

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 69 • NO. 12

DECEMBER 2017

General Meeting

Thursday, January 18, 2018

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Assembly Room, 7pm

Norway/Svalbard

Ed Harper

There is no general meeting in December but we look forward to January's meeting on the 18th. Our program will be presented by Sacramento Audubon favorite, Ed Harper, with a talk entitled *Norway/Svalbard*. This will, of course, include some of his wonderful photos. 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



White-throated Dipper
Ed Harper

SCHEDULE THE GBBC! FEBRUARY 16-19, 2018

Just to remind you to mark your calendars for the 21st annual GBBC, coming up February 16-19, 2018. Citizens' count statistics from all over the world generate much needed information for scientists about bird populations and movements. Last year participants counted over 20 million birds from around the world. Go to the birdcount.org site for further count information and take part in an easy, exciting and valuable project. Add your birds!

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, 2018 but remember camp registration may be much sooner. Much more information can be found at cvbirds.org/youth-scholarship-fund/, including requirements, registration, and forms. You can also contact Cliff Hawley at his email, yellowhammerca@gmail.com, if you have further questions.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2017-2018

Saturday, December 2, Daybreak, ARNHA Wildlife Count

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

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

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CBC DATES

Thursday, 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 17, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266
e-mail: jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Sunday, December 31, 2016, Folsom Christmas Count

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

**Saturday-Sunday, January 6-7, 2018, 6th Annual
Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count**

Registration is required.

Compiler: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652, mkgeiger@comcast.net

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

Field Trip Findings

Bobelaine Sanctuary (11/14) — Leaders Maureen Geiger and Ken Poener reported: “The first Bobelaine walk in months was enjoyed by 7 birders on a clear, lovely day, including a couple visiting from Israel who found the hike on the SAS website. (Meant to be a jointly-led hike, Ken Poerner did the honors as Maureen Geiger was unable to hike due to an injury.) 33 species were seen including usual winter residents such as Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, resident species such as Bewick’s and House Wrens, plus a Golden-crowned Kinglet and a Brown Creeper, not always found on this hike. The levee work and redo of the parking lot on Laurel is still not complete, and entrance to the Preserve was from Oak Avenue.”

Mather Lake (11/12) — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: “On a gorgeous autumn morning, a team of 12 birded Mather Lake in two phases. The whole team identified 38 species in the walk of the NW shoreline and three intrepid teammates stayed on to bird the south shore for an additional 10 species. Construction continues on the dam and levee and presented unusually low water levels for the lake. The conditions provided an unusual concentration of several species. Eighty Double-breasted Cormorants, 215 American Coots, 9 White Pelicans and 44 Mute Swans and 13+ Pie-billed Grebes were high numbers for these species. The lower water level suggested a concentration of fish and provided good looks at an otter doing a Sunday brunch. Highlights from Terry, Mike and Betty on the south shore were a Cooper’s Hawk, a Peregrine Falcon, 11 Turkeys, California Quail, Western Bluebirds and 2 American Pipits. Nice job Team!”

William Pond Park Beginners’ Trip (11/12) — Seven newer birders joined 4 Audubon trip leaders for this morning walk. Super scope looks at a male Nuttall’s Woodpecker, a Red-breasted Sapsucker and a very cooperative Red-shouldered Hawk were the highlights of the trip. The group totaled 36 species.

Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (11/11) — Leader Andi Salmi reported: “Our group of 9 birders enjoyed a mostly sunny day, which highlighted the beautiful colors of the numerous ducks. We saw Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, Pintail, Gadwall, Shoveler, Mallard, Ring-necked Ducks, American Wigeon, as well as Bufflehead

and Ruddy Ducks. Ten’s of thousands of Greater White-fronted, Snow and Ross’ Geese filled the air with their calls. A very accommodating adult Peregrine Falcon gave us plenty of time to enjoy its beauty. A group of American White Pelicans rested on an island. Other birds included small numbers of shorebirds, Pied-billed and Eared Grebe, Great Blue Heron, Great Egret and Snowy Egret.”

