

Foothills and the Sierra Nevada

**Mosquito Ridge Road**, just east of Auburn, is a wonderful access to the Sierran environment. From Interstate 80, take Foresthill Road 17 miles to Mosquito Ridge Road in the town of Foresthill. Turn right. There are many convenient pull-outs along Mosquito Ridge Road, and typical Sierran birds abound. It is 17.5 miles to Little Oak Flat, which is famous for Flammulated Owls, though they can be found beginning at mile 12 (detailed information on the Web site below). Stop often to listen. Spotted Owls are found at Placer Big Trees at mile 25 (hiking trails to giant sequoias). Northern Saw-whet Owls are found beyond mile 20. Northern Pygmy-Owls and Western Screech-Owls can also be found. All are easier to hear than see. Interesting mammals may be present on the road at night. Daytime birding is also rewarding. Black Swifts are found at Grouse Falls, though there are usually quite distant—a scope can help. To reach the falls, turn left onto Road 33 at mile 19, and it is 4.7 miles to the trailhead, and a nice quarter-mile hike.

More information is available at *Birding Hotspots of Placer County* ([placerbirding.com](http://placerbirding.com)) by Bruce Webb

