

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 70 • NO. 11

NOVEMBER 2018

General Meeting

Thursday, November 8, 2018

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Assembly Room, 7pm

Education and Birding

Gesna Clarke and Sandra Steurer

Gesna Clarke is a University of California, Santa Cruz and Sacramento Superior Court retiree who has been a member of the Sacramento Audubon Society for about six years. She has served as chair of the Education Committee since 2016. Her past professional life was multifaceted, incorporating components of education, outreach, organizational development and partnership development. This made it easy for her to seize an opportunity to chair the Education Committee. It has been an "honor" for her to work with dedicated, knowledgeable, veteran members from whom she continues to learn.

Sandra Steurer, a member of the Education Committee, is a Pediatric Occupational Therapist (COTA/L). She comes from a family of birders and has birded for over 30 years, starting when she was 22 years old. Her goal is to "get kids into nature, and what better way than to incorporate my love for birdwatching." This passion led Sandra to co-leading Family Friendly field trips in local and regional areas, making bird presentations to a variety of schools, and participating in the annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count (KCBC) which branched out to two days last year to include a day for teens.

The Education Committee supports Sacramento Audubon's mission in many ways. Hear more about this from Gesna and enjoy a PPT slideshow and talk by Sandra on *Why Do Birds Do That?* at the November 8, General Meeting. Don't forget it's the 2nd week!

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).

CALLING YOUNG BIRDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES!

Mark your calendars for January 5 and 6, the first weekend of 2019! Please join the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC) and Sacramento Audubon Society in the Seventh Annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count.

These family Bird Counts provide an exciting opportunity for kids, young adults and their families to be outside looking at birds and enjoying nature. Participants will be joining citizen scientists all over the world and will gain practice finding, identifying and counting all the birds they see. Day 1 for the younger birders aged 6 to 11 will be Saturday, January 5 from 9-12:30 and will be followed by a companionable lunch with other birder families at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

A second site for older birders, 12 years and up, and their families will occur on Sunday, January 6 with faster paced birding for more experienced young people at William Pond Park. It will be followed by a Compilation Gathering at a nearby restaurant. Questions can be sent to Wendy Money at wendydoug@msn.com or by calling/texting 916-205-3914.

Space is limited for both days, and children must be pre-registered to attend. Registration is first come, first served and opens on December 1, 2018. To register go to effieyeaw.eventbrite.com.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES, 2018-2019

SACRAMENTO AREA CBC DATES

Saturday, December 15, Stockton

Compiler: Jim Rowth: 209-487-3489

Wednesday, December 19, Woodfords Christmas Count

Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net

Compiler: Andi Salmi, 916-691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Saturday, December 22, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266

e-mail: jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Friday, December 28, Lincoln

Lincoln, Placer County: Compiler: Ed Pandolfino

Sunday, December 30, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 916-203-1610, e-mail: conardc@gmail.com

Saturday-Sunday, January 5-6, 2019, 7th Annual

Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

Registration is required.

Saturday Kids Compiler: Maureen Geiger, 916-281-6652

mkgeiger@comcast.net

Sunday Teens Compiler: Wendy Money, 916-201-3914

wendydoug@msn.com

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit natureali.org/cbcs.html

Field Trip Findings

Bushy Lake (10/13) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: “Fall is certainly in the air. Saturday morning started with a very large flock of House Finches sitting on the fence near the parking area. As we surveyed the flock we discovered a few Lesser Goldfinches among them. When we reached the flood plain a Golden-crowned and a White-crowned Sparrow popped into view in a dried Elderberry bush. At Bushy Lake the brush had become so overgrown that seeing through the bushes was impossible. We had to wait until we reached the far end of the lake to be able to see open water. At that point there was a good view of a flock of Wood Ducks. When we finished we had a total of 40 Species for the day.”

Humbug Creek (10/11) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “Trip to Humbug-Willow Creek trail this morning was great. 11 of us on a gorgeous morning saw about 43 species, best of which was a female Phainopepla sitting in great light, then flying about so we could see her really well. We had a visiting birder from Albuquerque and had fun showing her some of our resident birds which were almost all lifers for her. Very nice morning.”

