

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 68 • NO. 10

DECEMBER 2016

General Meeting

Thursday, January 19, 2017
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Things that Sting and Bite
Mike Caldwell

There is no general meeting in December but we look forward to January's meeting on the 19th. Our program will be presented by Mike Caldwell, with a talk entitled *Things That Sting and Bite*. Happy holidays and see you next year!

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

Sally Walters Schmoldt, President and Program Chair

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SIGN UP FOR THE ANNUAL ARNHA COUNT SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

Two of Audubon's greatest accomplishments are the 116 years of the North American Christmas Bird Count data and the new high tech bird list system we all know as ebird. Both of these citizen science monitoring efforts have taught us more about bird population status, movements and migration than any single research effort. Sacramento has its own local citizen science effort counting birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians along the American River Parkway – the annual ARNHA Wildlife (or Critter) Count. This is our 32nd year of this first Saturday in December effort and the coordination of the count is returning to the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Anyone interested in being added to the communication list should send an email to Rachael (rachaelc@sacnaturecenter.net). This year's count is on Saturday, December 3. Your participation is encouraged—there is no fee.

SCHEDULE THE GBBC! FEBRUARY 17–20, 2017

Just to remind you to mark your calendars for the 20th GBBC, coming up February 17–20, 2017. Citizens' count statistics from all over the world generate much needed information for scientists about bird populations and movements. Go to the birdcount.org site for further count information and take part in an easy, exciting and valuable project.

THE CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD CLUB'S YOUTH BIRDING CAMP AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

The David Yee Scholarship Fund will provide annual scholarships to birding camps for young birders. Camps include camps close to home in the Sierras, Seattle and Arizona. Both the selection criteria and award process will include elements directly related to birding. For all camps, the scholarship will pay for the cost of the registration for the youth participant while transportation will be the responsibility of the participant. Application deadline is February 15, 2017 but remember camp registration may be much sooner. Information can be found at cvbirds.org/youth-scholarship-fund/. You can also contact CVBC Vice President John Sterling at his email, jsterling@wavecable.com, if you have further questions.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2016-2017

Saturday, December 3, Daybreak, ARNHA Wildlife Count

Coordinators: Paul Tebbel and Rachael Cowan
e-mail: rachaelc@sacnaturecenter.net

Annual census of birds and other wildlife on the American River Parkway.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CBC DATES

Wednesday, December 21, 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 18, Sacramento Christmas Count

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

Saturday, December 31, 2016, Folsom Christmas Count

(Incorrectly listed as Sunday in November's Observer

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

Saturday–Sunday, January 7-8, 2017, 5th Annual Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

Compiler: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

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

Field Trip Findings

Cosumnes River Preserve (11/13)

— Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “We began the walk in thick fog, hearing Greater White-fronted Geese and Sandhill Cranes overhead. Up close we were able to view Black Phoebe flycatching, and as the fog lifted we had excellent scope views of a Downy Woodpecker. When we arrived at the wetlands it was sunny and we viewed thousands of geese, as well as 8 species of ducks and a variety of shorebirds. We totaled 38 species for the morning.”

William Pond Beginners' Walk (11/13)

— Larry Hickey, co-leader with Darrell Mohr and Grant Boice, reported: “Six beginning birders joined our field trip on a beautiful fall morning at William Pond Park. Returning White-crowned and Golden-crowned Sparrows were abundant, and we were impressed by the many sounds that the European Starlings make. We had very good looks at American Kestrel, Bufflehead, Red-shouldered Hawk, Northern Flicker, Spotted Sandpiper, Herring Gull, and Belted Kingfisher. It was a beautiful morning and we were surprised at how many unique bird species we observed on our morning walk.”

Bodega Bay (11/12)

— Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “15 participants enjoyed a great day exploring the various habitats of this bird-rich, world-class birding site. The highlight by far was seeing a group of 10 Red Phalaropes in the Bodega Harbor area. These birds are highly pelagic in winter and in their migration, so it was a special sight to see them here, and at close range (they were a life list bird for several in the group). An added bonus was a single Bonaparte's Gull in the same location. One of the highlights at Bodega Head was seeing at least 20 Surf-birds on the rocks just below the viewing area. Other highlights for the day included great views of a beautiful male Townsend's Warbler, and a couple of fly-over Cooper's Hawks. We tallied over 60 species for the day.”

William Pond Park (11/9)

— Leader Larry Hickey reported: “Eight birders met at the William Pond section of the American River Parkway. We were pleased to closely observe Lark Sparrows grazing near the parking lot. We were delighted by good looks at Phainopepla and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, good birds for the area.

