

Arcade Creek at American River College

Finding an area in which to bird near high-density living areas is becoming increasingly difficult. City parks offer some fine birding, but because of heavy usage, the birder is usually forced to use the very early hours of the day. Such is not the case at Arcade Creek. The ribbon of trees along the creek contains Oregon ash, buckeye, and many oaks, including a few rare oracle oaks. However, the underbrush is degraded and trampled from winter floods and heavy use. To keep the sun behind you, walk this length of Arcade Creek (less than a mile) during the afternoon or evening. There are benches near the start of the trail that are nice for just sitting and watching. This is good any time of day.

Birding the site: Since Arcade Creek stems from the foothills, one can expect almost any of the mountain migrants to pass through. In the spring one can see many nesting birds such as Yellow-billed Magpie, Western Scrub-Jay, Bushitit, Oak Titmouse, Acorn Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, and California Quail. During migration, various warblers can be found in the area. Check the college playing fields for gulls, blackbirds, and American Pipits. Past observations have included Nuttall's Woodpecker, Red-shouldered Hawk, Bullock's Oriole, Bewick's Wren, and, in winter, Varied Thrush and Lewis's Woodpecker. The southwest part of the trail by the stadium is usually more productive, with higher tree density and more underbrush for birds. The trail on the opposite side of the creek up to Garfield Avenue can also be productive. If one has only a few hours to bird, Arcade Creek can be very enjoyable.

Directions: From downtown Sacramento, take Highway 50/Capital City Freeway 1.7 miles east of Interstate 5. Take the Capital City Freeway (Business 80) exit toward Reno. After 8.6 miles, exit at Auburn Boulevard. Turn left on Auburn Boulevard, and after 0.9 mile, turn right on Myrtle Avenue. To reach the campus creek area, after 0.5 mile enter Parking Lot A (currently a \$1 fee). Proceed to the Round-house (auto shop) and park near the trees. Enter the trail from behind the Round-house and continue upstream on the opposite side of the creek, under Garfield Avenue, to an extension of Arcade Creek Park. An alternate approach is to begin at Arcade Creek Park on the Jo Smith Trail. Exit Interstate 80 at Madison Avenue (1.2 miles beyond the Auburn Boulevard exit). Turn right on Madison Avenue and go 1.4 miles, past Garfield Avenue, to Hackberry Lane and turn right. After 0.3 mile, turn right on Omni Drive and continue to Arcade Creek Park.

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