Monterey Trip (10/6 and 7) — Leader Linda Pittman reported: “This year, the coastal birding was on Saturday, with the pelagic trip on Sunday (due to availability of the boat) and the timing was late for migrants. A total of 13 birders started at Laguna Grande Regional park in Monterey. While circling the lake, we saw several species of expected warblers in the willow patches. A Peregrine Falcon sat preening on the Embassy Suites building long enough for everyone to get scope views and a Sora wandered around in the open on the edge of the lagoon. A smaller group of seven continued to Moonglow Dairy where we saw Red-necked Phalaropes, shorebirds and blackbirds. Several last minute cancellations reduced the number of participants on the pelagic trip to 19. It was clear and sunny in the bay, but swells were high, and the wind came up late morning, adding to the roughness. We headed up to Santa Cruz County and worked our way back through the bay. Highlights of the pelagic trip were over 100 Pink-footed Shearwaters, along with a few Buller’s and Sooty Shearwaters, a few Black-foot-

ed Albatrosses, Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers and a South Polar Skua. This was a good year for Rhinoceros Auklets too. We also saw Risso’s Dolphins, Pacific White-sided Dolphins, Harbor Porpoises, California Sea Lions and Humpback Whales. Captain and owner, Nancy Black, and several spotters did a great job of getting us on the birds. The combined coastal and pelagic total was nearly 100 species.”

Lincoln Area (10/7) — Leader Jane Taylor reported: “Six of us braved increasingly windy conditions unfavorable for grassland birding, so we mostly visited riparian habitats in Lincoln and Roseville, venturing into Sutter County to scan a drainage canal for waterfowl. We tallied about 45 species, the ‘usual suspects’ by and large, but our modest highlights included early winter visitors Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Say’s Phoebe, upwards of 50 Cedar Waxwings, and numerous juvenile Red-tailed Hawks. In a Roseville park, Subhash Chand took a photo of a bird we think was a first year Lark Sparrow, and among browsing goats for hire was an unusual spotted one.”

Point Reyes (10/6) — Leader Dan Williams reported: “For the second year in a row, high winds and very clear skies hampered our ability to find many migrant songbirds, but as it turned out the raptors stole the show for most of this day. At Drake’s Monument we had Purple Finches, a very cooperative Hutton’s Vireo, and calling Pacific Wren, Wrentit, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. An immature “Tundra” Peregrine streaked out of the sky and made a run at the birds on the beach, and then later a pair of Peregrines did battle with a Red-tail pair over the parking lot. Super cool! The wind was fierce at the ranches, and predictably there wasn’t much to see in the way of songbirds, though we did enjoy 2 snoozing Great Horned Owls at Mendoza, and 2 Barn Owls clinging like mad to the whipping cypress branches at Nunes. We saw 3 regular species of loons and a Red-necked Grebe on Drake’s Bay before deciding to retreat inland. While eating lunch at the Bear Valley picnic area, we were treated to a gorgeous adult Bald Eagle soaring overhead, and a Merlin put in a brief appearance as well. I happened to check the rare bird alert one more time and noticed a Red-eyed Vireo from

earlier in the week had been refound at the Inverness Tennis Club, so we backtracked a bit to try for that bird, and that’s when the real fun started! Not only did we see the Red-eyed Vireo but while we were enjoying more songbird activity than we had all day (Townsend’s and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Warbling Vireos, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Brown Creeper), suddenly Gary Fregien called out “BLACK VULTURE”! Sure enough, what was all but certainly THE Black Vulture that has been wandering around the North Bay area for the past three years just happened to drift over our group, giving us multiple long views as it mingled with several Turkey Vultures for much of the next hour! We had a total of 85 species on this very unique day. Gotta love Point Reyes in fall. It is truly never the same trip twice!”

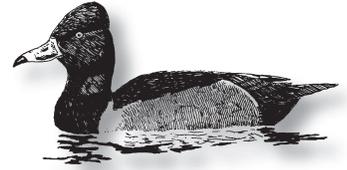
Woodland/Davis Clean Water Agency ponds (10/2) — Leader Craig DeMartini reported: “On a cool and breezy morning after a brief rain shower, six participants enjoyed the abundant birdlife of this expanded water treatment facility in Woodland, while two coyotes stalked and successfully caught voles in an adjacent field. More than 50 avian species have been seen here in 3 days, including White-faced Ibis, American White Pelican, Rock Wren, 120 Long-billed Curlews, and a juvenile Peregrine Falcon making several unsuccessful attempts at capturing shorebirds and pigeons.”