Grant Boice observed a raptor in a tree in the distance. We went closer, decided it was a falcon, debated, went closer and found it was a Peregrine. Buffleheads were in abundance and we saw many egrets, herons, goldfinches, ducks, and passerines. A group of river otters were closely observed and Anthony Asay drew our attention to the Peregrine Falcon as it flew overhead with rapid wing beats. We enjoyed listening to the White-crowned Sparrows singing, the Red-shouldered Hawks calling and new green growth everywhere after recent rains. It was healing to be in such a beautiful place with wonderful birders the morning after the election.”

Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (11/6)

— Leader Andi Salmi reported: “Our group enjoyed a beautiful day at the wildlife refuge, viewing thousands of geese, ducks and a variety of other birds. Snow Geese, including a dark phase goose, and Greater White-fronted Geese were plentiful, as were Pintail ducks which filled one pond as far as we could see. Other ducks included Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Bufflehead, Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal. A Loggerhead Shrike was a great find, as was one White-faced Ibis. Unfortunately, we missed Bald Eagle.”

Spenceville WLR (11/5)

— Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “The trip to Spenceville was on a nice fall day with 6 people joining me for an average day of birding. Highlights were Phainopepla, Rock Wren, Clark's Grebe and Say's Phoebe.”

Wolf Ranch (11/3)

— Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “The walk at Wolf Ranch produced 44 species on a nice morning with 12 of us walking the 2.5 mile loop. Best birds were the two Bitterns we had long, clear looks at and a beautiful Curlew strolling nearby while keeping a nervous eye on us, but finally flying off and calling its distinctive call. Few ducks had arrived so far this year but still, American Wigeon and Buffleheads were present as were Cinnamon Teal which probably breed there.”

Bodega Bay Family Trip (10/30)

— Trip canceled due to forecast of rain, thunder and lightning; will reschedule in spring.

Save Our Sandhill Crane trips (10/29

–10/30) — Leader Mike Savino reported: “On Saturday nine guests were treated to

a wonderful crane fly-in at Woodbridge Road during a beautiful sunset. The fly in was a bit abrupt in that the number of cranes went from none to hundreds in just a few minutes. Eventually there were between twelve and fifteen hundred. On Sunday evening cranes were observed along Woodbridge Road and a short stop at the parking area yielded good views of cranes feeding in the open grassy fields. At the South Unit, two scopes were set up for great views of shorebirds including many Long-billed Dowitchers, Greater Yellowlegs, Black-necked Stilts and various ducks. A pleasant surprise was the appearance of a few Black-bellied Plovers. We were also serenaded with the song of a Golden-crowned Sparrow. About 2,500 Sandhill Cranes flew in over the period of an hour. Many flew low overhead and settled in close enough to differentiate greater vs. lesser subspecies as well as juveniles.”

Sacramento Bar (10/30)

— Leader Valerie Phillips reported: “Eight intrepid birders joined me for what turned out to be a delightful walk. The weather prediction was for a heavy rain storm, which fortunately did not start until 11:15 am after we all left the parking lot! We agreed that the bird of the day was the young Sharp-shinned Hawk which kept chasing every bird that came near its tree! Other special birds were the Phainopepla acting like a flycatcher, darting out from the top of the tree for bugs, the Osprey flying overhead, a flock of Cedar Waxwings, 3 Greater Yellowlegs and a Common Merganser. We checked off 40 species.”

Cosumnes River Preserve (10/29)

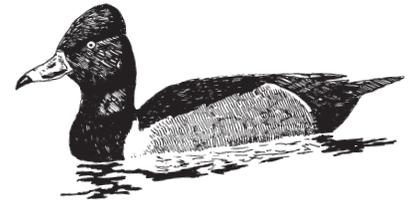
— Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “7 people joined me for this walk through the preserve. Greater White-fronted Geese and Sandhill Cranes called from overhead, but many more birds were heard than seen, until we reached the open wetlands where we had great scope views of 6 species of ducks and 5 species of shorebirds. We also looked at some interesting gall species, and we ended up at the CRP program Ducks In Scopes, where we had great microscopic looks at the invertebrates that the waterfowl and shorebirds consume.”

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge (10/25)

— Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Four of us braved the weather reports and experienced a little off and on drizzle.

Findings continued on page 7

Field Trips



Ring-necked Duck
Stephen D'Amato

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, for trips through December 4th contact the scheduler Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@comcast.net. For trips from December 5 contact the scheduler Tim Fitzer, spskua2@comcast.net, 870-5207.

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.