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge (11/7) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Sixteen of us gathered on the viewing platform on a clear, crisp morning to sort through the various duck and goose species. We had great fun discussing the differences between Snow and Ross’s geese, Canada and Cackling geese, and Greater White-fronted and a subspecies of the Greater White-fronted known as Tule geese. From the viewing platform, we took a walk on the nearby riparian trail and finished our outing with a drive around the refuge’s fabulous auto tour route where we tallied, among other species, Wilson’s Snipe, Long-billed Curlew, and Loggerhead Shrike. In all, the group saw 65 species plus two taxa (identified to family but not species).”

Lynch Canyon/King Ranch (11/5) — Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Ken Poener reported: “Yesterday was a beautiful day for 17 of us to hike at Lynch Canyon and check out a private ranch in Solano County. Highlights were a pair of Golden Eagles at each site, the usual assortment of Red-tailed Hwks, kites, kestrels and harriers, and a big flock of Band-tailed Pigeons at Lynch. The spectacular view from an high overlook of the San Pablo Bay all the way to the Sierra was a nice way to end the morning.”

Sailor Bar (11/4) — Leader Ben Graber reported: “The trip went surprisingly well, as it did rain, but it wasn’t too heavy. Only one other person showed up. We saw 43 species total. The two least common/most notable ones, a Glaucous-winged Gull and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, were both seen at the very end of the walk. Other highlights included California Quail, Western Bluebirds, White-tailed Kites, Red-tailed, Red-shouldered and Sharp-shinned Hawks, Red-winged Blackbirds, and the usual sparrows, towhees, titmice, and woodpeckers.”

Falcon Crest, El Dorado Hills (10/30) — Leader Craig DeMartini reported: “Seven of us had a very satisfying day at Falcon

Crest, totaling 48 avian species. The weather was gorgeous, with a cool morning and mild mid-day temperatures. One of several surprises were close views of a curious Wrentit. Also, a cooperative Hairy Woodpecker hammering on a downed limb, then flying into full view on to the trunk of a conifer. Two Bald Eagles perched below their annual nest, then soared overhead while vocalizing several varieties of their calls. We also enjoyed watching the calling Phainopeplas.”

Bodega Bay (10/29) — Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Mark Martucci, reported: “8 participants enjoyed a great day of birding around this world class birding site. We tallied 84 species of birds over all. Highlights included all 6 of our California occurring grebes including 2 Red-necked, 14 species of shorebirds and 8 species of gull including Bonaparte’s. The real highlight, though, was not a single species but the large flocks of shorebirds gathering at a couple of locations during the outgoing tide. Some in the group had never seen so many Sanderlings and Black Turnstones at one time. All in company with Black-bellied Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers, Snowy Plovers, Marbled Godwits, Willets, Dunlin, Least Sandpipers and a few Western Sandpipers. This is why I love birding Bodega Bay, and I’m sure all of the attendees would agree.”

Bucks Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway (10/28) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “The Bucks Creek trail in El Dorado Hills delivered as usual for 16 birders on a pretty fall day. The usual suspects were present including fantastic looks at a Cooper’s Hawk, several American Widgeon, more than a dozen Common Gallinules plus Lark and crowned sparrows, White-breasted Nuthatches, and woodpeckers. Tim Jackson co-led this trip and manned a scope which was very useful. By 11:40 when everyone returned to cars, it was 86 degrees!”

Ancil Hoffman Park (10/25) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Six birders came out for this morning walk. It was relatively quiet, but Mark Martucci added several species to the bird list just by hearing them. We had good looks at Downy Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker and Red-shouldered Hawk and heard European Starlings give very convincing renditions of other species’ calls.

Findings continued on page 7

Field Trips



Prairie Falcon
Linda Pittman

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 9, contact the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net. For trips from December 10 through January 11, 2018, contact the scheduler Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net, 502-2699.

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. 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: Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place.

**Saturday, December 2, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: John York, 409-9276
Johnyork157@yahoo.com**

John 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. Bring lunch, snacks and hydration as the refuge has no restaurants and birds poop in the water. 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. 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 2
ARNHA WILDLIFE COUNT
American River Parkway
rachaalc@sacnaturecenter.net**

Join a team counting birds, mammals and other wildlife on this annual event.

**Sunday, December 3
Beginning Birding Field Trip
William Pond Park**

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds.

Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

**Sunday, December 3, 8am
Robinson Road, Road 113
and Bird's Landing
Leaders: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com
Paul Cordero, pkcordero@gmail.com**

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

**Thursday, December 7, 8am
Lincoln WWTP and
Placer County Roads
Leader: Sonja Sorbo, 390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com**

In this morning trip we will start by birding the Lincoln water treatment plant. There are several large ponds which can hold a variety of ducks. From the plant, we will drive some nearby backroads of Placer county, searching flooded fields for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. We will search a small riparian area for sparrows, woodpeckers, and other resident species. Several open dry fields may provide hunting grounds for raptors. Meet at the parking lot of Dry Creek Community Park at 9235

Walerga Road in Roseville at 8am. FRS radios will be helpful.

**Saturday, December 9, 8am
Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley
Leader: Craig Swolgaard
530-334-3023, cswol@sbcglobal.net**

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 at the small public parking lot on Highway 16 and Sunrise Blvd at 8am. We will try to car pool to 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.

**Sunday, December 10
Gull ID trip on the American River
Leader: Ed Harper**

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. Herring, "Thayer's" (which is now considered a race of Iceland

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

Gull), 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. Trip will end before noon and is limited to 15 people to ensure quality learning opportunity. To register for the trip contact Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net (put Gull Trip in the subject line), or phone 502-2699 to find meeting time and place.

Sunday, December 10, 9am
Family Friendly Trip!
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Leaders: Wendy Money, 205-3194
wendydoug@msn.com
Sandra Steurer, 580-8398
sasteurer@yahoo.com

Join Sandra and Wendy in this great seasonal floodplain 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. We will enjoy the returning ducks, geese, swans, pelicans, raptors, and watch for stealthy rails and owls. 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, and 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. On this trip we stay in our vehicles, as blinds, most of the time, popping out for brief scope-aided views. The trip will end before noon, but bring water and snacks as needed. Loaner binoculars available. Questions? Contact Wendy or Sandra.

Tuesday, December 12, 8am
Mid-Yolo County Hotspots
Leader: Dan Murphy, 541-4213
dmmurpete@gmail.com

Join Dan for a trip to several mid-Yolo hotspots, beginning with the Davis WTP and ending with the Plainfield Elementary School quadrangle. Target birds include Burrowing Owl, wintering waterfowl, Red-tailed and Ferruginous Hawks, and perhaps a Prairie Falcon. We should finish by noon. Bring a snack and liquids. Meet Dan at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd, (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. Meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

Thursday, December 14, 9am
East Lawn Cemetery
Leader: Craig DeMartini, 599-3300
cloudwalk7@icloud.com

Join Craig for a 2-3 hour slow-paced walk through East Lawn cemetery where many common wintering species can be found. Often, there will be less common finds such as Red-breasted Sapsuckers or Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Meet at the entrance gate at 43rd Street and Folsom Boulevard. There is street parking on 42nd and 43rd streets.

Saturday, December 16, 7:30am
Mather Lake
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 206-3767
Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of our most popular birding locations, with quite a list of bird species. A nice variety of resident and migrant birds are possible, including White-tailed Kites, American Bittern, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe and Common Yellowthroat. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd, take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning and more advanced birders.

Sunday, December 17
SACRAMENTO CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Tuesday, December 19, 8:30am
Colusa NWR
Leader: John Huls, 396-5261
johnhulsnaturalist@gmail.com

Colusa always provides close up views of wintering waterfowl so this is a good trip for all birders and photographers. John will discuss waterfowl population trends, habitat management and threats from both ends of the migration routes. We will spend around 3 hours at the refuge so bring a lunch or plan on eating at nearby towns. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them and be prepared for changeable weather. 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 Road, 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.

