

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 70 • NO. 1

JANUARY 2018

General Meeting

Thursday, January 18, 2018

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Assembly Room, 7pm

Norway/Svalbard

Ed Harper

We start off the New Year with an exciting and dynamic program featuring some of Ed's finest photos presented in a lively and informative narrative. Both Ed and his wife Susan Scott visited Norway this past June and continued their explorations to Svalbard. Located halfway between Norway and the North Pole, Svalbard is a Norwegian archipelago whose iconic symbol is the Polar Bear. Ed and Susan sailed through pack ice to within 600 miles of the North Pole to obtain photos of not only Polar Bears, but of Walrus, Bearded Seal, Arctic Fox, Reindeer, and Humpback Whale. The birds did not disappoint either with Purple Sandpiper, Dovekie, Northern Fulmar, Thick-billed Murre, Ivory Gull, Barnacle Goose, and Snow



Barnacle Goose
Ed Harper

Bunting being some of the many species photographed. This promises to be an excellent program full of good information and inspiring photos. Be sure to bring a friend to this one!

Ed Harper is well known not only in Sacramento but also

across the nation. He has presented many programs over the years to the Sacramento Audubon Society, the Central Valley Birding Symposium, Western Field Ornithologists, and many other birding events. He is a former president of Sacramento Audubon and a past board member of the Western Field Ornithologists. Retired from having taught mathematics at American River College for 34 years, he still teaches birding classes and leads trips around the world. An avid birder and excellent photographer, he recently photographed his 800th bird in the USA, a Fieldfare in his home state of Montana.

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SIXTH ANNUAL KIDS' CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, January 6, 2018 and Sunday, January 7, 2018

Hopefully, if you are a family with kids, you're already registered for the Kids' CBC. Registered participants will be joining citizen scientists all over the world and will gain practice finding, identifying and counting all the birds they see. Counting on Saturday, January 6, will be for the younger birders, aged 6 to 10, from 9 to Noon, and will be followed by a companionable lunch with other birder families at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

This year older birders, 10 years and up, and their families will meet at William Pond Park at 9 am for their count. This will occur on Sunday, January 7, with faster paced birding for more experienced young people. At noon all will assemble at a nearby pizza restaurant to compile the results, share exciting moments of the day, and eat. Register at: effieyeaw.eventbrite.com

Space is limited for both days so children **must be pre-registered** to attend.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE OF THIS CHANGE

Already in effect, but not yet mandatory, all calls in the 916 Area Code that are currently dialed with 7 digits will need to be dialed using 1 + 916 + 7-digit telephone number.

Beginning on February 10, 2018, callers must use the new 1 + 10-digit dialing procedure for all calls. After this date, if customers do not use the new dialing procedure, their calls will not be completed and a recording will instruct them to hang up and dial again.

The reason for this change is that beginning March 10, 2018, new telephone lines or services in the 916 area, may be assigned numbers using a new 279 area code.

Dialing 916 from a 916 number does not change what a call costs and does not mean that a call is a toll or long distance call.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2018 SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CBC DATES

Saturday, January 6, 2018, 6th Annual
Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

Registration is required.

Compiler: Maureen Geiger, 916-281-6652, mkgeiger@comcast.net

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

Registration is required. effieyeaw.eventbrite.com

Compiler: Sandra Steurer, 916-580-8398, sasteurer@yahoo.com

Field Trip Findings

East Lawn Cemetery (12/14) — Leader Craig DeMartini reported: “An eclectic group of fifteen enjoyed socializing and birding on this chilly morning at East Lawn Cemetery. We examined owl pellets at the base of a fan palm. We enjoyed an encounter with a Pine Siskin among a small flock of Lesser Goldfinches. We got a good look at a tolerant Red-breasted Sapsucker. The most numerous species of the day had to be the nearly two dozen Northern Flickers. Several novice birders in the group asked many questions, shared experiences, and expressed their gratitude and desire to attend future Audubon walks.”