Saturday, December 3
ARNHA WILDLIFE COUNT
American River Parkway
Contact: Rachael Cowan
rachaelc@sacnaturecenter.net

Join a team counting birds, mammals and other wildlife on this annual event. There is more information on page 6, middle column, bottom of the page.

Sunday, December 4, 9:30am
Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River
Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311
calidris@surewest.net
One of two gull trips!

Join Ed for an informative walk along the American River and a chance to sharpen your identification skills. Ed is a great birder who will be looking for any interesting or unusual birds, with emphasis on tricky identification of the many gulls that winter on the River near Nimbus Dam. Herring, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, California, Ring-billed and Mew Gulls are all possibilities. Spotting scopes will be very useful, and be sure to bring your field guides and bird apps for this intensive study. This trip will end before noon. Meet Ed in the hatchery parking lot. From Hwy 50 go north on Hazel Avenue; turn left on Gold Country Blvd and the hatchery is on your right.

Family Friendly trip!
Sunday, December 4, 9:30-11am
Mather Lake
Leader: David Rosen, 801-0944
wildphoto@aol.com

Mather Lake is an excellent birding location any time of the year, but the winter months are especially good for a variety of ducks, geese, raptors, egrets, and herons. Other possibilities include Great-tailed Grackle, Common Yellowthroat, Common

Gallinule, a few species of sparrows, and some shorebirds. For budding birders, David will share the basics of birding and provide lots of opportunities to see birds through a spotting scope. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park. From Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel Drive about 2-1/2 miles to Douglas Road. Cross Douglas Road then take the first left into the Mather Regional Park parking area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. Loaner binoculars will be available.

Wednesday, December 7, 8am
Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach
American River Parkway
Leader: Sally Walters Schmoltdt
710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com

Sally birds this area regularly, and she'll be leading a field trip here the first Wednesday of every month. Joining her in the different months will give you a good idea of the seasonal changes along the parkway. 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, ending about 10am, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, and rock cobble. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Saturday, December 10, 8am
Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River
Leader: Craig DeMartini, 599-3300
Cloudwalk7@icloud.com
The second of two gull trips!

Join Craig for a morning walk identifying gulls and riparian species along the American River downstream of Lake

Natoma and Nimbus Dam. Craig will focus on the typical gull species that winter on the American River; such as California, Ring-billed, and Herring, as well as the less common species; Thayer's, Glaucous-winged and Mew Gulls; while keeping an eye out for the unusual and surprise arrivals. Raptors, including Osprey, Bald Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon are always a welcome sight. Spotting scopes are useful, as are field guides and the various birding apps for identification. Prepare for variable weather. This trip ends late morning. Meet Craig in the hatchery parking lot. From Hwy 50 go north on Hazel Avenue; turn left on Gold Country Blvd and the hatchery is on your right.

Sunday, December 11, 8am
Bobelaine Sanctuary
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Bobelaine is a 430-acre National Audubon Sanctuary on the Feather River, managed by Sacramento Audubon. This riparian forest of cottonwoods, sycamores and willows is home to a wide variety of birds and wildlife. Join Maureen for a 2-1/2 mile walk along the trails looking for resident and wintering birds. Herons, egrets, cormorants and grebes may be on the water, and a variety of sparrows and other passerines settled in for winter. Meet Maureen 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. If you wish to meet at Bobelaine, take Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City and about 2 miles north of the

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. The group will probably arrive there about 8:30.

**Wednesday, December 14, 8am
Humbug Creek, Folsom
Leader: Deb Weston 337-2818
notsewbed@mac.com**

Meet Deb at the Cummings Family Park on the corner of Creekside Drive and Oak Avenue Parkway in Folsom. You'll follow Humbug Creek around an easy 2+ mile paved loop. Downy Woodpecker, Common Gallinule, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and other resident and wintering species love this habitat. We may see river otters if we're lucky. This is a very pretty area and a great place for a morning bird outing. Trip will end by 11am. Bring water and dress for cold weather. We can handle a sprinkle, but heavy rain cancels trip.

**Saturday, December 17, 8am
Salt Springs Valley
Leader: Lou Regenmorter, 708-3755
Lc.regenmorter@gmail.com**

This area is located in western Calaveras County about an hour and a half drive from Sacramento. The open valley and its lake are home to many wintering ducks, hawks, eagles, owls and grassland birds. The trip will last into the late afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. Bring FRS radios and scopes if you have them. Meet at the Galt Park and Ride. From Sacramento take Hwy 99 south to the Twin Cities Rd/Hwy 104 exit (#277); turn left (east) on Twin Cities Rd, cross the freeway and turn right (south) on Stockton Blvd. The Park and Ride is just south of Twin Cities Road.