Thursday, December 21
WOODFORDS CHRISTMAS COUNT
Co-ordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net

Saturday, December 23, 3:20pm at Staten Island
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392
yogoombah@yahoo.com

Sandhill Cranes will be the focus of our trips, but you may see other wintering birds as well. Ducks, swans and geese, as well as shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the Delta, and hawks patrol overhead. We begin with a brief presentation about Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and conservation status. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars and scopes if you have them. Our tours usually end a few minutes after sunset. Once you arrive at the chosen viewing site no driving or hiking will be required. Directions to Staten Island: Take I-5 to the Thornton/Walnut Grove exit and proceed west towards Walnut Grove. Go about 3-1/2 miles where you will turn left (south) towards the big silo. The turn is just past a green sign that says, "Staten Island." We will meet at the base of the silo.

Saturday, December 30, 8am
Salt Springs Valley
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 947-7573
burris.nellieann@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 "It's a Grind" coffee shop, 19420 Twin Cities Road in Galt. From Sacramento take Hwy 99 south to Twin Cities Road/Hwy 104, (Exit 277). Turn left (east) on Twin Cities; cross the freeway and continue east to the shopping center on your right.

Saturday, December 30, 3:20pm
Sandhill Cranes at Staten Island
See write up for December 23rd.

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

Monday, January 1, 9am
Family Friendly Trip
**New Year's Day in the Cosumnes/
Mokelumne Rivers Area**
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 will be the targets of this trip. Possible shorebirds are Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitchers and Wilson's Snipe. Meet at the intersection of Bruceville and Desmond Roads, just south of Twin Cities Road. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. Spotting scopes and FRS Radios are helpful. This is an enjoyable trip for everyone, and beginners and families are welcome. There will be great scope views of the birds and loaner binoculars are available.

Saturday, January 6, 7am
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.

Saturday, January 6
Kids' Christmas Bird Count
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Contact: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Registration required.

Sunday, January 7
Teen Christmas Bird Count
Contact: Sandra Steurer, 580-8398
sasteurer@yahoo.com

Registration required.

Sunday, January 7, 8am
Sailor Bar, American River Parkway
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Join Mark for a morning walk checking out the resident and wintering birds. This is a good trip for beginners and experienced birders too, with Mark sharing his expertise on identification of the birds and their vocalizations. Meet at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY **FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS**

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sunday, December 3

*Trips limited to 10 adult participants, and require a minimum of 3 participants: Registration required.

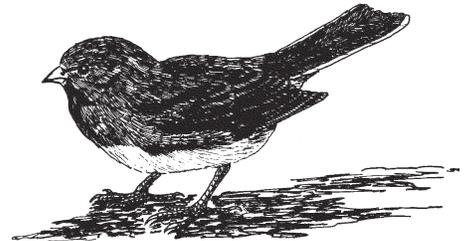
These outings are geared toward people who aren't yet entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. It is not necessary to be an Audubon member to participate.

The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on looking and listening. This walk, covering about a mile and a half, will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. You can sign up for just one session, or for more than one.

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.

SAS HOSPITALITY HELP NEEDED

The Board of Directors is requesting volunteers to help with the meeting hospitality. We hope to get enough volunteers, so we can make it a rotating service. Duties are basically making the coffee, lemon water, providing cookies or pastries; and setting up and clearing the hospitality table. Helpers will be reimbursed for their costs. If you have questions and/or want to help out contact Bill Bianco at biancowm@yahoo.com, or 372-3318.



Oregon Junco
Stephen D'Amato

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

It's Autumn again, and the wintering waterfowl, shorebirds and cranes are back. This is an opportunity to work on duck and other wetland bird identification, and is a great trip for families, youth groups and newer birders.

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 (up to 10 different species!) and other wetland birds.

Microscopes 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. Steady rain or flooding cancels event. Check www.cosumnes.org for updated schedule.

Come any time between 10am and 2pm on the following dates:

Saturdays: 12/2, 12/16, 12/23

Sundays: 12/10

Monday: January 1, New Year's Day

BOBELAINE SANCTUARY ACCESS REMAINS LIMITED

Access to the Bobelaine Sanctuary remains limited due to the devastating floods from the Oroville Dam failure and on-going levee repairs. Although the original construction schedule called for re-opening to the public by December 1st, that deadline may not be firm. Before visiting, check the SAS website and/or Facebook page for the latest update. Also, there is a SAS trip scheduled on December 12, so access will occur that day. We are still seeking donations to help repair and restore Bobelaine. If you can help, please send checks to SAS, PO Box 160694, Sacramento CA 95816. You can also donate online starting at sacramento-audubon.org/payments.html.



