

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



General Meeting

Thursday, March 19, 2020
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Southern Ecuador: In Search of Rare, Local, and New Species

Vayun Tiwari

Exploring the most biodiverse country in the world in search of rarities and local birds takes us to Southern Ecuador. From the dry Tumbesian woods, to the cloud forest, to the high Andean paramo, and finally Amazonian foothills. In this talk, Vayun Tiwari will share experiences from his first hardcore birding trip to Ecuador, showing highlights such as the Jocotoco Antpitta (whose discovery started a

new habitat conversation effort in Ecuador), Blue-throated Hillstar (a striking hummingbird discovered only in 2018 on a high Andean ridge!), Orange-throated Tanager (localized to the border region with Peru in the shadow of the remote Cordillera del Condor),



Toucan Barbet
Vayun Tiwari

Spot-winged Parrotlet (perhaps the first photographs from Ecuador), El Oro Parakeet (discovered in 1988 and already Endangered), the amazing Long-wattled Umbrellabird and more! The talk will also cover some time spent around Mindo, in the cloud forests west of Quito, photographing iconic species such as Toucan Barbet, Plate-billed Mountain Toucan and an array of colorful hummingbirds and tanagers.

Vayun is a sophomore at Harker High School in San Jose. Besides bird photography, his other interests are skiing and playing the trumpet.

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DAN WILLIAMS

A COLORING BOOK STARTS AN OBSESSION

This month, *The Observer* features Dan Williams, a Sacramento Audubon member who has been birding for over 25-years. Dan is currently a biologist for a global consulting firm and has recently worked on Caltrans, Union Pacific, and various water district projects here in California, as well as a transmission line project in Wyoming.

Recently Dan responded to a few questions that tell us more about why he is a valued member of Sacramento Audubon Society.

Why are birding and conservation important to you?

As human beings, we impact the planet in such profound ways that only in the last century we have begun to grasp and attempt to counterbalance. It is so important now that we have the awareness, the data, and the technology to apply better, more precise, and more effective solutions to our conservation efforts in order to leave the planet in better shape for future generations. I will forever be grateful to birding and to SAC Audubon for fostering in me from a young age the intrinsic value of birds and the



Dan Williams

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BIRD AND BREAKFAST EVENTS AT EFFIE YEAW

Traditional Event – Saturday, March 28 at 8am

Family-Friendly Event – Saturday, April 4 at 8am

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and Sacramento Audubon are once again teaming up to offer two special weekend morning birding trips coupled with wonderful breakfast fare.

This event, held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael, starts with bird walks guided by some of our best local birders. For weeks in advance, these guides scout the Nature Study Area so they will be able to point out nests and local rarities. After the walk, join fellow birders for wonderful food and hot coffee to help raise money for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. No extensive birding experience is necessary—this event caters to all levels.

On March 28, the bird walk will be approximately 90 minutes long, followed by the traditional casserole breakfast buffet provided by some of the best cooks among ARNHA Board members and Nature Center volunteers. Participants can also bid for attractive baskets and experiences in the silent auction.

On April 4, guests can choose to join either a family bird walk (a one hour walk appropriate for children 6 and older) or a longer, 90-minute adult bird walk open to those ages 12 and above. This event features a hot pancake breakfast, cooked and served by the Carmichael Kiwanis Club.

Bird and Breakfast often sells out. Reservations are required. Call 916-489-4918 for information, questions and to make reservations, or register online at www.sacnaturecenter.net/events/bird-breakfast-weekend/.

Field Trip Findings

William Pond Park (2/14) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “11 birders joined me for this Valentine’s Day walk, featuring courting couples such as Red-shouldered Hawks, White-tailed Kites and House Finches, and couples already house hunting such as White-breasted Nuthatches and Oak Titmouses. Great Blue Herons have already moved in to the rookery. There was a very active altercation between Red-shouldered Hawks and Yellow-billed Magpies, a NIMBY controversy.”

Sailor Bar (2/10) — Valerie Phillips made the report as the leader did not show up: “The 5 of us (all very good at spotting and ID-ing the birds) had an enjoyable 3 hours of birding. The morning was cold and a little breezy but sunny. We saw 51 species. Special birds were: Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, male Phainopepla, Barrow’s Goldeneye, Bufflehead and Sharp-shinned Hawk.”