**Sunday, December 18
SACRAMENTO CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422
mcudney@aol.com**

**Wednesday, December 21
WOODFORDS CHRISTMAS COUNT
Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net**

**Friday, December 23, 8am
Sacramento Wildlife Refuge
Leaders: Tim Fitzer: 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris: 947-7573
burris.nellieann@gmail.com**

Tim and Ann will be looking for the enormous flocks of ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way south. This is also a good place for raptors, and Bald Eagles are a possibility. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon and Tim and Ann are planning a stop for lunch at Sani Mart in Willows where they make delicious deli sandwiches. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. Please note there is a \$6 day use fee for each vehicle at the refuge, or buy a Duck Stamp and support all our national refuges. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike.

**Saturday, December 24, 3:15 pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and
Sacramento Audubon trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392**

This is the prime time to see our Sandhill Cranes. 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 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.

**Saturday, December 31st
FOLSOM CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com**

**Sunday, January 1, 9am
New Year's Day, Family Friendly Trip
Cosumnes River Preserve**

**Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net**

Start the New Year off right; go birding! Wintering Sandhill Cranes, Greater White-fronted Geese and a wide variety of duck species frequent the preserve. Ye llowlegs and Wilson's Snipe will be in the shallower water, and other shorebirds are possible. Tim will walk along the wetland ponds, stopping at the "Ducks In Scopes" activity and then going out to the boardwalk viewing area. Meet at the CRP Visitor Center parking lot. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. This is an enjoyable trip for everyone, and beginners and families are welcome. For directions see the December 24th trip or go to www.cosumnes.org.

**Wednesday, January 4, 9am
Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach
American River Parkway
Leader: Sally Walters Schmoltd
710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com**

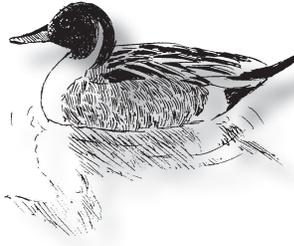
Sally birds this area regularly, and she'll be leading a field trip here the first Wednesday of every month. Joining her in the different months will give you a good idea of the seasonal changes along the parkway. From Highway 50 take Howe Ave north to Fair Oaks Blvd. Turn left onto Fair Oaks and cross 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, ending about 11am, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, and rock cobble. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

**Friday, January 6, 8am
Mather Lake
Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661
Marksawyer3383@yahoo.com**

Mather Lake is one of our most popular birding locations, with quite a list of bird species. Join Mark to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, American Bittern, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe and Common Yellowthroat. If you bring your camera Mark may give you some photography tips as well. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, January 7, 7:30am
Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR
Leaders: Daniel and Pam Thompson,
359-3777, keiran@surewest.net

Join Pam and Daniel for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, they'll take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes, looking for Sandhill Cranes, raptors and grassland birds, and then stop at the Colusa NWR viewing platform. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothing. FRS radios and scopes are helpful if you have them. Meet in 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. There is a \$4.32 per person charge at Gray Lodge, and it's wise to bring the exact amount for the Iron Ranger.



Northern Pintail
Kirsten Munson

Approximately 1 hour north of Sacramento, the Colusa NWR is a great location to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be plenty of ducks and geese, as well as other wetland species, passerines and raptors. We will spend a good amount of time on the viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through riparian habitat next to the main viewing pond. We will finish our outing to this wonderful NWR by taking the short auto tour. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Meet Dan at the Colusa NWR in the parking area near the restrooms at 9:30. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Williams; take Exit 578, Hwy 20 east to the refuge entrance, approximately 6 miles. Rain, strong wind, or thick fog cancels. No lunch break, but bring snacks and liquids. The trip will end around 1pm.

Saturday, January 14, 8am
Robinson Road, Road 113
and Bird's Landing
Leader: Bill Bianco, 889-4849
biancowm@yahoo.com

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride exit a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip, which will end in the late afternoon.

Saturday, January 14
Beginning Birder Walk
Cosumnes River Preserve

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. On this trip we will focus on waterfowl and easy shorebirds. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882. Further information is at the top of page 6.

