger bird to a willow tree. Two other cormorants, obviously disturbed by the incident, left the roost and flew very close to the falcon.

Shorebird highlights included a **Snowy Plover** at Sac Reg. WTP on 8/23 and single **Solitary Sandpipers** at the Davis Wetlands on 8/7 and CRP on 8/3. A **Willet** was found at CRP on 8/17, with two in the same field the following day, and one was at the Davis WTP on 8/31. Two **Marbled Godwits** were reported at the Davis WTP on 8/27. A **Dunlin** found on 8/20 at YBWA, still in breeding plumage, was at least a month early. **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were reported at YBWA on 8/7 and 8/20, and **Pectoral Sandpipers** were at the Davis WTP on 8/10, YBWA on 8/20 and 8/25, and the Davis WTP on

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8/31. A first cycle **Franklin's Gull** was a nice surprise at the Davis WTP on 8/27, and a juvenile **Western Gull** was there the following day.

A **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** was heard and then seen near the Pedrick Rd bridge along Putah Creek on 8/16. There were two reports of heard-only **Yellow-billed Cuckoos** along the American River on 8/18: one across the river from Paradise Beach and the other at William B. Pond Rec. Area. There was a somewhat early report of two **Lewis's Woodpeckers** in Capay near the Cache Creek bridge on 8/31. After last winter's sparse showing, perhaps this species will winter in higher numbers this coming season.

Songbird highlights included an adult male **American Redstart** at Reichmuth Park on 8/14-16, with what is likely the same bird found in September. Another adult male **American Redstart** was found at the SRCSD Bufferlands from 8/16-19, and an adult male **Baltimore Oriole** was photographed at the Sacramento Bypass, accessed from Yolo County Rd 126 on 8/19.

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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.

Observations continued on page 9