William Pond Beginners’ Walk (2/9) — Cathie LaZier, co-leader with Larry Hickey, Muriel Parker and Darrell Mohr reported: “High winds kept our species count down to 35, but the 6 beginners, all with sharp eyes, got good looks at a few birds, mostly waterfowl—mergamers, goldeneyes, Buffleheads, Coots, Pied-billed Grebes and the ubiquitous Mallards.”

Bushy Lake (2/9) — Leader Dan Brown reported: “11 of us braved high winds to rally 42 species on a 3 hour walk. Highlights were: good looks at a male Anna’s Hummingbird, Nuttall’s Woodpeckers, both male and female, Downy Woodpecker and a Sharp-shinned Hawk.”

Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley (2/8) — Gary Fregien, substituting for Craig Swolgaard reported: “24 birders gathered at the Park and Ride to pool up and start the road trip to southeastern Sacramento Co. Just before departing, an adult Bald Eagle cruised over. A very nice start for the day. And as I always say, ‘all is well the starts well’. Because this trip was billed as a ‘raptor run’, the rest of the day went well, too. Both Meiss and Michigan Bar Roads produced many hawks. In fact, the number of Ferruginous Hawks (12) rivaled Red-tailed Hawks, and we had a Rough-legged Hawk on both legs of the trip.

Ponds along Meiss Road gave us swans, geese, ducks and shorebirds, including one shorebird we identified as a Wilson’s Phalarope. Although we were not aware of it at the time, turns out this species was ‘out-of-season’, as pointed out to us later by the eBird reviewer. In addition to the raptors seen along Michigan Bar Road, we saw about 30 Wilson’s Snipe along the Cosumnes River at the bridge. We tallied 60 species on the day.”

Mather Lake (2/2) — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: “Fog and chilly air greeted 16 intrepid birders for a great morning of birding. Highlights included 50 Mute Swans, an occupied Great Horned Owl nest and a fly-by of a Bald Eagle. Raptors spotted were 2 Northern Harriers, multiple White-tailed Kites, several Red-tailed Hawks and a Red-shouldered Hawk. The morning total species was 52.”

Yolo-Solano Big Day (2/1) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “It was so foggy at the meeting place that some people had trouble finding the turn off, and we were wondering if we would be able to actually see any birds. But the fog soon cleared and 17 of us enjoyed a mild and mostly sunny day. Highlights included Burrowing Owls at our first location, a Western Screech-Owl at Lake Solano County Park, a Great Horned Owl at Jepson Prairie and another at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, and a Barn Owl (though only seen by a couple of people) at Pioneer Park in Davis. So, it turned out to be a great owl day. But perhaps the bird of the day was a beautiful male Eurasian Wigeon at Lake Solano by the dam. We tallied 107 species for the day. Not among our highest tallies for this trip, but no one seemed to care, as it was a very satisfying and enjoyable day.”

Lincoln WWTP (1/29) — Leader Sonja Sorbo reported: “Several waterfowl fans joined forces on a crisp sunny winter’s day to see what avian delights would be in store. Our welcome ambassador was a White-tailed Kite, elegantly hovering near the parking lot! Driving up to the levee road yielded views of some huge skeins of Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese in the distance. We were delighted to see about a dozen Long-billed Curlews fly overhead! In a nearby field, a healthy-looking coyote was loping along and spooked a pheasant and Great Blue Heron from their hideouts. On utility wires overhead a pair of American

Kestrels cozied up to one another, gazing down at some smaller passerines. A roosting Great Horned Owl in a nearby tree gave us the “stink eye.” After these lovely distractions, we turned our attention to the myriad ducks in the ponds. Most of the expected species were present. A Eurasian Wigeon tried to blend into the crowd, but his beautiful cinnamon and peachy head were reflecting sunlight like a beacon. Then we looked skyward and noted a Bald Eagle soaring languidly, probably trying to select a specific victim for a feathered feast. Luckily for the waterfowl, the predator soared away, perhaps hoping for a quieter approach somewhere else.”

Bobelaine (1/26) — Leader Brian Gilmore reported: “About 9 people attended. From the main entrance we walked to the north end of the sanctuary and returned on the main levee road which was very muddy because it had been recently graded—everyone had mud caked on their shoes. We walked 4.85 miles and identified 38 species. Fox Sparrow, Wrentit, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, and Orange-crowned Warbler were a few notable species. Tundra Swans, Snow Geese, Greater White-fronted Geese still present in the flooded rice fields and many skeins of geese in flight. Of note the trails were nicely mowed and well-marked at every intersection with directional signs.”