Red-tailed Hawk
Stephen D'Amato

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Institutes New Fees!

Effective November 15, 2017, individuals 16+ years of age, will need a CDFW Lands Pass or a current fishing or hunting license in possession at Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (also known as Isenberg Crane Reserve). This is the same type of pass you already pay for and use at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. A one-day lands pass costs \$4.32 and an annual lands pass costs \$24.33. Lands passes may be purchased online at wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing/Lands-Pass, by phone at (800) 565-1458, and in-person wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold.

This pass will also be necessary at the Yolo Bypass WA effective January 1st along with a long list of other state public lands.

Annual Lands Passes are sold for the calendar year. 2018 Lands Passes will be available starting November 15. You can buy day or annual passes here: wildlife.ca.gov/Licensing/Lands-Pass. You will need to create a profile and log in to purchase an annual pass. Day passes can be purchased by logging in or by selecting the "Guest" tab. A PDF of 'Properties that Require a Lands Pass' can also be found on the same page. Please contact the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife at (800) 565-1458, if you have any questions..

Birding and Nature Events

22ND ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 22nd Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 12-15, 2018**. Every Martin Luther King weekend over 500 California bird festival lovers visit Morro Bay, a Globally Important Bird Area, to see, photograph, and learn more about birds. Morro Bay is located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the Pacific Flyway. The area offers pristine beaches, beautiful state parks, an excellent natural history museum, panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and, best of all, thousands of birds. Over 200 species are usually sighted during the Festival weekend. Online registration will close Tuesday, January 2nd at midnight. After that you can only register at the site (in the Community Center). Some events fill up fast so hurry to the Festival site at morrobaybirdfestival.org or call 805-234-1170.

11TH ANNUAL WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The City of Galt, in collaboration with the Cosumnes River Preserve and Galt Joint Union Elementary and High School Districts, is pleased to bring you the 11th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, January 20, 2018**. The festival guests will enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the Cosumnes River Preserve and the incredible opportunity to catch sightings of waterfowl, shorebirds and wildlife in their winter habitat. Festival headquarters will provide a starting point for exclusive preserve tours, educational presentations, wildlife shows, art displays, wine walk, hometown history and hands-on activities. This is a winter celebration you'll always remember! The keynote speaker will be author and photographer, Paul Bannick. He is the author of *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls* and *The Owl and The Woodpecker, Encounters with North American's Most Iconic Birds*.

Registration for the annual festival will open in December so check online or call so you don't miss any of your favorite tours. Space for tours is limited, so sign up as soon as possible at the Galt city website below or eventbrite.com. Visit www.ci.galt.ca.us for more information or call 209-366-7180, if you have any questions.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL OF THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

The 19th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 24-28, 2018**. Choose from over 70 field trips and workshops that are sure to appeal to a wide variety of interests and ability levels. In addition to numerous bird-watching field trips for waterfowl, cranes, raptors and songbirds, you might choose to take a guided tour of a nature preserve, visit a local vineyard, or hike the scenic Sutter Buttes in search of lofty views and resident wildlife. The workshops offer something for everyone! Learn about nature photography, bird carving, how to record nature sounds, how to identify those backyard birds, and much more. Free nature activities are offered for youth as well as armchair adventures for all.

The keynote speaker will be Jon L Dunn, chief consultant and author of all seven editions of the *National Geographic Field Guide to the Birds of North America*, and a birding tour leader for over 30 years. He will share his passion for birds and exceptional knowledge of the challenges of identifying the Pacific Flyway's waterfowl.

Registration is open now. Further information can be found at snowgoosefestival.org and if you have any questions, you can reach them at info@snowgoosefestival.org, or by calling the Festival Office at 530-592-9092. 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.

EFFIE YEAW NATURE CENTER WINTER CAMPS

Winter nature camps are offered during Winter Break (Dec/Jan). Register soon—these are popular camps! Go to sacnaturecenter.net/education/nature-camps/winter/ for full information and registration forms.

