



The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

VOLUME 69 • NO. 4

APRIL 2017

General Meeting

Thursday, April 20, 2017

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Assembly Room, 7pm

The Game Warden's Son

Steven T Callan

Steven T. Callan's love of nature and passion for protecting wildlife took root long before he experienced the adventures described in his memoir, *Badges, Bears, and Eagles*. In *The Game Warden's Son*, he recounts more of his own investigations, along with those of his game warden father and their colleagues. Intertwined with a half century of adventures and investigations is a story of the life-long relationship between a boy and his father.



Steven T. Callan grew up in the small Northern California farm town of Orland. With an insatiable interest in wildlife, particularly waterfowl, he never missed an opportunity to ride along on patrol with his father, a California Fish and Game warden. Steve went on to graduate from CSU, Chico, and attended graduate school at CSU, Sacramento. Hired by the California Department of Fish and Game in 1974, he began his career as a game warden near the Colorado River, promoted to patrol lieutenant in the Riverside/San Bernardino area, and spent the remainder of his thirty-year enforcement career in Shasta County. Callan has earned numerous awards for his work in wildlife protection and is the recipient of the 2014, 2015, 2016 *Best Outdoor Magazine Column* awards from the Outdoor Writers Association of California. Avid bird-watchers and members of National Audubon, Steve and his wife, Kathy, live in the Redding area.

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BIG DAY OF GIVING, MAY 4

Donations to Sacramento Audubon

This year, SAS is again joining the May 4 **Big Day of Giving** which is a fundraising effort for non-profit organizations in the Sacramento area. Over 500 non-profits participate in this annual event which is a 24 hour giving challenge that lifts up lives and makes Sacramento a better place to call home. Last year, Sacramento area residents donated over \$5 million to their favorite non-profits. The minimum donation is \$15 and we'll be perfectly happy with that amount to boost our financials!

This is a special request for you to involve your family and friends who have the slightest interest in birds, conservation, or SAS. The more people that talk about it, the better for birds in Sacramento. So please tell at least 10 people who share your values, that May 4 is a great day to donate to Sacramento Audubon.

If you would like to help SAS, May 4th is the day to do it, so please put it on your calendar. You can read all about the Sacramento Audubon, its mission, goals, projects and finances at: bigdayofgiving.org/sacramentoaudubon. There is no link yet to donate but we'll have one in next month's Observer.

Join Us For Family and Beginner Field Trips!

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk. On **Saturday, April 15, at 10:30**, Sue Darst, Larry Hickey and a Nature Center docent will lead a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, and other resident birds such as towhees and Bushtits will be active. Reservations are not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net.

Clarksburg Branch Line Trail, West Sacramento. On **Saturday, April 22 at 9am**, Ann Burriss will lead families on a morning walk along a section of West Sacramento's Clarksburg Branch Line Trail. The paved trail and adjacent pond provide lots of good habitat for a variety of birds. Meet Ann in the parking lot east of Nugget Market off of Lake Washington Blvd. The walk will end by noon. More information, including directions and leader contact information, is on page 4 of this month's Observer.

Family Friendly Trip and Beginners Too! Bodega Bay Join Sandra Steurer and Wendy Money on **Saturday, May 13 at 8am**, for a full day of birding around Bodega Bay, taking in a variety of habitats. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and raptors. This trip is great for families with kids and beginning birders too. Bring a sack lunch, water and layered clothes. Optional stop for dinner on the way home. Loaner binoculars will be available. More information, including directions and leader contact information will be in next month's Observer.

FAMILY AND BEGINNER FIELD TRIPS continued on page 6

Field Trip Findings

Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley (3/12) – Leader Craig Swolgaard reported: “Our Sunday raptor trip started with sunny, warming temperatures and got better as we went! We ended up with a good list of 11 raptor species, including Ferruginous Hawk, Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, Great Horned Owl, and Burrowing Owl. Other interesting birds included Loggerhead Shrike, American Wigeon, Tundra Swan, Horned Lark, Cliff Swallow, and Rock Wren. Total species added up to over 50. We decided not to follow my original raptor route and after finishing up with Meiss Road, we drove over to Michigan Bar Road. From there we had incredible views of the Sierra Nevada, the Coast Range, and Valley!”