Clarksburg Branch Line Trail (1/25) — Ben Graber, substituting for Maureen Geiger, reported on this Family Friendly trip: “We had a fairly small group of people on a cold, overcast morning. We did a loop around the main pond but didn’t end up going to Bridgeway Island. It wasn’t the birdiest day overall, but the highlights included excellent looks at a Great Blue Heron, a Belted Kingfisher, and a Red-shouldered Hawk. Everyone seemed to have a good time.”

Yolo Bypass WLA (1/25) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “11 of us got together under partly sunny skies and mild temperatures (I commented at one point that I was almost ready for shorts and a tee shirt), then some fog rolled in and it got colder and we were throwing our jackets back on, then the sun broke through again. Nevertheless, it was a wonderful outing. The main highlight was seeing the continuing Swamp Sparrow. This was

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Field Trips



California Quail
Chris Conard

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. For trips through March 11, contact the scheduler Sonja Sorbo, ssgasdoc@yahoo.com, 916-390-8463. For trips from March 12 through April 11, contact the scheduler Carla Barbaro, cbarbaro@comcast.net, 916-717-8808.

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.

Sunday, March 1, 8am Bridgeway Island Pond Leader: Dan Murphy, 916-541-4213 dmmurpete@gmail.com

Join Dan for a trip to Bridgeway Island Pond. Target birds include Blue-winged Teal, other waterfowl, raptors and marsh birds. We should finish by noon. Bring a snack and liquids. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Avenue, Exit #81, turn left at the light, and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. Meet in the south east section of the parking lot.

Sunday, March 1 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. On this trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks and bird behavior as we look at individual birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid77@gmail.com; put Beginning Birder in the subject line.

Wednesday, March 4, 8am Estates Drive American River access Leader: Craig DeMartini 916-599-3300 Cloudwalk7@icloud.com

This area is a great example of established riparian habitat. The American River meanders, creating islands and ponds where we will look for Wood Ducks, herons, egrets, and kingfishers. Further inland there are several very old Valley Oaks along a trail that has been referred to as the Avenue of

Giants, where we will look for towhees, wrens, titmice and nuthatches. From Watt Ave take American River Drive east to Estates Dr. Turn south on Estates and follow until it dead-ends at the levee

Saturday, March 7, 6:30am Arrowhead Marsh and Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Leaders: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471 shoppe01@surewest.net Mark Martucci, 916-833-6722 matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Arrowhead Marsh and MLK, Jr Regional Shoreline, encompassing much of San Leandro Bay, is an extremely productive birding area. It is well known for Ridgway's Rails, lots of wintering ducks and hundreds of shorebirds during the falling tides. It has also produced rarities and hard to find species such as Nelson's and Swamp Sparrows. We will likely spend most of the day there. However, time permitting, we may visit other nearby locations. Bring lunch and liquids, and dress for possible cold early morning temps. Meet Scott and Mark at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Sunday, March 8, 7:30am NOTE: Daylight Savings Time Begins Mather Lake Leader: Wayne Blunk, 916-206-3767 Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake can be a hotspot for birding, with a variety of possibilities. Join Wayne 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 and more experienced birders.

Wednesday, March 11, 8am William Pond Park Leader: Larry Hickey, 415-305-0651 Larryhickey1@gmail.com

This park has varied habitats and a variety of birds may be found. Larry will be looking for early spring migrants and nesting birds as well as resident wrens, towhees and other passerines. He'll check out the heron rookery and the pond area. Trip will end before noon. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east, just under 1 mile, and it runs into the park. Meet along the first parking area on your left, just after the kiosk. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, March 14, 7:30am Cosumnes River Preserve Leader: Mike Heacox, 916-972-1809 mikezots@gmail.com

Waterfowl will be migrating north shortly, so take this opportunity to check out the wide variety of ducks and geese who winter at the preserve. Yellowlegs, Wilson's Snipe and other shorebirds are possible depending on the seasonal pond levels and Marsh Wrens, Black Phoebe and Yellow-rumped Warblers should be active. Mike will walk the Wetlands Walk loop, 1-1/2 to 2 miles. This is a great trip for beginners. From

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Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road, Exit #498; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. Rain cancels the trip.