Most camps are from 10am to 1pm (except for the birding camps) and include a hike, science topics and a craft (or other activity). Kids should be encouraged to dress appropriate for the weather (usually layers and maybe an umbrella for winter) and to wear clothes that can get a bit dirty. They will be outside, after all!

Camps cover many topics and include age ranges: 5, 6-7 and 8-11. Other camps will also be offered during Spring Break. The Nature Center can't wait to have your child join them!

Findings continued from page 2

Birding By Ear Walk (10/22) — Leaders Mark Martucci and Paul Cordero reported: “Mark and Paul unleashed their dubious knowledge and suspect comedic stylings on a captive audience of nine novice to intermediate birders. With the bird migration waning, the fish migration brought in the raptors and scavengers: Turkey Vultures, an Osprey and a fabulous look at a perched adult Bald Eagle. Cooper’s Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, Peregrine Falcon and White-tailed Kite rounded out the list of excellent birds of prey. The focus of the trip was birding by ear and we focused on the songs and calls of White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Oak Titmouse, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Northern Flicker, Phainopepla and Western Bluebird. Good times were had by all!”

Elk Grove/Cosumnes Area (10/21) — Leaders Wendy Money and Sandra Steurer reported: “A cool, clear morning greeted nine joyful participants in their visit to Desmond Rd and Woodbridge Ecological Reserve. Our goal was to see Sandhill Cranes and waterfowl arriving to newly flooded fields. We were treated to many cranes flying over and in groups on the ground, as well as herons and egrets in good numbers. Ducks had started to arrive during the week and gave us good looks. Finding a pond full of elegant Northern Pintail led to a long stop which included a kestrel, geese, shorebirds, pipits, and a coyote! At Woodbridge, two ponds kept us busy with the antics of cranes and stilts. Mike, a regular visitor to crane sites, showed us some bedded down Wilson’s Snipe he had previously found. We had some of the best Northern Mockingbird viewing imaginable, giving young and old a chance to study plumage and feather wear. Total avian species for the day was 40.”

Hope Valley - Alpine County (10/21) — Leader Dan Brown reported: “Dan and 4 hardy folks had a great day bird-

ing and enjoying what was left of the fall foliage in Alpine County today. And, we also had snow on the ground at our first birding stop (27° at 9am)! The birds were hard to come by but we did see 33 species, highlights being Townsend’s Solitaire, Red-breasted Sapsucker and Ring-necked Duck.”

Mather Lake (10/18) — Cathie LaZier reported for Sheila Green: “Temporary construction work cut off access to half the lake, and lower water levels left the eastern marshy area dry, but we still managed to see a good selection of birds. Frank Gray’s scope let us discuss details of raptor/buteo identification, and a good selection of sparrows let us total 42 species.”

William Pond Park Beginners’ Trip (10/15) — Cathie LaZier reported: “Larry Hickey, with help from Darrell Mohr and Craig DeMartini, led an enthusiastic group of beginners, managing to view 42 species of birds. Highlights were great scope looks at a California Quail and a Peregrine Falcon.”

SRWTP Bufferlands (10/15) — Leader Chris Conard reported: “Highlights included a smattering of recently-arrived dabbling ducks (American Wigeon, Northern Pintail, and Gadwall), several small groups of Wood Ducks, plus shorebirds such as a lingering Semipalmated Plover, Spotted Sandpipers, Greater Yellowlegs, recently-arrived Dunlins, and many Least Sandpipers. Songbird highlights included two Rock Wrens on a rocky levee, Orange-crowned Warblers, and a great assortment of sparrows, with excellent views of a Fox Sparrow and multiple Lincoln’s Sparrows.”

Earl J. Koobs Nature Area (10/14) — Leader Cliff Hawley reported: “Our trip last Saturday was great. I was joined by 5 participants. We covered the 4 acres of Koobs Nature Area and found 30 species. The highlights were a female Purple Finch and a pair of Varied Thrushes.”

Cathie LaZier

SAS OUTREACH, VOLUNTEER, HELP OUT, HAVE FUN!

SAS Outreach has the **Galt Winter Bird Festival** coming up on **January 20, 2018**. We need a couple of volunteers to help 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 20th; please contact Bill Bianco at biancowm@yahoo.com, or 372-3318.