Mid-Yolo County Hotspots (12/12) — Leader Dan Murphy reported: “Six birders and I attended. The day was sunny with little wind, fine weather for this time of year. We saw 59 species on a morning that began at the Davis WTP, with stops at the Yolo Landfill Pond, the CR103 pond, the borders of Conway Ranch, and ended with the fields in the vicinity of Plainfield Elementary School. High points included sighting several Redheads among the thousands of waterfowl at the WTP, good looks at a young Red-shouldered Hawk on CR103, and fairly close looks at three Ferruginous Hawks and several Red-tailed Hawks soaring over fields east of the Plainfield School.”

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (12/10) — Leaders Wendy Money and Sandra Steurer reported: “What a way to spend a cold winter morning in the Sacramento Valley. Bird numbers, brilliant light conditions, and ten fun birders to share it all. Highlights were fly-overs of three different species of goose — including one blue-morph Snow Goose, a lone Canvasback, Eurasian Wigeon, a sizable cluster of Black-Crowned Night-Heron (thanks, Mike!), charismatic American Pipits running around everywhere, enormous clouds of blackbirds, seven species of raptor-including Merlin, and six Wilson’s Snipe doing their typical aerobatics. Twelve otters, two families of six, entertained us with their feeding frenzies. Total species for the 3 hour trip was 50.”

Gull ID trip (12/10) — Leader Ed Harper reported: “An eager group of 15 birders assembled to study gulls at the leisurely starting time of 9:30am. The weather was perfect with clear skies, no breeze, and temperatures ranged in the upper

50’s. Although the gull numbers were strangely down from past experiences at this location, there were still enough birds to afford a good study of Ring-billed, California, Herring, and Glaucous-winged Gulls of various ages. A couple of 1st winter Iceland (Thayer’s) Gulls completed the assortment. The gulls were cooperative as they perched nicely for study and a myriad of spotting scopes were available to examine important identification marks. We were able to watch the birds in flight and learned important details to observe. Not only were the gulls of interest, but both Common and Barrow’s Goldeneye were studied. Other species such as Spotted Sandpiper and Phainopepla were noted and the vocalizations for many birds were pointed out. A high flying Peregrine Falcon was observed, but it never rested on the cable line across the river as it frequently does. The group effort turned up 43 species of birds in completing an enjoyable morning.”

Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley (12/9) — Leader Craig Swolgaard reported: “Here is a quick summary of what our group found yesterday when we birded along Meiss and Michigan Bar Roads. The weather was clear with great views of the Sierra Nevada. Meiss Road—Raptors included Red-tailed Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Northern Harrier, American Kestrel, White-tailed Kite, Merlin (in the cottonwood area about midway along the length of the road), Burrowing Owl (at the traditional site off the road where a creek cuts into the bank), and a very vocal Loggerhead Shrike at the sheriff memorial (the bird seemed to be constantly “mumbling” to itself). Vultures and ravens were abundant. In a distant pond to the north of the road we scoped Tundra Swan, American Coots, peeps, Greater Yellowlegs, Bufflehead, Ruddy Duck, and other unidentified waterfowl. In addition were found numbers of Horned Larks and American Pipits in a plowed field. Other birds included American White Pelican, many grazing groups of Canada Goose, Say’s Phoebe, Savannah Sparrow, Western Bluebird, Western Meadowlark, distant flocks of blackbirds and gulls, European Starling (whoop-ee....), a couple of unidentified swallows (likely Tree). Michigan Bar Road—This site provided some extra raptors. In addition to Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Harrier, and Prairie Falcon, we got exceptional

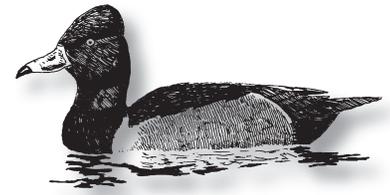
looks at a Ferruginous Hawk flying overhead, three Bald Eagles at the bridge (including a 3-year morph that we saw while returning, perched 25 feet from our car), Cooper’s Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel, many vultures. No waterfowl on Cosumnes River apart from a single Pied-Billed Grebe. The Rock Wren near the bridge vocalized some but we missed seeing it, a strikingly colored group of Lark Sparrows was a treat. The only woodpeckers were Acorn and Downy. No Lewis’s. For many, the most unusual sighting was near the bridge where a cow delivered a newborn calf, with the umbilical cord still dangling from parent and calf when we left. Vultures soon gathered. Our most obvious “misses” for raptors included Rough-legged Hawk, Osprey, and Golden Eagle. Maybe next year!”