Sunday, January 8, 8am
Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley
Leader: Craig Swolgaard
530-334-3023, cswol@sbcglobal.net

This day will focus on wintering raptors. A published study found that California's Central Valley is one of the richest wintering areas for raptors in the country. The trip will begin at Meiss and Dillard Roads and end at Clay Station and Dillard Roads following a 33 mile loop used as a survey route in a past study. Many species of raptors have been found along this productive drive during the winter months, including Golden Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, White-tailed Kite, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and Burrowing Owl. This is also a good area to find Mountain Bluebirds in winter and has potential for other vagrants. Meet Craig at the small public parking lot on Highway 16 and Sunrise Blvd. at 8am. We will car pool to try and keep the car numbers down, as some of the route uses pullouts on a busy highway. Bring a spotting scope if possible. Trip may go into early afternoon so water and food may be a good idea.

Tuesday, January 10, 9:30am
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1951
dantank1016@gmail.com

Sunday, January 15, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: John York, 409-9276
Johnyork157@yahoo.com

First stop will be Colusa Wildlife Refuge, checking out the viewing platform, (restrooms available), and then on to SNWR. John will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley. Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles are sometimes seen, as well as herons, egrets and bitterns. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. Please note there is a fee for each vehicle at the refuge: either \$6 for a day pass or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd., go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd., and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1.

Join Us For
Family Field Trips!

Traylor Ranch On November 5, Sandra Steurer and Wendy Money led a family-friendly trip to Traylor Ranch in Penryn. Their bird list, after less than 3 hours, was 34 species! Here is their report: We were welcomed to the Traylor Ranch Bird Sanctuary with a close fly-over of a Cooper's Hawk. Along the trail, we found a Hermit Thrush moving through the bushes with a crowned sparrow and a lovely female California Quail popped up on top of the Himalayan berry bushes. In the grasslands and wetlands, Western Bluebirds perched on their boxes and nearby oaks. Four species of woodpeckers were easy to find and the elegant Say's Phoebe showed its peach-colored belly beautifully in the morning light. Topping off a crystal-clear morning in the Penryn area, we found a single Dark-Eyed Junco.

There is so much interest that family-friendly trips are being planned for most months. The next chance families have for a great trip like this will be at Mather Lake with David Rosen on Sunday, December 4. For trip details, see page 3 in the Observer or check Facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon or the SAS website at SacramentoAudubon.org.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sunday, January 22
Sunday, February 19

Location: Cosumnes River Preserve, focusing on wintering waterfowl and some common shorebirds.

Date: Saturday, January 14

These beginner field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on where to look and what important field marks to look for. This walk will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Trips are limited to 10 adult participants and registration is required. Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 457-6882, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

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

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

December: Sundays 12/4, 12/11, and 12/18

January: Start the New Year off right and join us on Sunday, January 1, 2017

For further January and February 2017 dates check Activities at www.cosumnes.org

Birding and Nature Events

21ST ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 21st Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 13-16, 2017**. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the Pacific Flyway. Registration is open but some events fill up fast so hurry to the Festival site at morrobaybirdfestival.org or call 805-234-1170.

10TH ANNUAL WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The City of **Galt** in collaboration with the Cosumnes River Preserve and Galt Joint Union Elementary School District are pleased to bring you the 10th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, January 21, 2017**. Many migratory and resident birds call Galt their winter home. The key note speaker will be David Allen Sibley, Ornithologist/Illustrator and author of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*. Google 'Galt Birding Festival' for more detailed information. Registration for the annual festival is already open so check online or call so you don't miss any of your favorite tours. If you have any questions please call 209-366-7115.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL OF THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

The 18th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 25-29, 2017**. Registration will begin in December. Further information can be found at snowgoosefestival.org or by email at info@snowgoosefestival.org and phone 530-345-1865. Since many of the trips fill up fast, it is best to get on their mailing or email list, available on their website, or stay in touch on their facebook page at facebook.com/SnowGooseFestival.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON CONSERVATION GRANTS - 2017

Sacramento Audubon Society would like to fund community based conservation projects that promote the mission of the Society. We believe that when organizations work together, we can exponentially magnify our impact. The projects should conserve (or restore) habitats, or help protect species. The geographical area should be within 50 miles of Sacramento. The available grants are for \$500 to \$2,000 for the year 2017.

Sacramento Audubon Society's mission is to:

- a) promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds;
- b) promote the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach;
- c) provide, encourage and support environmental educational opportunities; and
- d) provide proactive leadership in the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

If your organization is interested in applying for such a grant, please submit a proposal for your project. The proposal should be no more than 2 pages long and should include the project's goals and how they meet one or more of the above mission objectives, an action plan with time-line, and the project budget with some breakdowns. Also indicate if this is an ongoing effort or a one-time project and the personnel who will work on the project. The goals should be measurable and achievable within the 12 month grant period.