Sunday, March 15, 8am
Sailor Bar, American River Parkway
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 916-225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com

Join Darrell for a morning walk checking out the local birds. Possible birds include Phainopepla and California Quail. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way just west of Hazel. Meet at the last parking lot on your left, just before the boat launch parking area. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Monday, March 16, 8am
Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach
Leader: Mark Sawyer, 916-968-1661
Marksawyer3383@yahoo.com

Join Mark for a morning bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the American River. Mark will be looking for migrants and resident breeding birds, wrens, towhees, and other small passerine birds. From H Street, (north side of Sac State University), take Carlson Ave north till it crosses Sandburg and dead ends into the park.

Saturday, March 21, 9am
Family Friendly Trip!!!
Folsom Lake, near Rattlesnake Bar
Leader: Sandra Steurer, 916-580-8398
sasteurer@yahoo.com

This is a great spot for family members of all ages and a good time to find a nice variety of birds. Join Sandra on a 1 to 2 mile walk in the oak woodlands with views of the lake, to search for the Yellow-breasted Chat, in addition to specialty birds such as Phainopepla, Rock Wren and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Meet at Flower Farm on the corner of Horseshoe Bar Road and Auburn-Folsom Road, for voluntary ride-sharing or carpooling to the entrance of the park. Park entrance fee is \$12 per car. The trip will end before noon. Please email or text leader if you are coming.

Sunday, March 22, 7:30am
Putah Creek Preserve

Leader: Mark Martucci, 916-833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

This is a great area to find a variety of late wintering birds as well as early migrants. Take I-80 West to Pedrick Rd, (2nd exit west of UC Davis). Turn right, go north for about a mile. The parking lot for the Putah Creek preserve is immediately on the left after the bridge over the creek. This hike has up and down hills, uneven terrain and may be wet and muddy.

Thursday, March 26, 8am
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Leader: Ed Harper, 916-971-3311
calidris@surewest.net

Join Ed at this great birding area between Sacramento and Davis. 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 on I-80 west, take the first exit at the west end of the Yolo Causeway, East Chiles/Rd 32A, Exit #78.

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. FRS radios can be helpful on this trip.

Saturday, March 28, 8am
Sacramento Bar
Leader: Stan Hunter, 530-902-8462
Stanton.hunter@gmail.com

On this morning walk along the American River, you will see, and hear, a nice variety of resident birds and maybe a few early spring migrants. Possibilities include Phainopepla and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. This is a great trip for beginning and more experienced birders. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania and follow it into the park. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, March 29, 7:30am
Mather Lake
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 916-206-3767
Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake can be a hotspot for birding, with a variety of possibilities. Join Wayne

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 and more experienced birders.

Monday, March 30, 8am
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Cathie LaZier, 916-502-2699
empid77@gmail.com



White-faced Ibis
Linda Pittman

This area of the parkway is excellent for birding and Cathie will be looking for early nesting birds and returning migrants, as well as wild cucumber, giraffe's head and Dutchman's pipe-vine. This is a very good trip for beginners, as well as more experienced birders. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park in

Fair Oaks. The trip will end by noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, April 4, 8am
Bodega Bay
Leader: John York, 530-320-4751
Johnyork157@yahoo.com

Join John for a full day of birding around Bodega Bay, taking in a variety of habitats. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and raptors. Meet John at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave, Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. Bring fluids and dress for changeable weather. John is planning to stop for lunch in Bodega Bay.

Sunday, April 5, 8:30am
Family Friendly Trip
Bushy Lake
Leader: Ben Graber, 916-844-8682
Bgraber984@gmail.com

Meet Ben 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. He will be looking for a variety of resident species and Wood Ducks are a good possibility on the lake. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike

that will take 2 to 3 hours. Bring water and sunscreen. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders.

Sunday, April 5
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. On this trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks and bird behavior as we look at individual birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid77@gmail.com; put Beginning Birder in the subject line.

Wednesday, April 8, 8am
River Bend Park
Leader: Dan Brown, 916-704-0951
naturestoc@aol.com

Meet at the 1st parking lot on your right, just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk through the oak woodland and over to the river, looking for small woodland birds and woodpeckers. We sometimes have good looks at Red-shouldered Hawks or Great Horned Owls. Walk will end by noon, and it's a great walk for beginners. From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field

Road, take Rod Beaudry Drive north into the park. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, April 11, 8am
Effie Yeaw Nature Center/Ancil Hoffman Park
Leader: Rich Howard, 916-203-0952
rhowarda@gmail.com

Let's go on an "Easter Egg Hunt." This trip is scheduled a day before Easter and a week after ARNHA's Bird and Breakfast event, when Sacramento Audubon volunteers find and map nests at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. We will use that map to find as many nests and oak woodland birds as we can, then move into Ancil Hoffman Park to see more open country birds (Yellow-billed Magpies, Western Bluebirds). We will also be on the lookout for water birds on the American River and Spring migrants. From California Ave. in Fair Oaks take the Tarshes Drive entrance; at the stop sign turn left on San Lorenzo and follow it to the nature center parking lot on your right. For further directions see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. This trip will end around noon.