Lincoln WWTP and Placer County Roads (12/7) — Leader Sonja Sorbo reported: “On this picture-perfect autumn morning, the group was treated to a wonderful array of waterfowl and raptors. To our dismay, two of the ponds at the plant were almost devoid of birds, possibly due to a river otter frolicking around in the water. Luckily, we hit paydirt on the two east side ponds!! Scores of Canvasbacks cruised back and forth, tolerating a lone interloper Redhead in their midst. Other feathered friends included American Wigeon, Bufflehead, Gadwall, Pintail, Ruddy Ducks, Common Goldeneye, and Common Merganser. After enjoying the duck extravaganza, we circled around the treatment plant’s perimeter and were rewarded with great views of a Ferruginous Hawk, three Redtails, two Cooper’s Hawks, two Kestrels, and a Great Horned Owl. The best performance of the day was provided by a Belted Kingfisher whose aerial ballet was delightful. A nearby riparian area rewarded us with the usual suspects including four woodpecker species, a Hermit Thrush, White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmice, a score of White-crowned Sparrows and numerous Ruby-crowned Kinglets.”

Robinson Road, Rd 113 and Bird’s Landing (12/3) — Mark Martucci, co-leader with Paul Cordero reported: “A small group of five saw 52 species on a bright sunny day in Solano County. Highlights included Great Horned Owl, Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie

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Field Trips



Ringneck
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 January 11, 2018, contact the scheduler Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net, 916-502-2699. For trips from January 12 through February 11, 2018, contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, offleash56@yahoo.com, 916-761-1124.

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.

Monday, January 1, 9am

Family Friendly Trip

New Year's Day in the Cosumnes/ Mokelumne Rivers Area

Leader: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207
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,
916-359-3777
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 park-

ing 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,
916-281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Registration required.

Sunday, January 7

Teen Christmas Bird Count

Contact: Sandra Steurer,

916-580-8398
sasteurer@yahoo.com

Registration required.

Sunday, January 7, 8am

Sailor Bar, American River Parkway

Leader: Mark Martucci, 916-833-6722
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.

Saturday, January 13, 8am

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: John York, 916-409-9276
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.

Sunday, January 14, 8am

Laguna Creek Wetlands, Elk Grove

Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 916-281-
6652, mkgeiger@comcast.net

Jane Van Kessel, 916-524-4157
Jvankessel55@comcast.net

Join Maureen and Jane for a leisurely walk on a paved trail along the Laguna Creek wetlands. Although sandwiched between housing on the north and south, this wide trail meanders along the creek and marshy areas and is bordered by urban plantings including many oaks. The diversity hosts a nice variety of birds such as ducks, herons, passerines and sparrows, with unexpected species always a possibility. This is a good walk for beginners and is handicapped accessible. This trip will last into late morning. Meet Maureen and Jane at Jack Hill Park. From Hwy 99 south, exit at Elk

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Grove Boulevard; pass Elk Grove-Florin Road, and less than a mile later turn left onto Porto Rosa Drive. Follow to Jack Hill Park and the parking area. Restrooms are available in the parking lot.

Monday, January 15, 8:30am

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Leader: Craig DeMartini

916-599-3300

cloudwalk7@icloud.com

Join Craig in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl as well as raptors. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A) on your left, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS radios and scopes are helpful on this trip, which is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Trip will end before noon. If the bypass is closed due to flooding, the trip is canceled. NOTE: Each visitor who is 16 years of age or older is required to carry a daily (1 day, \$4.32) or annual (\$25.10) "Lands Pass" while on the property. If you carry your own hunting or fishing license you are exempt from this requirement. To acquire the pass, go to www.wildlife.ca.gov/licensing/lands-pass

Saturday, January 20, 8am

Teal Bend

Leader: Richard Barbieri

916-761-1124

offleash56@yahoo.com

Join Richard to explore the rich habitat at Teal Bend Golf Course. Meet at the Raley's Shopping Center on Arena Blvd at 8am. 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.