Bushy Lake (3/11) – Leader Darrell Mohr reported: “A sunny morning. What a nice start to the tour. Eleven people came for the morning walk. We walked around Bushy Lake. The area on the northside of the lake is still swampy. We had a fly over of a Peregrine Falcon. There was a total of forty species of birds observed including Savannah Sparrows, Bluebirds, Red-tail Hawk and Red-shouldered Hawk, plus many other species. What was missing were Wood Ducks. The lake is coated with a plant that is dark brown and may be discouraging ducks from visiting the lake.”

Lake Solano/Putah Creek (3/7) – Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris, reported: “It was an overcast day. 12 birders viewed a Western Screech-Owl, 2 Common Loons, many Phainopeplas, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Bald Eagle and heard Pileated Woodpecker. We ventured to the top of Monticello Dam to see the lake flowing over the wormhole and surprise : Rock and Canyon Wrens above the road . Everyone had a fun time with many life birds. Janet Johnson, a participant on the trip, sent a message to Tim and Ann as follows: “It was so great to birdwalk with you and the gang from Sacramento! I was so happy to be welcomed into such a friendly and helpful group. The couple of firsts for me—Red-breasted Sapsucker, Western Screech-Owl—made this outing very special and memorable. I’m especially grateful for your warmth and generosity with your knowledge.”

Arrowhead Marsh and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline (3/5) – Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Mark

Martucci, reported: “Okay, this may seem odd to say, given that the trip was punctuated by periodic squalls of rain and sometimes hail, plus nearly gale force winds at times, but I think this was a really great trip. A small group of just 5 of us braved all of this. We started off with fairly nice weather and good views of lots of species. But that soon changed as the winds picked up, fiercely at times. But we played it just like the birds, seeking shelter when things got bad, then coming out when it improved. We had 14 species of shorebirds, including great views of some Red Knots, 13 species of ducks, with great views of Blue-winged Teal, and at least 7 Ridgway’s Rail heard (unfortunately not coming out into the open). We tallied nearly 70 species over all.”

Beals Point, Folsom Lake, FAMILY FRIENDLY TRIP (3/5) – Sandra Steurer, co-leader with Wendy Money, reported: “Timing is everything! The rain clouds parted and our kids’ birding group was able to locate 33 species of birds on a two hour walk around a park, through the woods, and across a dam. We found four Rock Wrens, giving us plenty of time to notice barring! Lingered White-Crowned Sparrows were plentiful and Western Meadowlarks and Western Bluebirds provided a brilliant splash of yellow to the landscape of a waiting-to-be-filled Folsom Lake. Harlequin-like Lark Sparrows mixed with other birds, scurrying to eat before the next rain cloud passed. A lone Great-tailed Grackle passed over us as we left the park setting. As we climbed a bit, an adult and juvenile Red-Tailed Hawk circled closely enough to give us a chance to compare their plumage. Finally, the male Anna’s Hummingbird who greeted us as we arrived, was still on the perch to bid us farewell when we left. Great group of kids – lots of fun and learning!

Bucks Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway (3/4) – Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “A hearty group of 16 walked the Trail to the last large pond finding birds and much beaver activity, plus a muskrat sitting on vegetation in one pond munching on something. Numbers of birds and species were down probably due to the cold wind, low 50’s temp, and overcast sky. With 42 species plus 4 taxa, most fun was the counting of 13 Common Gallinules, probably a low number. A large falcon seen for seconds harassing a Red-tailed Hawk was nice as were the

American Kestrels and Red-shouldered Hawks. Disappointing was the very low number of Acorn Woodpeckers, usually abundant at this site.”

Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach (3/1) – Leader Sally Walters Schmoltdt reported: “Five people joined me in tallying 35 species. Tree Swallows were investigating a snag with many cavities; Red-shoulders were copulating. Nice mix of winter and spring birds. Willows nearer the channel were nearly covered in water. Muddy trails were somewhat of a deterrent. The American River was still flowing high.”

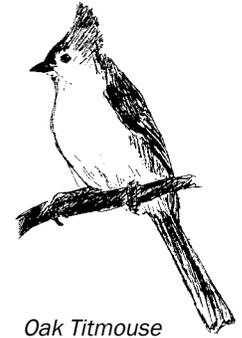
Highway 37 and Schollenberger Park, Petaluma (2/26) – Leader Mark Martucci reported: “A small group of six saw 78 species of birds on a very pleasant day in the Petaluma area. Highlights included Greater and Lesser Scaup, Aleutian Cackling Goose, Horned, Eared and Western Grebe, Forster’s Tern, American Avocet, Least and Western Sandpiper, Willet, Long-billed Curlew and Mew Gull.”