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entire natural world.

How old were you when you started birding, and what sparked that interest?

My mom gave me a coloring book of birds when I was about 8 years old, and oddly enough that was what started my obsession. I don't remember giving birds a second thought before that, but that summer vacation in my room using Crayola markers on those pages, birds like Wood Duck, Purple Gallinule, and Painted Bunting with their crazy vibrant colors made their earliest impressions on me, and I thought "These are just out there in the world to be found? I want to see all these!!!"

My mom worked at a bookstore at the time, and one day she met a woman who was looking for a bird guide. My mom brought up how I was getting interested in birds, and the woman told her she was going on a SAC Audubon trip in the coming days, and that I should come along. My first Audubon trip was to Cosumnes River Preserve. To that point, I had just been steadily learning the birds in my apartment complex, but the surge of new birds on my first Audubon trip (ducks, shorebirds, a Great Horned Owl, kingbirds, blackbirds, meadowlarks, orioles) led me to start my Life List, and I was officially hooked.

Why do you think it's important to expose young people to birding and nature at an early age?

I see birding as an engaging way to connect kids to the natural world in an era of ever-increasing technological distraction. It's so important to establish a foundation of appreciation for the natural world at an early age so kids have that perspective as they move on with their lives. Not everyone will become a biologist or a naturalist, but everyone should know they share this world with millions of other species and that the planet is here for more than just our consumption.

What message would you deliver to today's young birders?

Don't lose your appreciation for the birds that are in your life every day. Listing is a worthy pursuit, and rarities are always fun, but I find I derive a ton of satisfaction from showing kids or beginning adults their first kingfisher or flicker or kestrel. Their enthusiasm always reminds me how awesome these creatures are that are right in front of us all the time.

Dan is also a Field Activity Committee
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Birding and Nature Events

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 25th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 15-21** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. The northern coast of California offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats on Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where over 270 species of birds have been sighted. Held at the peak of spring migration, shorebirds abound and special opportunities are planned to see many other species, including Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Snowy Plover and even whale watching. Further information can be found at www.godwitdays.org or call 1-800-908-WING.

11TH ANNUAL POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

Save the dates of **April 23-26** for the Bay Area's best birding and nature extravaganza! Held over the last weekend of April, the three day festival attendees choose from 50+ educational field outings and classroom-based events based in Marin and Sonoma counties, and focused on birds, wildlife, plants and marine life, plus hiking, biking, kayaking, art and field photography, and led by some of the Bay Area's award-winning naturalists and birders. For more information and to sign up for their email newsletter, visit pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. Tickets are already on sale, and all proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

General Meeting

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pet in his high school Jazz Band. While Vayun has been birding with his dad, Vivek Tiwari, for a few years, and has participated in birdathons with the Fledglings, the Santa Clara youth team, he started bird photography when he was 10 years old, during a family trip to the Florida Everglades. Since then he has also photographed in California, Panama, Peru, Belize, Hawaii, Bahamas, Trinidad and Tobago, and on his most recent trip to Ecuador. Vayun is currently working on analyzing 40 years of bird population data from his home region, connecting bird population trends to climate change, and setting up a wildlife photography club in his school. Vayun will have calendars with the best photographs from this Ecuador trip for sale. All proceeds will go to the Jocotoco Foundation for habitat protection of the Blue-throated Hillstar. 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.

Anthony Asay, Program Chair

PRELIMINARY GBBC RESULTS

Count Update, February 18, 2:25PM, PST
The checklists are pouring in for the Great Backyard Bird Count and as of Tuesday, the 18th, more than 128,000 tallies have been entered in the United States. Those world lists include more than half the bird species in the world with about 6,596 species reported!

There's a lot to explore. To get started, go to ebird.org/gbbc/explore. There you can search for a particular species you're curious about and see where it has been reported. You can also search by location. For a great overview of what's happening with the count worldwide, click on the "Major regions" link and choose "World." You can also explore "Yard Totals" and "Patch Totals." With "Patch" totals you can see what birds and how many were found at your favorite birding spot. The "Top 100" lets you compare with other counters in your region.