Saturday, January 20, 10:30am

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

This family friendly nature walk will be at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers and Wild Turkeys are abundant, but sharp eyes and ears may find Spotted Towhees or Bushtits as well. Reservations are not needed; fami-

lies can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists from the nature center and birders Lynne Tweten and Dan Williams from Audubon. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, January 21, 8am

Lincoln Grasslands/West Placer Co.

Leader: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471

shoppe01@surewest.net

Western Placer County can often rival the great wildlife refuges in numbers and diversity of waterfowl, and it is also known for large concentrations of raptors. Besides the expected species, Eurasian Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, and Lewis's Woodpecker are all possible. Join Scott for a full day of exploring this diverse area and bring liquids, lunch and FRS radios if you have them. Meet at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Tuesday, January 23, 9:30am

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Dan Tankersley, 916-662-1951

dantank1016@gmail.com

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.

Thursday, January 25, 8am

Lincoln WWTP and Placer County Roads

Leader: Sonja Sorbo, 916-390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com

On 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, January 27, 8am

Bushy Lake

Leader: Darrell Mohr, 916-225-3999

mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident and wintering species. With most leaves fallen from the trees, there will be better views of the lake, and Wood Ducks are a good possibility. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. You may want to bring water. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders.

Saturday, January 27, 3:40pm

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley Staten Island

A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon trip

Coordinator: Mike Savino

916-446-1392

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. 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. 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. Please park facing the road so that when you leave your headlights will not face the cranes.

Sunday, January 28, 7am

Yolo/Solano Big Day

Leader: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net

Get set for a full day of birding "hot spots" of Yolo and Solano Counties to see how many species we can tally. We have had as many as 121 species on this trip. We will begin at Lake Solano Park and Putah Creek for unique passerines and waterfowl, then head down Highway 113 to the Robinson Road area for raptors and possibly Mountain Plover; then to the Yolo Bypass and the Davis Landfill for more waterfowl, shorebirds and gulls. The itinerary can change depending on conditions and reports. For those interested, Scott would like to have a casual dinner nearby to tally up species and talk about what was seen. Scopes and FRS radios are helpful. Bring lunch, snacks, and dress for changeable weather. Meet Scott at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 7am. From Sacramento, take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right at the light, then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance, a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. Rain cancels.

Sunday, January 28, 3:40pm

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley Staten Island

A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino
916-446-1392
yogoombah@yahoo.com

See the write-up for Saturday, January 27th.

Wednesday, January 31, 8am

Robinson Road, Road 113 and Bird's Landing

Leader: Bill Bianco, 916-889-4849
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.

Friday, February 2, 8am

Sailor Bar

Leader: Mark Sawyer, 916-968-1661
Marksawyer3383@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. 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.

Saturday, February 3, 8am

Bobelaine Sanctuary

Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 916-281-6652, mkgeiger@comcast.net
Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277
kenpoe@sbcglobal.net

Join Maureen and Ken for a 3 mile walk along the trails of this 430-acre National Audubon Sanctuary on the Feather River, managed by Sacramento Audubon. They will be looking for resident and wintering birds such as Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow, crowned sparrows, both towhees and various raptors. If there has been rain, the trails may be wet and muddy. This trip will end by noon. 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. Meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. To meet at Bobelaine, from Sacramento take Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City and about 2 miles north of the 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 8:30am.

Sunday, February 4, 7:30am

Mather Lake

Leader: Wayne Blunk, 916-876-0457
Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations, and he usually turns up quite a list of bird species. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron 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 birders.