Merced County Wetlands and Refuges (2/25) – Leader Dan Brown reported: “We started the day birding Dale and Rhoda Azevedo’s private duck and bird refuge where we tallied about 50 species which included ducks, three calling Virginia Rails, lots of shorebirds and the highlight of the morning, an adult Bald Eagle! After lunch at the Azevedo’s, we visited the San Luis NWR, stopping in at the visitor center first and then birding the waterfowl auto tour route, finding two American Bitterns, one Burrowing Owl and a Great Horned Owl. We ended the long day at the Merced NWR, seeing many more ducks and shorebirds including many Wilson’s Snipe, five more Great Horned Owls, another Burrowing Owl and several hundred Sandhill Cranes. Our species total for the day was 80, but the real highlight of the day was the Azevedo’s great hospitality and wonderful private refuge along with great weather and no flooded roads!”

Gibson Ranch County Park (2/22) – Leader Deb Weston reported: “Six of us enjoyed seeing the sunshine today, even though walking conditions were wet and muddy. We saw 48 species with the best bird of the day being a Merlin giving us great scope views. The Lark Sparrows were very accommodating and we were treated to a great view of an Anna’s

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Field Trips



Oak Titmouse
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, for trips through April 9 contact the scheduler Sonja Sorbo, ssgasdoc@yahoo.com, 390-8463. For trips from April 10 contact the scheduler Carla Barbaro, cbarbaro@comcast.net, 717-8808.

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ridesharing/ carpools. Participants are, however, encouraged to voluntarily share rides. Any carpool arrangements are private agreements between the driver and the passengers. Drivers must carry adequate insurance coverage. Please be courteous and share gas expenses with the driver. FRS radios can be helpful on all trips. Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader. In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER contact the trip leader for trip status.

NOTE: With continued rain in our forecast, it is especially important to contact the trip leader if you have any doubts about the status of a trip. Fieldtrips along the American River, the Yolo Bypass and Cosumnes River Preserve are particularly in jeopardy.

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

Join Gary on a trip featuring spring migrant and resident birds. As the name implies, this area includes water and riparian habitats, and draws spring migrants and resident nesters. We can expect passerines including flycatchers, sparrows, thrushes, warblers, woodpeckers and wrens. There will also be forest hawks and river ducks. We will be hiking along Putah Creek on a narrow dirt path for up to a mile. Expect to bird for 3-4 hours. There are tables along the creek for having lunch. Meet at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Sunday, April 2, 8am Ancil Hoffman Park Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722 matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

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

Wednesday, April 5, 7:30am Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach Leader: Sally Walters Schmoltdt 710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com

Join Sally for a morning bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the

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

Saturday, April 8, 8am till noon Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Leader: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652 mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl as well as raptors. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A) on your left, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS Radios are helpful on this trip.

Sunday, April 9, 7:30am Mather Lake Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457 wayne.blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident birds. Targeted birds

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

Sunday, April 9 Birding By Ear

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

Monday, April 10, 9am Earth Day Birding & Tree Appreciation Estates Drive-American River Parkway Leader: John Huls, 396-5261 johnhuls@sbcglobal.net

Earth Day and Arbor Day both occur in this Spring month, and to celebrate we will explore the natural history of American River Parkway trees and note the birds, mammals, reptiles and insects that rely on them. This walk will feature magnificent heritage valley oaks that were standing before the arrival of Jedediah Smith, John Sutter and the 49'ers. Tree hugging will be tolerated. From Watt Ave take American River Drive east to Estates Drive, turn south on Estates and proceed until it dead-

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ends at the levee.

**Wednesday, April 12, 8:30am
Ancil Hoffman Park/Effie Yeaw
Nature Center**

**Leader: Cathie LaZier, 502-2699
empid@earthlink.net**

Meet Cathie in the Effie Yeaw parking lot for this birding walk, looping around the golf course with a couple of side trips down to the river, then returning to the parking lot on Effie Yeaw Nature Center trails. This walk is approximately 3 miles, with some up and down slopes and uneven footing. Wear comfortable shoes and you may want to bring water or snacks. We'll try to end the trip by noon. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Saturday, April 15, 7am
Bodega Bay**

**Leader: John York, 409-9276
Johnyork157@yahoo.com**

Join John for a full day of birding around Bodega Bay, taking in a variety of habitats. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and raptors. Meet John at 7am at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. Bring fluids and dress for changeable weather. John is planning to stop for lunch in Bodega Bay.