As of this writing, Colombia is in the lead for the number of species seen, with more than 1,074!

VOLUNTEER FOR THE SWALLOW BOX SURVEY

Help is needed at Cosumnes River Preserve from March to July this year to monitor swallow boxes in order to determine the annual survivorship rate of fledging Tree Swallows.

There are various routes of Tree Swallow boxes throughout the Preserve, about 40 boxes per route. Teams of 4 volunteers will be assigned to each route, 2 monitoring at a time. The boxes will be monitored twice a week with teams deciding amongst themselves which days they prefer to monitor.

If you are interested or if you would like to be put on the email list for future news, trainings, and anything swallow box related please email JDavis@blm.gov.

Future trainings will occur on March 16. Please RSVP to the email listed above.



Tree Swallow
Jim Dunn,
Preserve Volunteer

BUFFERLANDS EVENTS

CREEK WEEK BIRDS AND BLOOMS TOUR

April 11, 8:30am–10:30am

The Fishhead Lake mitigation wetland is a nice example of wetlands created as mitigation for earlier wetland losses. The wetland has both a permanent and seasonal component as well as a surrounding upland buffer. Thousands of waterfowl winter at the wetland and many remain year-round to nest and raise young. Much of the area is planted to native wildflowers that bloom in early spring. California poppies, lupines, owl's clover, baby blue-eyes, and many others can be seen spreading about the uplands and wetland edges. Visitors will receive a packet of native flower seeds to start their own native garden.

The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Roger Jones at 916-875-9174 or jonesro@sacsewer.com to confirm your reservation and meeting location. Please note, we can only take reservations the week preceding the event.

NOTE: No Pets, Please! For all Bufferlands events, we respectfully request that you please leave your dogs and other pets at home.

Findings continued from page 2

the first time I led a trip there in which everyone got good looks at this bird. Other highlights included at least 6 Blue-winged Teal, 3 Lesser Scaup (these, and other diving ducks can be hard to find in the Bypass), at least 250 Black-bellied Plovers and thousands of Snow, Greater White-fronted and a few Ross's Geese flying over. We tallied 67 species. Great day and a great group."

Colusa WLR (1/23) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: "For the 14 of us that arrived for this outing, fairly dense pockets of fog were experienced on the drive up. However, on arrival at the refuge, we were greeted with no fog, very slight wind, and a comfortable temperature. A great winter day for birding that included time on the viewing platform, a walk on the adjacent riparian trail, and a drive around the auto tour route. Interesting observations included very good looks at two Great Horned Owls; three Eurasian Wigeon among many American Wigeon and most all of the other expected duck species. Very few

Ross's Geese were noted, but we had a conservative high count (65) of the "Tule" goose subspecies of the Greater White-fronted Goose. We finished with a total of sixty species."

Cosumnes River Preserve (1/19) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "4 people joined me on a foggy morning. Many thousands of Snow Geese were high overhead; Say's Phoebes were active; ELEVEN! species of ducks were seen, plus the ongoing shoveler/blue-wing teal hybrid. Purple Finches were a nice surprise."

Sacramento Bar (1/18) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: "8 ladies and myself started birding on a foggy morning. We did not expect to see many birds due to the fog; however the parking lot was very productive, 8 species. Out on the water we spotted Common and Barrow's Goldeneye. Further along we encountered a Red-breasted Sapsucker, Osprey and a Phainopepla. With a total of 57 species, a very enjoyable morning was had by everyone."

Cathie LaZier

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SUPPORTS BUSHY LAKE RESTORATION PROJECT

The Bushy Lake Restoration Project originated in 2015, when Dr. Michelle Stevens, Professor, Department of Environmental Studies, CSU Sacramento spearheaded a pilot phase. This eco-cultural restoration project has incorporated experimental design and adaptive restoration methods to inform restoration practice, wildlife monitoring and adaptive management. It is a collaborative effort involving Sacramento County Parks, local community engagement, environmental groups as well as CSU Sacramento faculty, students, and the University's offices of Public Affairs and Advocacy and Sustainability. Sacramento Audubon contributed volunteers and funds to help support and maintain this effort.