Thursday, February 8, 9am

Western Yolo County

Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 916-947-7573 burris.nellieann@gmail.com

Tim and Ann will be birding rural roads of Western Yolo County looking for Ferruginous Hawks, falcons, eagles and other wintering birds. Meet at the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot in Woodland. From Sacramento take I-5 north to Road 102 (Exit 536); turn north on 102 and take the next right turn onto East Main Street, and turn right into the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot. This trip will last into the afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and layered clothing. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

Saturday, February 10, 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 include the whole length of Meiss Road in Sacramento County, plus a good portion of Michigan Bar Road. 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, February 11

Merced County wetlands and refuges

Leader: Dan Brown, 916-704-0951
naturestoc@aol.com
Co-leader: Dale Azevedo

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Join Dan and Dale for a full day of birding a few of the many wetlands in the Merced County area. We will start Sunday morning birding Dale's private duck club property. We plan on birding the private area until early afternoon, then spend the rest of the day birding the National Wildlife areas nearby, ending the day at Merced National Wildlife Refuge to enjoy the cranes and geese at sunset. We will be taking several short hikes during the day, so wear appropriate shoes. Also bring lunch, liquids and snacks, as lunch will be in the field. This trip will be limited to 15 participants. Please contact Dan Brown for information on meeting place and time in Merced County on Sunday morning.

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:

Monday: January 1, New Year's Day

Saturdays: January 6, 13, 20 and 27,
February 3 and 17

Sundays: February 11 and 25

BOBELAINE SANCTUARY ACCESS REMAINS CLOSED

The Bobelaine Sanctuary remains closed to the public. Most levee repairs that were expected to be completed by December 1st have been delayed. It is not safe to cross the levee to enter Bobelaine until the repairs are complete. At this time it is unclear how much longer it will take to complete the work on the levee. Once Bobelaine is open we will let you know. The Bobelaine Sanctuary was heavily impacted by floods from the Oroville Dam failure last year.

If you would like to make a donation to help defray restoration costs, please go to the Sacramento Audubon Society website: www.sacramentoaudubon.org/payments.html. If you can help, please send checks to SAS, PO Box 160694, Sacramento CA 95816.

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. 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. Online registration will close Tuesday, January 2nd at midnight. After that you can only register at the site (in the Community Center). The Festival website is morrobaybirdfestival.org/.

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 has already opened 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! 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.

Registration and 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.

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

Sally Walters Schmoldt, President and Program Chair



Polar Bear
Ed Harper

Don't miss this month's General Meeting with Ed's program about his trip to Norway.

Findings continued from page 2

Falcon, Loggerhead Shrike, Tricolored Blackbird and Bonaparte's Gull."

William Pond Park (12/3) — This beginners' trip on a beautiful autumn morning offered great scope looks at a Red-shouldered Hawk, a Downy Woodpecker, Wood Ducks and a Double-crested Cormorant preening in the sunlight, showing off the iridescent feathers and the bright blue eye.

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (12/2) — Leader John York reported: "We had a good turnout for a day at Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, including our club president, Sally Walters, so Tim Fitzer had to behave himself. Easily a quarter million geese, including 7 blue morph snows, were everywhere on the refuge, as well as pockets of wigeon, Ring-necked Ducks and the other usual suspects. A couple of Bald Eagles, a Cooper's Hawk chasing a smaller bird, two Peregrine Falcons plus plenty of Red-tails and Harriers rounded out the raptors. Other highlights were two Loggerhead Shrikes and 17 Ring-necked Pheasants. Icing on the rarity cake was the Vermillion Flycatcher at Maxwell Cemetery and Eurasian Wigeon among the Ross's Geese at Colusa. A really fun, very birdy day."

Sandhill Crane Trips (11/25-26) — Leader Mike Savino reported: "The SOS/SAS Thanksgiving weekend crane tours went well. On Saturday 16 people showed up at the south parking lot of the Woodbridge Ecological Reserve. At least four more people wandered by and joined our group for a while. There was a small fly-in near us so we got good close up views of the cranes via spotting scope. Some large fly overs of geese also entertained us. We were a bit surprised to see about half a dozen Tundra Swans landing nearby. (Some one said hundreds are up in the Marysville area now.) Sunday it was raining but three people joined in to enjoy a small fly-in with good close up views. Both days also provided some good views of a few species of ducks, shore birds and gulls as well as fly-overs of geese

and swans."