**Saturday, April 15, 10:30am
Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk**

Join Audubon birding leaders Sue Darst and Larry Hickey and a Nature Center docent for a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael.



Western Kingbird
Dan Brown

Acorn Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, and other resident birds such as towhees and Bushtits will be active. Reservations are not

needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net.

**Sunday, April 16, 7am-noon
Pine Hill Preserve Birding**

Leader: Chris Conard
**Pre-registration is required through
Pine Hill Preserve**
**contact Graciela Hinshaw at
ghinshaw@blm.gov
www.pinehillpreserve.org**

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

**Tuesday, April 18, 8am-11:30am
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area**

**Leader: Frank Gray, 723-5249
fgray4birds@aol.com**

Join Frank at this great birding area between Sacramento and Davis to drive the auto tour loop. Target species include Yellow-headed and Tricolored Blackbirds, American Bitterns, various species of waterfowl and raptors, and maybe a rarity. To optimize viewing, voluntary carpooling is encouraged, and the leader will have a few two-way radios available. Occasional stops will be made for scope views; leader will bring a scope and participants should bring scopes if you have them. Emphasis will be on discussion of identifying characteristics of various species. Beginners as well as more experienced birders are encouraged to attend. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, and 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. Optional lunch afterwards at a nearby restaurant.

Family Friendly Walk
Saturday, April 22, 9am
**Clarksburg Branch Line Trail,
West Sacramento**

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

Families are invited to join Ann for a morning walk along a section of West Sacramento's Clarksburg Branch Line Trail. The paved trail and adjacent pond provide lots of good habitat for a variety of birds. Meet Ann in the parking lot east of Nugget Market off of Lake Washington Blvd. The walk will end by noon.

**Saturday, April 22, 8am
River Bend Park**

**Leader: Cathie LaZier, 502-2699
empid@earthlink.net**

Meet Cathie at the 1st parking lot on your right, just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk through the oak woodland and over to the river, looking for small woodland birds and woodpeckers. We sometimes have good looks at Red-shouldered Hawks or Great Horned Owls. Walk will end by noon, and it's a great walk for beginners. From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field Road, take Rod Beaudry Drive north into the park, (formerly called Goethe Park). A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Sunday, April 23, 8am
Sweetwater Creek**

**Leader: Richard Barbieri, 761-1124
offleash56@yahoo.com**

At this favorite spring hotspot you should find wild flowers in bloom and hear the song of the Yellow-breasted Chat. Other possibilities are Lazuli Buntings, Wrentits, California Thrashers, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and migrating warblers. Meet at the Bella Bru in the shopping center on the northeast corner of El Dorado Hills Blvd. and Highway 50. From Hwy 50 east take Exit #30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the shopping center on your right. This is a great trip for beginners and more experienced birders, and an opportunity to see several good birds.

**Sunday, April 23
Beginning Birding Field Trip
William Pond Park**

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 502-2699. More information is on page 5.

Wednesday, April 26, 8am
Sailor Bar, Olive Ave Entrance
Leader: Larry Hickey, 415-305-0651
larryhickey1@gmail.com

Join Larry at the Olive Ave entrance to Sailor Bar. This is a good area to see Phainopepla and a variety of woodpeckers and resident birds. We will walk for about 3 miles along the base of the bluffs to the fish pond, then back on trails along the American River. Some of the paths are on uneven ground. From Winding Way, (between Fair Oaks and Chicago), go south on Toyon Ave; continue left on Natoma Ave, and at 0.4 mile turn left on Olive Avenue, down a hill and into the parking lot. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Thursday, April 27, 7:30am
Dry Creek–West Roseville
Leader: Sonja Sorbo, 390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com

For this half-day trip we will meet at Dry Creek Community Park in west Roseville and then walk a couple of miles along a path that connects the park to Cook-Riolo Road. The path is bordered by Dry Creek and the Morgan Creek golf course. This is a nice riparian corridor where we can expect to find resident species and hopefully some migrant warblers. Summer visitors include Ash-throated Flycatchers, Western Kingbirds, and Bullock's Orioles. Meet at Dry Creek Community Park (parking lot); take Highway 80 east to the Antelope exit, follow Antelope Road to Walerga, go north on Walerga—the park is at 9235 Walerga Road.

