

**Davis Wastewater Treatment Plant**

These are typical sewage ponds with numerous settling ponds and levees between them. During weekday business hours, the gates are open, and birders are welcome to walk the roads around the ponds, although to do this, you must check in at the office and sign a "Contractor and Visitor Orientation Sheet." Weekend access is available with advance arrangement. Overland flow access is limited to plant staff only due to increased risk of contact with wastewater and emergency evacuation complexity.

Staying on designated roads will ensure that birders continue to be welcome at this facility.

**Birding the site:** Before reaching the treatment plant office, three large oxidation or settling ponds on the north side of the entrance road can be scoped from the road. The ponds support large numbers of wintering and migrating waterfowl: Northern Pintails, American Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, Lesser Scaup and Ruddy Ducks, with occasional Ring-necked Ducks. There also may be large numbers of Wilson's Phalaropes (with smaller numbers of Red-necked Phalaropes), Long-billed Curlews, and Black-bellied Plovers. Occasional Golden-Plovers have been seen on the dikes between the ponds. Western Gulls have been seen in winter, and Franklin's Gulls are possible in summer.

The northeast pond contains duckweed (*Lemna*) and hosts a wide variety of waterbirds, shorebirds and passerines that use its many crisscrossed cells. Blue Grosbeaks nest in the trees between the ponds and the overland flow area to the east. Northern Harriers, American Bittern, Cinnamon Teal and Gadwalls nest there. The overland flow may be viewed from the Davis Wetlands access road.

In the summer, during migration, there are often large numbers of swallows including Barn, Cliff, Tree, Bank and Northern Rough-winged Swallows on the wires along the entrance road.

**Directions:** Take Interstate 80 west across the Yolo Causeway (about 6.5 miles from Sacramento) and exit at East Chiles Road/Road 32A (exit 78) at the west end of the causeway. At the stop sign, turn left. In 1.9 miles, veer right, cross the railroad tracks, and go north (the road becomes Road 105) until it dead ends at Road 28H. Turn right onto Road 28H, the levee road which leads to the Control Plant building. The

plant is open weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to about 3:30 p.m. and most weekends until 1 p.m. As mentioned above, to walk around the ponds rather than scoping from the entrance road, birders must first check in at the Control Plant office.

*Maureen Geiger and Joan Humphrey*



Yolo County

### City of Davis Wetlands

This evolving wetland consists of 400 acres of ponds and upland habitat of varying depths and is a continuation of Davis's storm water and wastewater treatment process.

**Birding the site:** In general, the wetlands produce shorebirds, waterfowl, Northern Harriers, Marsh Wrens, Common Moorhens and a variety of swallows. Yellow-headed Blackbirds have bred on Tracts 6 and 7. Presence and variety of birds depends on water depth and season.

The Wetlands are divided into the larger Stormwater and Wastewater Lagoons and seven smaller tracts. When water levels are low in Wastewater Lagoon, check the exposed spits of land for American White Pelicans, Double-crested Cormorants, White-faced Ibis, and gulls and terns, including occasional Bonaparte's Gulls. Clark's Grebes, Western Grebes, Eared Grebes, American Avocets, Black-necked Stilts, diving ducks, including occasional Redheads, are also found in this lagoon. Cinnamon Teal occur in large numbers, and Ruddy Ducks and Gadwalls are present year round. Green-winged and occasional Blue-winged Teal can be found except during mid-summer months.

Numbers and intensity of birds on Stormwater Lagoon varies depending on the amount of water present. As this rainwater evaporates in the summer months, large numbers of migrating shorebirds such as Long-billed Dowitchers and both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs can be found. Peregrine Falcons may be attracted by the shorebird activity. In winter, waterfowl abound.

On leaving the Wastewater Treatment Plant or the Davis Wetlands, checking the ditch and fence along Road 28H may produce Burrowing Owls; also check the ponds north of the road which may harbor large numbers of ducks and shorebirds.

**Directions:** Follow the directions above to reach the Davis Wastewater Treatment Plant and continue east past the Control Plant building. Stop at the access gate and sign in at the wooden kiosk to the left of the gate. The gate is kept closed by a bungee cord; be sure to close this behind you, and sign out when you leave. Hours are 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. daily from February 15 to August 31. Currently, from September 1 to February 14, during the hunting season, the wetlands are open only on Mondays from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m..

Yolo County

Vehicles must remain on the tour loop, but pedestrians are welcome to walk the other roads in the wetlands. Tours are generally offered by the Yolo Basin Foundation on the first Saturday of the month (yolobasin.org). For updated access information to the wetlands, check the City of Davis Web site (city.davis.ca.us/pw/water/wetlands.cfm).

*Maureen Geiger and Joan Humphrey*

### Yolo Egret and Heron Rookery

This rookery is very active in spring with Great Egrets, Snowy Egrets, Cattle Egrets, Black-crowned Night-Herons and occasional Great Blue Herons nesting in a large stand of eucalyptus trees on private land.

**Birding the site:** The time to visit is from May into July (March and April for courting and nest building). About a quarter of a mile after turning onto Road 103, check the large stock pond on the left for nesting Gadwalls, Black-necked Stilts, Canada Geese, and Burrowing Owls on the island. Also check the surrounding fields and overhead for Swainson's Hawks and along the overhead wires and fences for Loggerhead Shrikes, Blue Grosbeaks and Western Kingbirds.

When you reach the rookery, the cacophony of bird squawks, quorks and cries will announce the birds before you leave your vehicle. Many egrets and herons can be seen flying to and from the rookery in all directions, and young in the nest (and occasionally on the ground) may be found in a variety of ages from just hatched to ready to leave the nest. In recent years, some of the trees have been thinned out, reducing available nest sites somewhat.

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*Maureen Geiger*