Lincoln Grasslands Trip #2 (11/26) — Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Mark Martucci reported: "Despite the foul weather during much of the day, we did amazingly well, tallying 99 species. No one even dreamed we would hit that number when we were sitting in our cars, eating lunch during a downpour that we were sure would not end. Six of us braved this weather in hopes of getting something respectable, numbers wise. It definitely helped having a relatively new birder along, who was an excellent spotter. He got at least 5 life list birds. And we have to thank someone from the opposition who came along and led us to at least 3 good birds. Highlights included Cackling Goose, Ferruginous Hawk and 3 owl species. But the real highlight was being able to get so many species on such a rotten day, weather-wise. It's customary to say everyone had a great time, but I don't think anyone would necessarily describe it that way. Let's just say that it will go down as one of those "remember that time" days."

Lincoln Grasslands Trip #1 (11/25) - Richard Barbieri, co-leader with Tim Fitzer, reported: "With four other cars in tow and a beautiful clear day in front of us we set out to try and set a new record. Trying our hardest to keep up a fast pace and cover as much terrain as possible, along with not finding several common species was challenging our efforts. We did however, tally some great species like Loggerhead Shrike, Virginia Rail, Common Loon, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl, and Prairie Falcon. Our days total was 99 species which many felt would not be met by our opposing team because the following day's forecast called for rain. I knew better."

William Pond Park (11/24) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "7 people joined me for this autumn morning walk. Visitors from Virginia, Peter and Molly, were interested in the chips and call notes of our local birds. We watched a Kestrel dive and catch a large insect, and ended

the day with Lark Sparrows, Western Bluebirds and American Pipits foraging in the grass. E-bird total was 43 species."

Salt Springs Valley (11/21) — Leaders Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris reported: "The day began foggy in Sacramento and finished warm and sunny. Some of the highlights were two adult Bald Eagles, two Merlins, Loggerhead Shrikes, many Lewis' Woodpeckers and six Ferruginous Hawks, one of which was a dark morph, an absolutely beautiful specimen. Joining us was a visitor from Virginia who got several lifers. Fun day with a fun group of thirteen."

Deer Creek Hills (11/19) — Leader Mara Weston reported: "Seven of us spent the morning birding Deer Creek Hills. Lisa Couper and Thomas Baumann were wonderful hosts for the trip, giving us lots of information about this special property. We ended the morning with a total of 39 species. Highlights were Red-breasted Sapsucker, Phainopepla, and an abundance of Lincoln's Sparrows."

Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR (11/18) — Leaders Daniel and Pam Thompson reported: "With seven folks we birded our way up to Gray Lodge and then did the walking route, finding seven Blue-wing Teal and one Eurasian Wigeon. After that we drove the ponds and marveled at the huge numbers of Snow Geese. After lunch we drove the west side of the Buttes and got some good looks at Shrikes and Kestrels. At Colusa geese and ducks were very close to the viewing stand, with one Eurasian Wigeon and several Cackling Geese. On the pond route we had a lovely look at a Peregrine Falcon. The ponds were loaded with geese and ducks. The Black-crowned Night Heron rookery was packed with birds. We went back to the viewing stand to watch the Ross's Geese fly in for a bit. Then we started home down Lone Star Road, picking up some great shore birds, including Wilson's Snipe and Long-billed Curlew. A full day with a total of 85 species."

Cathi LaZier

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 916-343-6303, if you are interested.

2018 NATURE BOWL UPDATE

SAS is proud to announce that 14 confirmed elementary school teams are registered for Nature Bowl semifinals at Camp Pollack, April 26, 2018. 4 slots are still open: one for the 3-4th grade division and 3 for the 5-6th grade division. Pass on the word to any elementary school teacher who may be interested. For more information and registration forms, go to www.wildlife.ca.gov/regions/2/nature-bowl

Many volunteer opportunities will be available for Nature Bowl semifinals. In the next few months education committee members will reach out to those who can devote a few hours to support this event. To volunteer or for any questions, please contact host coordinator, Gesna Clarke; gesna_clarke@sbcglobal.net or phone 916-343-6303.