Saturday, April 29, 8am
Bushy Lake, Cal Expo Floodplain
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 species and Wood Ducks are a good possibility on the lake. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. Bring water and sunscreen. This is a great trip for beginners.

Sunday, April 30, 7:30am
Georgetown Nature Areas
Leader: Craig Swolgaard,
Home (530) 333-4345,
Cell (530) 334-3023,
cswol@sbcglobal.net

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway
Dates: Sundays, April 23 and May 7

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

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

Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 502-2699, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

Traverse Creek Botanical Area and/or Georgetown Nature Area are two diverse nature areas near Georgetown, both with forests and creeks. Hike several miles on trails to find Sierra Nevada species: kinglets, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, seven woodpecker species, Black-headed Grosbeak etc. Migrating warblers, vireos, and Lazuli Bunting are also present. Bell's Sparrow and California Thrasher may be found in the chaparral. Meet at Craig's house in Georgetown, 2884 Church Street. Georgetown is an hour drive from Sacramento and can be reached either by highway 50 to Placerville, then Hwy 193 north or by taking highway 80 to Auburn, then Hwy 49 south to Cool, then Hwy 193. Church Street intersects Hwy 193 one block north of Main Street. Parking is available.

Tuesday, May 2, 7:30am
Sweetwater Creek
Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris
Tim: 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net
Ann: 947-7573, burris.nelliann@gmail.com

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

Wednesday, May 3, 7:30am
Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach
American River Parkway
Leader: Sally Walters Schmoldt,
710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com

Join Sally for her monthly bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the American River. Sally will be looking for migrants and resident breeding birds, wrens, towhees, and other small passerine birds. From Highway 50 take Howe Ave north to Fair Oaks Blvd. Turn left onto Fair Oaks and cross over the American River. Turn right on Carlson Ave, which is the first stop light past the American River bridge. Continue on Carlson Ave to its end, at Glenn Hall Park. This is a City Park so there is no charge for American River access. Meet on top of the levee. This will be a fairly easy walk, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, and rock cobble. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Saturday, May 6, 8am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Meet Dan at the Visitor's Center Parking Lot off Franklin Boulevard by 8am for a full morning of birding at this gem in the south end of Sacramento County. There should be lots of fun migrants and many in stunning breeding plumage for us to enjoy along the trail system. Bring snacks and plenty of water and expect a slow-paced easy loop hike. After birding the riparian woodland for most of the morning we will also scope any wetlands west of Franklin Boulevard and off Desmond Road (depending on conditions) for shorebirds and waterbirds. 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.

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

Sally Walters Schmoldt, President and Program Chair

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Hummingbird on a nest. We had an interesting sighting of a Red-shouldered Hawk sitting on the ground waiting for prey to emerge. All in all a perfect morning with a wonderful group of people."

Sacramento Bar, Family Friendly Trip (2/19) — Leader Paul Cordero reported: "River access in that area was closed."

William Pond Park, Beginning Birder Trip (2/19) — Cathie LaZier, co-leader with Craig DeMartini, Darrell Mohr and Valerie Phillips, reported: "In spite of questionable weather and very high river levels, four beginners and two avid newer birders joined us for an enjoyable morning. Highlights of the 45 species seen and heard were Great Blue Herons in a rookery, scope looks at a Red-shouldered Hawk and American Kestrel, Yellow-billed Magpies constructing a nest, and as a final touch, a pair of Western Bluebirds in the parking lot. Cavorting otters added to the fun."

North Natomas Regional Park (2/18) — Leader Ben Graber reported: "The North Natomas trip was a success. 3 people showed up, and the highlights were Ring-necked Pheasants, Eurasian Collared-Doves, several Say's Phoebes, a pair of Cinnamon Teals, Common Gallinules, a nesting pair of White-tailed Kites, Kestrels, Lincoln's Sparrows, and Killdeer. The weather held out very nicely."

Ancil Hoffman Park — Effie Yeaw Nature Center, (2/17) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "No one joined me for this trip, probably because of the steady rain. I walked the route by myself, but had only 28 species, compared to 39 on this same route two days earlier."

BUSHY LAKE UPDATE

The restoration experiment in native plant species that are resilient to fire has been expanded this spring. On March 4th a group of 15 volunteers cleared 12 new sites for plant experiments; and cleared flood debris from the experimental area. On March 11th, about 13 participants planted over 400 plants. Santa Barbara Sedge, Creeping Wild Rye, and Mugwort were planted. Plots were of a single species; and some were of a mix of species to see how they co-benefit each other. Previous plots were replanted where required.