The Board of Directors of the Sacramento Audubon Society will evaluate each proposal for how well it fits with SAS goals, and the cost to benefit ratio of each project. They reserve the right to request modifications to the project. As with all grant programs, there is limited funding available and not all proposals can be approved. We would like your submissions by December 15, 2016.

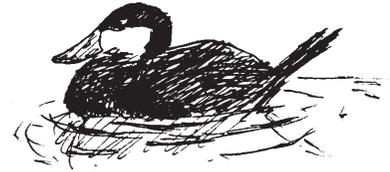
Please send proposals either electronically to Sally Walter Schmoltdt at: President@sacramentoaudubon.org (preferred option) OR by snail mail to Sacramento Audubon Society, Attn: SAS Conservation Grants Program, PO Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER WINTER CAMPS

The Effie Yeaw children's Winter Camps are offered December 27-29 and January 3-5.

Most camps are 10am to 1pm, so kids should bring a snack and a water bottle. Depending on the weather, a sweatshirt or jacket and hat are also a good idea.

You can register online, via fax/mail or by phoning the Nature Center at 489-4918. The online address is www.sacnaturecenter.net/ for more information and registration. Participants must be pre-registered and pre-paid.



Ruddy Duck
Kirsten Munson

Findings continued from page 2

With temperatures being in the mid-sixties and no wind, we had very pleasant conditions. Though there were no rarities this day, the group did see a wonderful mix of species near the southeast corner of the auto tour. In a small field near the road were Sandhill Cranes, Great, Snowy and Cattle Egrets, White-faced Ibis, Long-billed Curlew, Greater Yellowlegs and one, seemingly out-of-place, American White Pelican."

Save Our Sandhill Crane trips (10/22 & 10/23) — Leader Alan Kilgore reported: "On Saturday 4 people showed up at the Cosumnes River Preserve for the evening Sandhill Crane fly-in viewing. After an introduction to Sandhill Cranes the group caravanned to the Phil and Marilyn Isenberg Woodbridge Ecological Reserve. Along Woodbridge Rd we observed dozens of Sandhill Cranes feeding in the harvested corn fields. About sundown, there was a spectacular fly-in of about 500 Sandhill Cranes in groups of 4 to 50. A group of about 50 cranes landed on the closest pond providing great spotting scope views, including a juvenile and a mixture of lesser and greater subspecies. We also saw a group of 8 White-faced Ibis flying over, hundreds of Greater White-fronted Geese, a Belted Kingfisher, and heard the sweet song of White-crowned Sparrows. A gorgeous, brilliant sunset capped the esthetics of the evening. Lines of silhouetted cranes flying on the pink-orange-red sunset, with Mt Diablo's inky-black profile in the background punctuated the dwindling light of dusk. There were no participants on Sunday but the leaders observed about a dozen Sandhill Cranes in the ponds west of Franklin Blvd, and several dozen more Sandhill cranes flying in into the same ponds. Cranes were also noted in harvested fields along Bruceville and Desmond Roads."

Bodega Bay (10/23) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: "A small group of just 5 of us had a wonderful day with gorgeous weather. At Doran County Park, we had an interesting time looking for Snowy

Plovers. We searched the mud flats on the Harbor side where they often appear during the outgoing tides, then went over to the beach side where we have often seen them roosting in sand depressions, even with people walking by. But no go. Then, upon returning to the harbor side, we immediately spotted 40 of them on the flats with hundreds of other shorebirds. The bird of the day would have to be Red Phalarope, two of them, viewed just off Bodega Head. We tallied 87 species over all at Bodega, with several more seen at the new section of the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge, just off of Highway 37."

William Pond Beginners' Walk (10/22) — Larry Hickey, co-leader with Darrell Mohr and Craig DeMartini, reported: "We had a good trip today with four enthusiastic participants. Some were advanced beyond beginners. Highlights were a very large flock of Cedar Waxwings, close observations of a Snowy Egret foraging and good looks at Red-shouldered Hawks."

Hope Valley (10/22) — Leader Dan Brown reported: "Nine of us enjoyed birding in the fall weather and what was left of the beautiful fall foliage today up in Alpine County. The day started off at Luther Pass (El Dorado County) with a temperature of about 35 degrees and ended in downtown Markleyville at about 70 degrees. We tallied 37 species with the highlight of the day being an awesome display of Townsend's Solitaires with a total of at least 10 individuals in the first 2 hours of birding! We had at least 5 individuals calling and chasing each other around at Luther Pass and then another 5 or 6 about 2 miles east of the Pass! The close second highlight of the day were 3 presumed Woodhouse's Scrub-jays. According to the range maps, this newly recognized species is the only scrub-jay present in the area of Indian Creek Reservoir where our sightings were! Other nice species sightings were 2 American Dippers, 7 Lewis's Woodpeckers, 5 Mountain Bluebirds and 1 Prairie Falcon."