The good news is that Professor Steven's department just received funding from the Wildlife Control Board Lower American River Conservancy Program to create a Conceptual

Restoration Plan for Bushy Lake (CRPBL) The area has been serving as a living lab for Sacramento State, with Stevens and her students conducting annual planting, monitoring, and adaptive management. The overarching objectives of CRPBL are to 1) protect, enhance and restore a sustainable habitat refuge for pond turtles; 2) enhance habitat for fire resiliency; and 3) enhance the education and interpretation of resources in the Parkway, specifically showcasing tribal cultural use of the Parkway.

Sacramento Audubon continues to support this environmental educational opportunity that helps to promote the restoration of Bushy Lake and the populations of wild birds for the community and future educational outreach and conservation activity. With the assistance of long time Sacramento Audubon member and HDR biologist Dan Williams, CSU Sacramento students



Professor Michelle Stevens

Andrea Levinson and Nathan Marschall, have begun to gather data on the resident bird species of Bushy Lake.

Watch the Field Trips section of future issues of the *Observer* for information on a May 2, CSUS hosted trip to Bushy Lake. Attendees will have an opportunity to observe Dan, Andrea and Nathan gathering data for the project.

LOCAL BIRDING TRIPS OF INTEREST

These are not Sacramento Audubon field trips, but are great opportunities for birders and are all Family Friendly.

**Birding for Families at Effie Yeaw Nature Center
March 21, Saturday, 10:30am**

Bring the family out for a birding and nature walk led by a Naturalist and our special guest guides, Mary Forrestal and Cathie LaZier from the Sacramento Audubon Society. Birdwatchers of all levels welcomed. Make sure to bring your binoculars or borrow a pair from us.

Cost: General, \$5. Ages 4-11, \$3. 3+ Under FREE.
Members receive \$1 off each admission.

These family-friendly weekend programs fill quickly, so please CALL TO REGISTER and save your spot 916-489-4918. Programs start promptly at stated time and run 30-60 minutes depending on content and are offered only once per day.

Effie Yeaw Nature Center is in Ancil Hoffman Park. Directions can be found at www.sacnaturecenter.net. There is a \$5 per car parking fee or you can use your ARNHA membership card or County Parks pass.

DAN WILLIAMS continued from page 5

member and recently volunteered to work with a CSUS intern to lead a Sacramento Audubon team on a bird monitoring and data analysis program as part of a larger Bushy Lake Restoration Project. CSUS Environmental Studies Professor Michelle Stevens is coordinating the project and supervising the student internship.



SAS OUTREACH HELP OUT AND HAVE FUN!

Bill Bianco, our hard working Outreach chair, has asked for volunteers for Galt Winter Earth Day on Saturday, April 18. It's indoors and 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, please contact Bill at biancowm@yahoo.com; or at 916-372-3318. Koobs Nature Area is also having a Bird Day. This event is outdoors but the exact date is undecided, probably in May. Please let Bill know if you are interested.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2020

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sundays, April 5 and May 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 empid77@gmail.com, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 916-502-2699, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Darlene Bettencourt, Bruce Bostick, Joan L Clark, Carol Edwards, Taylor Florence, Cathy George, Daniel Griffin, Lois Harter, The Peter Hayes Family Trust, Dana Miller-Blair, Lynne and Larry Moore, John Payne and Peggy Cranston, and Beverly Sales made donations to the **General Fund**.

Milton Briggs, Carol Edwards, Dana Miller-Blair, John Payne and Peggy Cranston, Lynn Saxelby, Angela and Stephen Thompson, and Glenn Wilson made donations to the **Education and Conservation Fund**.

Carol Edwards, Dana Miller-Blair, John Payne and Peggy Cranston, and Lynn Saxelby made donations to the **Bobelaine Sanctuary**.

Many thanks to all of 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 continuing restoration and management.



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon

You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

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.

Mark Your Calendars: Great Opportunity for Birding and Learning about Birds

Western Field Ornithologists (WFO) is celebrating its first 50 years with a conference in Reno, NV, September 9-13, and everyone is invited. If you've never been to a WFO conference, it offers a mix of great field trips, workshops to help learn more about birds and birding, and engaging talks on local research. WFO links ornithologists who love birding with birders who have an interest in the science of birds.

Early September in Reno is an ideal time, with mild weather and both shorebird and passerine migration in full swing. Our field trips will take advantage of this. You can learn more about this conference, past conferences, and WFO in general on our web site (www.westernfieldornithologists.org/conference.php). We will open registration for the conference in June so keep checking for updates. Or, better yet, become a member (www.westernfieldornithologists.org/join.php) and you will get early notice for registering for the conference (as well as a subscription to our journal *Western Birds*). If you have questions, you can contact Ed Pandolfino at erpfromca@aol.com.