This ongoing experiment is monitored by CSU Sacramento students under Dr. Michelle Stevens direction. Look at this and other on going restoration projects by going to the following link: www.bushylake.com

If you bird or walk the area south of Bushy Lake you can view the experimental area. At this time you will see orange flags (new or previous plants); and blue flags designating replanted species. Dr. Stevens confided her appreciation to SAS for our help in funding the restoration project.

Bill Bianco

FAMILY AND BEGINNER FIELD TRIPS continued from page 1

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk On Saturday, May 20, at 10:30am, join Audubon birding leaders and Nature Center docents for a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, and other resident birds such as towhees and Bushtits will be active. Reservations are not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net.

William Pond Park On Saturday, May 27, at 9am, meet Craig DeMartini along the first parking area just past the entrance kiosk, for this morning walk looking for returning migrants and resident birds. Wrens and towhees call from the bushes. Western Bluebirds may be found in the park area, and Craig will be looking for Red-shouldered Hawks and Ash-throated Flycatchers. This is an excellent trip for beginners of all ages, and loaner binoculars are available. More information, including directions and leader contact information will be in next month's Observer.

BUFFERLANDS BIRD AND NATURE SPRING TOURS

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

Find more details here at regionalsan.com/bufferlands-calendar-events for the Birds and Bloom Tours. Visitors should see lots of birds and lots of wildflowers and will receive a packet of wildflower seeds. The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Roger Jones at jonesro@sacsewer.com the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

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

Find more details here at regionalsan.com/bufferlands-calendar-events for the Creek Week Creatures adventure. The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Steve Scott at scotts@sacsewer.com the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

Saturday, May 20, Walk on the WildSide!

Bring the family and join Regional San's Bufferlands staff for our annual Walk on the Wildside event, a celebration of International Migratory Bird Day.

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

Guided and self-guided tours are offered throughout the day. Explore a pristine valley oak riparian forest in search of migratory songbirds. Visit numerous wetland and riparian forest restoration projects. Take one of the Bufferlands guided tours and enjoy a unique opportunity to see a rare heron and egret rookery—one of only four in Sacramento County. This rookery contains more than 120 active nests of great blue herons, great egrets and double crested cormorants. Spotting scopes will be available for optimum viewing of these fascinating and beautiful birds.

Walk on the Wildside has grown to be one of Sacramento's favorite outdoor environmental events, and both the event and parking are FREE! Directions is next month's *Observer*.

THE 20TH ANNUAL GBBC WAS THE BIGGEST EVER!

Once again participants from around the world set new records for the number of species identified during the four days of the Great Backyard Bird Count, for the number of checklists submitted, and the number of estimated participants. These numbers are based on totals taken on the afternoon of March 3 and they are impressive. The amount of increase is based on a comparison to 2016 count figures: **Total checklists:** 173,826 (2016 final total: 162,052); **Total species:** 5,940 (2016 final total: 5,689); But the biggest increase seemed to be in the number of participants. **Estimated participants:** 214,018 (2016 final total estimate: 163,763).

California led by far among the states for the most species and New York was the standout for the most checklists. The undisputed winner for number of species reported is Colombia with a whopping 955, followed by India with 801, and Mexico with 774 species.

For a most interesting summary of GBBC 2017 including rarities seen, new trends and photos go to gbbc.birdcount.org/ and then click on 2017 Summary in the column on the right hand side of the page.

Now that you've contributed to the Great Backyard Bird Count, you have everything you need to take part in the third annual Global Big Day, taking place May 13, 2017. The goal is to find as many species as possible in just one day! You'll participate just as you did for the GBBC, using your same login name and password, spending at least 15 minutes counting birds, and entering your checklists online through eBird. Keep an eye on the eBird website for more information about this great event as it gets closer.

Birding and Nature Events

OLYMPIC BIRDFEST 2017, SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

From **April 7-9** the 14th annual Olympic Birdfest will take place in **Sequim, WA**. More information can be found at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 22nd annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 19-25** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. The Klamath bioregion of California offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats on Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where over 270 species of birds have been sighted. Further information can be found at www.godwitdays.org or call 1-800-908-WING.

POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

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

PONTOON BOAT TOURS AT CLEAR LAKE

Thanks to the dedication of Redbud Audubon Society members, and plenty of rain this winter to bring the level of Clear Lake high enough for boat navigation, the popular Heron Days on the lake will take place this year on two consecutive weekends, **April 29, 30** and **May 6, 7**. The boat tours are a rare opportunity to see nature up close on beautiful Clear Lake. Each day consists of six 90-minute tours leaving on the half hour between 8am and 11am. Each boat will have an experienced Audubon guide to point out the birds being seen on the tours and explain their behaviors. Besides several species of nesting herons and egrets, tour guests are likely to see nesting osprey and cormorants, yellow-headed blackbirds, and Western and Clark's grebes in courtship displays where they "dance" in pairs across the lake surface. Bird life on Clear Lake include nesting Great Blue Herons and blackbirds. Other probable sightings include raptors, grebes, ducks, woodpeckers, great horned owl and much more. Register early at redbudaudubon.org/heron-days-2016/. Tickets sell out fast.

California Audubon

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

News of proposed budget cuts at the Environmental Protection Agency bode ill for conservation in San Francisco Bay and San Diego, as two major programs are on the chopping block.

In San Francisco Bay, the EPA looks to cut its entire \$4.8 million budget for clean water and wetlands restoration programs. This is particularly bad news, as San Francisco Bay has never received a proportionate share of federal restoration funding.

Last year, residents of Bay Area communities approved Measure AA, which will raise about \$500 million over the next 20 years for wetlands restoration. Leaders had intended to use this money to leverage greater investment from the federal government.

We've got owlets!

Because of the drought, it's been a while since we've had a good clutch of chicks on the Audubon Starr Ranch Barn Owl webcam. But this year, the owls have hatched, there are six chicks and things are going great. Take a live peek into their nest over at starranch.org/blog/.

Cornell Lab Petrel Cam

Not to be outdone!

Cornell Lab of Ornithology with their partners in Bermuda have a Nest Cam (all-aboutbirds.org/cahows) of Bermuda Petrels (Cahows) which is one of the most endangered species of birds in the world, with only 130 breeding pairs left in the wild.

Now the Cahow parents will be spending the next three to four months traveling thousands of miles over the Atlantic Ocean foraging for squid and small fish to feed to the hungry youngster. If all goes well, the chick will leave for the open ocean sometime around the start of June.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Joan L Clark, Chris Couper, Bill Hanlon, Elaine Light, Carol Livingston, Wendy Money, David Rial, and Amy Williamson made donations to the **General Fund**.

Bob and Cindy Austin, Carol Baker, Barbara Klocek, Wendy Money, Rick Skehen, and Nancy Woody made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Sacramento Audubon would very much like to thank the **Frederick Harrold Family Fund** of the **Sacramento Region Community Foundation** for a grant supporting our efforts at sustaining the environment and educating the local community.

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

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

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

SACRAMENTO COUNTY BREEDING BIRD ATLAS 2.0

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

The new "twist"—connection with eBird

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

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

Chris Conard, Ed Pandolfino

SAS OFFICERS NEEDED!

The Board of Directors is in search of people interested in filling vacancies for the Fiscal year 2017-2018, for the following positions: Treasurer, Recording Secretary and one Board Member. Anyone interested in these positions may email the President, Sally Walters-Schmoldt at bajaowl@gmail.com, or phone 710-1077.

SAS OUTREACH

Spring and summer events are now fully staffed with volunteers to work at our table. SAS and Bill especially would like to thank all of our members who have stepped forward to help with our community outreach. You are what makes our organization unique and well-respected. We would also like to thank Tim Fitzer, for the material handling cart he donated to Outreach. Thanks to all volunteers present and future!

Outreach Chair, Bill Bianco

CA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME Fremont Weir Wildlife Area Field Trip

Saturday, May 20, 7:30am, Fremont Weir Wildlife Area

Leader: Brian Gilmore, 358-2869, George.gilmore@wildlife.ca.gov

This riparian stretch along the Sacramento River north of Woodland also features large expanses of meadow/grassland where Blue Grosbeaks, Lazuli Buntings and Western Kingbirds have nested in recent years. Swallows, bluebirds, orioles, wrens and Swainson's Hawks are usually present also. This easy walk will last until late morning and be mostly in the sun so hats, liquids and sunscreens are good.