Yolo Bypass WLA (10/18) — Leaders Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris reported: "Beautiful

blue skies, cool temperatures and just a hint of a breeze greeted us as our group of 19 started the morning at the Bypass. It turned out to be an amazing morning with 7 sightings of American Bittern. Another unexpected sighting was of a Sora that crossed in front of the group on a trail by parking lot C. But perhaps the sighting that caused the most excitement was as the group was leaving, a Western Yellow-bellied Racer was found on the road. There was no visible injury to the snake but it wasn't moving much. After everyone saw it and took pictures it was moved off the road. Species count for the day was 51."

Humbug Creek (10/16) — Leader Mara Weston reported: "Trip was rained out."

Bothe-Napa Valley (10/15) — Leader Dan Williams reported: "8 of us enjoyed a peaceful walk through the redwood rainforest just before the rain moved in big time! Easily the highlight at the state park was a gorgeous female Pileated Woodpecker which lumbered in over our heads and perched near the top of a dead tree, letting loose its jungle yells to our delight. Quite a few Hairy Woodpeckers, Pacific Wrens, Hermit Thrushes, Brown Creepers, Steller's Jays, Hutton's Vireos, and a Townsend's Warbler were some other nice birds from our morning walk. After picking up some lunch supplies in St. Helena, we headed down Highway 29 to Wetlands Edge Park in American Canyon. We were able to enjoy an abundance of dabbling ducks and shorebirds as well as a nice adult "Tundra" race Peregrine Falcon terrorizing them. Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, Gadwall, Marbled Godwits, both Dowitchers, Avocets and Stilts were there in the hundreds, and we heard a Sora pipe up on a couple of occasions. Finally, a brief stop at Lynch Canyon yielded distant but definitive looks at one adult Golden Eagle, as well as a Prairie Falcon, a Northern Harrier, and several Red-tails and Kestrels. A flock of Western Bluebirds entertained us in the foreground while we scanned for raptors. We observed 90 species in all!"

Cathie LaZier

FREE TUNDRA SWAN TOURS THIS WINTER

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is offering free swan tours near Marysville on Saturdays beginning in November and extending through January 2017.

Co-hosted by local rice farmers, the naturalist-led tours will focus on tundra swans in one of the premier locations for viewing swans in California. The swan tour offers participants a spectacular opportunity to encounter these stately, elegant birds, which weigh more than 20 pounds with a 5.6 foot wingspan. Ducks, geese, shorebirds, herons, egrets and raptors, are commonly seen in this area also, which contains 23,000 acres of rice fields.

Tours will be held on Saturdays from 9:30am to 11:30am and from 1pm to 3pm. The driving tours will also involve walking a short distance.

Pre-registration is required at www.wildlife.ca.gov/Regions/2/Swan-Tours. As many as 30 people may register for each tour.



Northern Harrier
Stephen D'Amato

FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S FIELD TRIPS SPONSORED BY:

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY AND EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER

Mather Lake Leader: David Rosen	Sunday, December 4, 2016
Cosumnes River Preserve Leader: Tim Fitzer	Sunday, January 1, 2017
Kids' Christmas Bird Counts—1 date remaining for registration: Ages 6 to 10 Ages 10 and Up	Saturday, January 7 (FULL) Sunday, January 8
The Kids' CBCs require pre-registration. For both dates, visit sacnaturecenter.org	
Family Nature Walk Location: Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael	Saturday, January 21
Humbug Creek Leader: Mara Weston	Saturday, January 28
Family Nature Walk Location: Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael	Saturday, February 18
Sacramento Bar Leader: Paul Cordero	Sunday, February 19

For more information and directions to events at Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael, visit sacnaturecenter.org.

Other events are sponsored by Sacramento Audubon. For more information, visit sacramentoaudubon.org or facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon.

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

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- 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.

ANDROID APP NOW AVAILABLE *BIRDING IN THE* SACRAMENTO REGION

SAS has just released BirdWalk, a new app that puts our publication *Birding in the Sacramento Region* on your android phone. The app helps you find birding trails and lets you know what you can expect to see at local birding hotspots. Download BirdWalk from the Google Play Store and start exploring our region! BirdWalk was a generous donation from Josh Louie and Margaret Gabil and made available for FREE.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Michael Eaton, Natalie Fenner, Stanley G Ford, Truman Holtzclaw, Charity Kenyon, Judith and James Lamare-Pachl, Laura Nickerson, David Rial and Susan E Solarz made donations to the **General Fund**.