ANOTHER BIRD THREAT: FISHERIES

People across the globe consume fish caught by fisheries. But many bird species—from penguins to albatrosses—need fish to survive.

Seabirds—species like Laysan Albatross and Pink-footed Shearwater—are “off the radar” for most people. We simply don’t think about these birds that spend most of their lives over the open ocean. That’s why it may come as a surprise to realize that human activities and fisheries in particular are a taking a great toll on these long-lived birds, now the most threatened group of birds on Earth.

Dual Threat: Overfishing and Bycatch

Overfishing is depleting many seabirds’ main food. In recent years, fisheries have begun to take not only fish for people to eat, but harvesting ever-smaller forage fish as feed for cattle and pigs. This means even fewer fish for seabirds to eat.

A related threat is “bycatch,” when fisheries accidentally catch wildlife other than fish, like sea turtles and dolphins. Few realize that seabirds, including the critically endangered Waved Albatross, are among fisheries’ unintended victims. Among fishing methods, longlines with hundreds or even thousands of baited hooks kill at least 320,000 seabirds yearly. Gillnets, which can stretch for a mile in length, take at least 400,000.

Because of a lack of data, these figures probably represent an extreme low end of the spectrum.

This full article can be found on the American Bird Conservancy website: [abcbirds.org/threat/fisheries/Reducing the Fisheries Threat to Birds](http://abcbirds.org/threat/fisheries/Reducing%20the%20Fisheries%20Threat%20to%20Birds).

ABC is very proactive in trying to protect birds from any number of threats. They work with experts from many countries and fields, frequently achieving positive results.

BIRD PRESENTATION AT SCHOOLS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Gesna Clarke, our energetic and productive Education Chair, would like some speakers for birding presentations at schools, local groups and organizations. The time commitment is less than 5 hours annually. The program is already prepared with a slide presentation and information sheet. You don't have to use the slides and can use your personal experience and knowledge, but the visuals can make presentations interesting. Contact Gesna Clarke at gesna_clarke@sbcglobal.net or 343-6303, if you are interested.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON 2018 NATURE BOWL PARTNER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Sacramento Audubon is the newest Nature Bowl partner with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Sacramento Audubon will host semi-finals at Camp Pollack, April 26, 2018. Nature Bowl is a science based program developed for 3-6th graders that "increases ecological knowledge and conservation literacy." Read more about Nature Bowl at wildlife.ca.gov/regions/2/nature-bowl Volunteers are needed in several areas, and a volunteere meeting has already been held but if you are interested in volunteering in any capacity, please contact host coordinator, Gesna Clarke; gesna_clarke@sbcglobal.net or phone 343-6303.

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

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

Join Us For Family Friendly Field Trips!

Sunday, December 10, Yolo Bypass, 9 am

Join Sandra and Wendy in this great seasonal floodplain 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. We will enjoy the returning ducks, geese, swans, pelicans, raptors, and watch for stealthy rails and owls. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right 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. On this trip we stay in our vehicles, as blinds, most of the time, popping out for brief scope-aided views. The trip will end before noon, but bring water and snacks as needed. Loaner binoculars available. Questions? Contact Wendy Money 205-3194, wendydougms@msn.com or Sandra Steurer 580-8398 or sasteurer@yahoo.com

Monday, January 1, Cosumnes/Mokelumne Rivers Area, 9 am

Join Tim Fitzer New Year's Day to find wintering Sandhill Cranes, Greater White-fronted Geese and a wide variety of duck species. Possible shorebirds are Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitchers and Wilson's Snipe. Meet at the intersection of Bruceville and Desmond Roads, just south of Twin Cities Road. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. Spotting scopes and FRS Radios are helpful. This is an enjoyable trip for everyone!

Saturday, January 20, 2018, 10:30am, Family Nature Walk

Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael.