Sabine's Gull: one of the species we have a chance of finding at this conference (AND the logo bird for WFO!) Photo by John Ranlett.



Among many sites we will visit is Carpenter Valley, a recently-preserved mountain meadow in Nevada County. Photo by Ted Beedy.



Seasonal Observations

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

Many of the notable birds this month were found on or continued from the local CBCs. After decent rains in December, this January was mostly dry, and the disconcerting pattern continued through press time. Notable waterfowl were headlined by the apparent return of last winter's **Garganey** to Bridgeway Island Pond in West Sacramento; it was reported from 1/3 through the end of the month, though still mostly in eclipse plumage. One of the more striking birds found was a male hybrid **Blue-winged Teal x Northern Shoveler** seen and photographed from 1/3 into February. The female/immature **Red-breasted Merganser** first found downstream of the Nimbus Hatchery on 12/17 continued sporadically through at

least 1/10. A **Band-tailed Pigeon** was found in the Pocket/Greenhaven area of Sacramento on 1/1, and Sacramento County's second record of **White-winged Dove** was found on 1/24 among dozens of **Mourning Doves** and **Eurasian-Collared Doves** coming to seed along Meiss Rd to the west of Dillard Rd through the end of the month.

It has been a good winter for **Western Sandpipers** in the Valley, and five were found on **Sherman Island** on 1/26. A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was reported along Yolo Rd 104 on 1/1, and an adult **Slaty-backed Gull** was photographed at the same location on 1/31. A **Barred Owl** found on private property in south Davis was reported publicly on 12/11. It turned up again on 1/12, where it was seen and photographed, but became tangled in a net at a fish pond on 1/13 and was taken to the UC Davis Raptor Center.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members.

Theresa Arciniega Carl Norton
Mary Gaspari Mary Schiedt
Kathryn George Richard Rypinski &
May Hardison Mary Winneker
Sara Keeler

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 March 24, 2020, at 7pm. This Board Meeting will be held at Turley Associates, 2431 Capital Ave, Sacramento, CA 95816.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to Board Minutes.

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

www.sacramentoaudubon.org
sacaudubonmembership@gmail.com
P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

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The Observer Newsletter \$35 per address (1 Year) _____

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Send address changes to our Membership Chair to help keep down our costs.

Observations continued

Because this expanding species is a threat to **Spotted Owls**, it will likely remain in captivity. A wintering flock of **Long-eared Owls** was found on private land near Sloughhouse, with a high of 15 or more birds reported. A **Common Poorwill** found on a private ranch in southeastern Sacramento County on 1/15 was a nice surprise so early in the season.

The **Tropical Kingbird** first found along Sherman Island East Levee Rd on 11/23 continued through at least 1/11. The young male **Vermilion Flycatcher**, becoming increasingly bright red, first found at Tanzanite Park in Natomas on 10/30 continued into February. There was a good showing of wintering Empidonax flycatchers at Cosumnes River Preserve.

A **Hammond's Flycatcher** was found in the Tall Forest on 1/2, while a **Gray Flycatcher** (found 1/4) and a **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** (found 12/29) were

found on public trails and continued into February. The **Plumbeous Vireo** reported in Winters on 12/8 continued through at least 1/6. The **Clay-colored Sparrow** found on 12/27 at Tanzanite Park continued into February. Additional notable reports included up to 45 **Mountain Bluebirds** along Meiss Rd west of Dillard Rd (first found on 1/15), two **Lawrence's Goldfinches** (much harder to find in winter) on 1/15 on a private ranch in southeastern Sacramento County, the continuing **Swamp Sparrow** along the auto tour route at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, and the continuing **Worm-eating Warbler** in southeastern Davis, first found on 10/27 at San Marino Park and continuing through at least 1/13.

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

The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000-foot 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:

Max Brodie, Gil Ewing, Marc Fenner, Ben Graber, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, James Holmes, Emmett Iverson, Logan Kahle, Jeri Langham, Andrew Lee, Ronan Nicholson, Michael Perrone, Steve Scott, Lucas Stephenson, Mark Stephenson, Thomas Tinsley, John Trochet, and Dan Williams.

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

Chris Conard

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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, March 19, at 7pm

At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Vayun Tiwari, *Southern Ecuador: In
Search of Rare, Local and
New Species*



White-breasted Parakeet
Vayun Tiwari