Michael Keaton, Charity Kenyon, Fred Klas and Lachlan McClenahan made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

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

SAS OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

SAS Outreach has the Galt Winter Bird Festival coming up on January 21, 2017. We need a couple of volunteers to work our table at the event. You do not have to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding and talking to people about our field trips and SAS. You would be working with an experienced volunteer. If you can work a 3 or 4 hour shift on Saturday, January 21st, please contact Bill Bianco at biancowm@yahoo.com, or 372-3318.

Seasonal Observations

October 1 to October 31

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

After a very busy September, reports slowed during what proved to be an historically wet October. Impressive **Blue-winged Teal** numbers continue to be reported at Bridgeway Island Pond in West Sacramento, with a high of 92 on 10/29. Locally uncommon **Redhead** reports were of a single male at the Sacramento County Bufferlands on 10/20 and a high of six at the Davis WTP from 10/16-18. A **Marbled Godwit** was a nice surprise among a **Long-billed Curlew** flock along East Levee Rd in Natomas on 10/27. The nice showing of **Pectoral Sandpipers** at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) continued, with six on 10/1 and a single continuing through at least 10/8. Two **Pectoral Sandpipers** were found at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on 10/18-22, and two were found at the Davis Wetlands on 10/2 along with a fairly late **Solitary**

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to this
new member:

Debra Pintel Steiner

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. There is no December meeting. The next meeting will be on January 31, 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.

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



Observations continued

Sandpiper. An adult **Western Gull** was a nice find at the Davis Wetlands on 10/31, where they are rare but regular. The **Sabine's Gull** at the Sacramento Regional WTP continued through 10/1.

Two **Band-tailed Pigeons** were seen along Wood Duck Slough at the CRP's Tall Forest on 10/1. From 10/25 to the end of the month, a **Greater Roadrunner** was seen by many along Yolo County Rd 92B near Matchbook Winery. A well-described **Yellow-shafted (Northern) Flicker** was reported at the UC Davis Arboretum on 10/4 and another was reported from Lake Solano on 10/9. An **Olive-sided Flycatcher** reported along the American River Parkway (ARP) between the Howe and Watt accesses on 10/1 was the latest report of this uncommon migrant this season. A probable **Tropical Kingbird** was briefly seen and heard at Charles Jensen Park in Carmichael on 10/30.

A **Townsend's Solitaire** at the Sacramento City Cemetary on 10/5 was an excel-

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 _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

Happy Holidays



lent report of this species that has proven to be quite rare in the Valley. Three **Mountain Bluebirds** along Michigan Bar Rd on 10/30 in eastern Sacramento County were the first for the season. A female-type **American Redstart** was found along ARP near the Estates Dr access on 10/1 and a hatch-year male was found along Babel Slough on 10/2. On 10/2, a **Brewer's Sparrow** was photographed at the Sacramento City Cemetery along with five Chipping Sparrows. A **Grasshopper Sparrow** found along Meiss Rd on 10/10 was surprisingly late in the season. A **Chestnut-collared Longspur** found along Lamb Road, east of Staten Island, in northern San Joaquin County on 10/22 continued through the end of the month and is a good record of a rare but likely under-reported species.

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

Keith Bailey, Mike Curry, Lily Douglas, John Ehrenfeld, Gil Ewing, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, Scott Hoppe, Dan Kopp, Alan Krakauer, Keith Kwan, Jeri Langham, Mark Martucci, Dan Murphy, Frances Oliver, Linda Pittman, Jim Rowoth, Ben Sandstrom, Mark Sawyer, Steve Scott, Kirk Swenson, Jim Thomas, John Trochet, David Yee, and Bryan Young.

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

Chris Conard

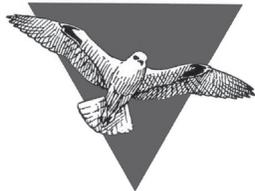
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White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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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

2017

- January 19** Mike Caldwell, *Things that Bite and Sting*
- February 16** Steph Clymer, *Historical Records into e-Birdg*
- March 16** Paul Bannick, *A Year in the life of North American Owls*
- April 20** Steven T Callan, *The Game Warden's Son*
- May 18** Joe Ferreira, *Asian Nature Transect: Enjoying the Wildlife of India, Bhutan and Thailand*