These events at Effie Yeaw are held the third Saturday of almost every month and no registration is needed. Just show up and enjoy! The website address for other outdoor, family friendly, weekend events is sacnaturecenter.net/events/weekend-programs/

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



Seasonal Observations

October 1 to October 31 Rare and Unusual Bird Reports www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

There were quite a few interesting reports in this time of transition, with waterbird numbers building and fall migrants tapering off, but with some welcome surprises. A possible **Bean-Goose sp.** (perhaps **Taiga Bean-Goose**) was seen and heard flying over Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 10/3 with a small flock of **Greater White-fronted Geese**. Unfortunately this bird has not been relocated, but may turn up among the large overwintering flocks. Reports of 100+ **Blue-winged Teal** would be shocking if that hadn't been the norm at Bridgeway Island pond in West Sacramento in recent years. Two **Surf Scoters** at the Lincoln WTP 10/17-19 were very nice finds for the Valley. Reports of migrating **Common Poorwills** came from an office park in Roseville on 10/3, Meiss Rd on 10/14 and CRP along the River Walk on 10/21. **Band-**

tailed Pigeon reports included singles from the American River Parkway (ARP) between Howe and Watt Aves on 10/1, CRP on 10/13 and William Land Park on 10/27. Around Davis, there was one at Slide Hill Park on 10/19, 25 there on 10/22, and 40 on 10/26 along Putah Creek downstream of Pedrick Rd. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** (or perhaps a hybrid with **Red-breasted**) along Putah Creek upstream of Winters was found on 10/19. A **Hairy Woodpecker** at CRP on 10/3 was unexpected, where there are very few records for the flats of the Valley, and another from the low foothills at Michigan Bar on 10/9, though still rare anywhere in Sacramento County, was less of a surprise.

An **American Dipper** was found at the traditional site near the Hwy 128 bridge over Putah Creek to the west of Winters on 10/22-31. **Varied Thrushes** were reported in fair numbers after a near-absence the previous fall/winter. A **Sage Thrasher** on 10/11-13 near Pedrick Rd and Putah

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome this new member:

Gwen Singh

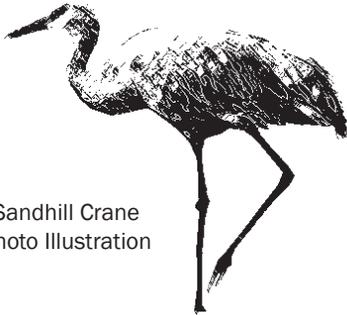
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Winifred Detwiler, Ann Kohl and Joanne Vinton, made donations to the **General Fund**.

Peter Thomas made a donation to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

A donation to Bobelaine was made by David Rial.

Thank you for your continued support of Sacramento Audubon and its work in the community. Donations to the Bobelaine Sanctuary are encouraged to help defray the cost of restoration after this year's flooding.



Sandhill Crane
Photo Illustration

Observations continued

Creek was a nice find. Locally rare warblers included a **Tennessee Warbler** at Ancil Hoffman Park along the ARP on 10/9, a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** along Putah Creek downstream of Pedrick Rd on 10/6, and a **Black-and-white Warbler** on 10/7 at Ancil Hoffman Park. The female **Hooded Warbler** in north Davis first reported on 8/16 continued through end of the month. A "**Sage Sparrow**" photographed on 10/20 along Yolo County Rd 27 east of Rd 103 was determined to be a **Sagebrush Sparrow** after much discussion. **Red Crossbill** reports included one at Babel Slough on 10/17 and a calling flyover in the Rosemont neighborhood (south of Hwy 50 and east of Watt Ave) on 10/30. An **Evening Grosbeak** was photographed in north Davis on 10/12 and one flew over Slide Hill Park in Davis on 10/13.

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

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.

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:

Stuart Angerer, Kathy Blankenship, Lyann Comrack, Dan Cook, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Stephen Fettig, Frank Fogarty, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Dan Kopp, Arav and Aranya Karighattam, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, John Luther, Mark Martucci, Michael Perrone, Jim Rowoth, Steve Scott, John Trochet, Dan Williams, and Rick Williams.

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

Chris Conard

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. There is no meeting in December. The next meeting will be on January 30, 2018 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.

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White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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

The Observer is published by the Sacramento Audubon Society, monthly, January through December, except June and August, when we publish abbreviated editions.

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

Thursday, January 18

At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm

January 18: Ed Harper, *Norway/Svalbard*



Dovkie
Ed Harper