Directions: From Sacramento: Travel I-5 north toward Woodland. Take the County Rd 22 Exit after crossing over the Sacramento River. Turn right or east on County Rd. 22 take the first left, County Rd 117, over the railroad tracks. Travel on County Rd 117 for 5.8 miles and turn left (west) on County Rd 16 (unpaved). County Rd 16 will terminate at the parking lot on the east levee of the Fremont Weir Wildlife Area (Yolo Bypass). Meet at Fremont Weir Wildlife Area Parking lot.

Further information about the Weir, including a map and water cautions can be found at www.wildlife.ca.gov/Lands/Places-to-Visit/Fremont-Weir-WA.

FUTURE SAS PROGRAMS

2017

May 18

Joe Ferreira, *Asian Nature Transect: Enjoying the Wildlife of India, Bhutan and Thailand*

Seasonal Observations

February 1 to February 28

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

Extremely wet weather continued and many local sites were partially or completely flooded, limiting access to popular birding area such as the Cosumnes River Preserve, portions of the American River Parkway, and the Yolo Bypass. The male **Tufted Duck** first found on 1/29 from the San Joaquin River East Levee Rd at Sherman Island continued on and off through at least 2/20. What was apparently a second male **Tufted Duck** was found and photographed miles upstream off of Brannan Island on 2/11. The two **White-winged Scoters** also continued into February, with at least one reported through 2/19. A **Surf Scoter** was found in the same area from 2/11-18, with others reported at the Winters WTP, beginning on 2/3, and Lake Berryessa on 2/28.

A **Common Loon** was found at the Deep Water Channel in West Sacramento from

SAS NEW MEMBER

Welcome to these
new members:

Lynn Saxelby
Doyle Blaney
Glenda Green

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 April 25, 2017 at 7pm. Board meetings are held at the Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room, 601 Munroe St, Sacramento, 95825.

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

Swainson's Hawk
Dan Brown



Observations continued

2/6-21, with two at Lake Solano on 2/27-28, and a single below Monticello Dam on 2/28.

An adult **Brown Pelican** on Lake Natoma on 2/18 was a surprise for the season (most of the rare **Brown Pelican** records for the Valley have been in the summer and fall). A pair of **Bald Eagles** began nesting at Lake Natoma this season, reflecting the further expansion of this species in the area. A light-morph **Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk** was an interesting find in El Dorado Hills from 2/19 through at least 2/26. An adult **Glaucous Gull** was found at Rd 104 just south of Rd 155 along the flooded Yolo Bypass from 2/11-15

Apparently the same banded male **Costa's Hummingbird** that has been present on and off for over three years continued along Putah Creek between Davis and Winters this month. A **Hammond's Flycatcher** photographed in Village Homes, Davis, was also reported for much

of the month. A **Tropical Kingbird** found at Brannan Island SRA on 2/11 was the first photographed in Sacramento County. The **Townsend's Solitaire** initially found at Lower Cache Creek Regional Park 1/15 continued through at least 2/13. The **Sage Thrasher**, first reported on 1/27 near Rds 25A and 96B, continued through at least mid-month and another **Sage Thrasher** was found on the eastern portion of Meiss Rd on 2/12. A wintering **Wilson's Warbler** continued near Spanos Court, along the American River Parkway (ARP), and was seen sporadically throughout the month. Finally, the **Red Fox Sparrow** found along the ARP between Howe and Watt continued to be reported almost daily into March.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recentsightings.html).

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

Dan Airola, Stuart Angerer, Keith Bailey, Terry Colborn, Lily Douglas, Leo Edson, Gil Ewing, Tracy Farrington, Stephan Fetting, Frank Fogarty, Lindy Fung, Gil Ewing, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Terry Hodapp, James Holmes, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Sami LaRocca, Tim Manolis, Bruce Mast, Dave Quady, Jason Riggio, Sonia Santa Ana, Michelle Swarthout, Kirk Swenson, John Trochet, and Dan Williams.

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

Chris Conard

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

Your membership supports the SAS mission of conservation, environmental education and protection of the region's natural ecosystems and diverse wildlife populations. Please include your email address if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List for letter/email writing on conservation issues.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

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

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

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White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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203-1610, e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, sawise7@sbcglobal.net

Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Send all copy to the Editor. Observations must reach the Seasonal Observations Editor by the 8th of the month.

The Observer is published monthly January through December, except June and August, by the Sacramento Audubon Society.

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

Thursday, April , 2017

Steven T Callan:

The Game Warden's Son

At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm