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!

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/

TAKE PART THIS YEAR!

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

As reported in last month's *Observer*, the David Yee Scholarship Fund will provide annual scholarships to birding camps for young birders. The application deadline is February 15, 2018 but remember camp registration may be much sooner. You can find all the information 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.

Seasonal Observations

November 1 to November 30 Rare and Unusual Bird Reports www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

Each November one looks at the bird records and tries to infer what kind of winter we are likely to have. Are there a lot of northern or montane birds showing up in the Valley? Are we going to have a lot of **Lewis's Woodpeckers**, or **Varied Thrushes**, or **Pine Siskins**? Has anyone seen a **Rough-legged Hawk**? Aside from an apparent influx of **Purple Finches**, the main theme of the month may be lingering migrants, plus a few surprises. A **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** was a nice find at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) from 11/8 to at least 11/25. **Red-necked Grebes** are quite rare in the Valley, so one photographed on the north fork of the Mokelumne River between Staten and Tyler islands on 11/28 was notable.

The peak of shorebird season has passed, but reports of single **Pacific Golden-**

Plovers at YBWA on 11/3 and again on 11/11 were matched by presumably a different bird found at the Woodland WTP on 11/3-20. Four **Marbled Godwits** at YBWA were a nice find on 11/18. The gull highlight was a **Franklin's Gull** found at the Woodland WTP on 11/21 and continuing through at least 11/28. On a taxonomic note, **Iceland Gulls** are a lot easier to find this fall: **Thayer's Gull** and **Iceland Gull** have been lumped by the AOU, and all are now considered Iceland Gulls, though teasing out their subspecific identities is still a great challenge.

Empidonax flycatchers are very rare after mid-October, with **Hammond's** and "**Western Flycatchers**" (presumably **Pacific-slope Flycatchers**) accounting for nearly all of the late fall and winter records in our area. A "**Western Flycatcher**" was found and photographed along Babel Slough on 11/19. Single **Cassin's Vireos** were found at Slide Hill Park in Davis on 11/14 (likely a continuing bird) and at

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome this new member:

Jeanette Barnard
Dona E Snow
Virginia G Gardiner

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Jean Alford, Judi and Stephen Green, Marya Liberty, Robert and Muriel Parker, and Dan and Jan Tankersley made donations to the **General Fund**.

Jean Alford, Karen D Benson, Virginia G Gardiner, Melissa Gates, Christine K Holmstrom, Dr J M Langham, M A Nunes, Robert and Muriel Parker, Jeffrey Shelton, and Dan and Jan Tankersley made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

A donation to **Bobelaine** was made by Pamela Herlihy.

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 last winter's flooding.



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon

Observations continued

Reichmuth Park on 11/12. One of few **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** records for Sacramento County, and a new species for the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP), was found on 11/18 along the River Walk. A second chickadee, not identified to species, was heard the same day on the Tall Forest survey at CRP. A **Palm Warbler** foraging near one of the ponds at the Woodland WTP on 11/24-28 was quite a surprise, as was an **Orchard Oriole** found on 11/30 in north Davis and continuing into mid-December. Lastly, a **Swamp Sparrow** was found along the auto tour at YBWA on 11/25 foraging in the canal near "the Y" where the route splits south of the entrance. This species has been found at the same spot in previous years and it continued there into mid-December.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html). The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between

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.

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

March 15, At the Effie Yeaw Nature, Center, 7pm
Harry Fuller, *Birding Spots Off I-5*

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, Laura Davis, Gil Ewing, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, Scott Hoppe, Stan Hunter, Dan Kopp, Arav and Aranya Karighattam, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Tim Ludwick, Mark Martucci, Michael Perrone, William Rockey, Jim Rowoth, Steve Scott, Ian Souza-Cole, Kirk Swenson, John Trochet, 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. 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*



Walrus
Ed Harper