Point Pinole Regional Shoreline (9/30) — Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Ken Poerner, reported: “Birding at Pt Pinole Regional Park was excellent for the 11 of us who walked the 3.5 miles out to the pier. The highlight was definitely watching a gorgeous Barn Owl hunting over the dune grasses, diving, perching and hunting some more very close to us. In addition, at one point we had a Red-shouldered, Red-tail and Cooper’s Hawk and an Osprey in the sky at the same time. Moments later a White-Tailed Kite (one of several we saw throughout the morning) soared overhead. Vaux’s Swifts, shorebirds and many goldfinches were a few more of the 59 species we saw during a really satisfying 5 hours of birding.”

North Bay Hot Spots (9/29) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “8 birders enjoyed a great day in the field, with thousands

Findings continued on page 7

Field Trips



Ringneck Duck
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 November 11, contact the scheduler Darrell Mohr, mohrdd@gmail.com, 916-225-3999. For trips from November 12 through December 11, contact the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net.

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.

Thursday, November 1, 8:30am Lincoln WWTP and Placer County Roads

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

In 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. FRS radios will be helpful.

Saturday, November 3, 8am Sutter's Landing Park

**Leader: Jane Taylor, 916-587-3366
1jgtaylor@att.net**

This morning trip will take us along levee and riverbank searching for wintering birds and river dwellers in this short stretch of riparian habitat on the American River in midtown Sacramento. Ducks, occasional shore birds, passerines, sea lions and raptors are all possibilities. Be prepared for a chilly morning and possible muddy trails, when we will walk up to an easy three miles. Heavy rain or dense fog cancels. Meet at the skate park lot at the terminus of 28th Street. From Business 80 heading east (towards Cal-Expo), exit on E Street, turn left onto E and then right on 28th Street which dead ends at the Park. Heading west on Business 80, also take the E Street exit; turn right onto E Street, then right again onto 28th and proceed to the Park. This trip should end before noon so bring liquids and, if desired, snacks.

Sunday, November 4, 8am (NOTE: Daylight Savings Time ends today)

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

This 1,039-acre park just off I-80 in Solano County consists of rolling hills with stands of native oak, buckeye and bay trees, small riparian corridors, panoramic vistas and a pond for ducks, grebes and possible shorebirds. Other fall and resident birds may include Golden Eagles plus harriers, hawks, kites and woodpeckers, Western Bluebirds and quail. This trip involves about a two mile walk on an easy trail and will end mid-day. Please note: this area is generally colder, wetter, foggier and windier than Sacramento, so dressing in layers is recommended. There is a \$5 parking fee. From Sacramento on I-80 West, after Fairfield, take the Red Top Road exit. Go south (left) under the underpass. In less than 0.1 mile, turn right on McGary Road (parallels I-80) and follow for 1.8 miles. Turn right on Lynch Road, go under the I-80 overpass. There is a gate at the entrance which Ken will open at 8am. Drive into the gravel parking lot.

Tuesday, November 6, 8am Sacramento Wildlife Refuge Leader: Andi Salmi, 916-508-7192 andisalmi@yahoo.com

Andi 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 can be found here regularly. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks

and warm clothes. 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, Exit #524; go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Road, 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, November 10, 8am Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Leader: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471 shoppe01@surewest.net

This great area is only 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. Scott may do some short walks on the foot trails to get better vantage points. 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. Scopes are helpful on this trip, as are FRS radios. This is an excellent trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Trip will end before noon.

Sunday, November 11, 8am River Walk Park, West Sacramento Leader: Bill Bianco, 916-372-3318 biancowm@yahoo.com

This is a new area for Sac Audubon and should turn up a variety of passerine species, sparrows, wrens, thrushes and more. We'll bird the river from the boat landing, then walk south past the I Street and Tower Bridges and up onto the levee.

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

Walk should end by noon. Meet Bill at the Raley's parking lot; from Hwy 50 take Jefferson Blvd north; go left on W Capitol Ave and left on Westacre Rd to the lot.

Monday, November 12, 8am
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Leader: Craig DeMartini
916-599-3300
cloudwalk7@icloud.com

This great seasonal floodplain is only 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento.

A variety of ducks, geese and shorebirds frequent the flooded fields, and American Bitterns and White-faced Ibis are often seen. Raptors and owls are also a possibility. 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. The trip will end before noon but you may wish to bring water and snacks. FRS radios can be helpful.

Thursday, November 15, 9am
Robinson Road, Rd 113 and
Birds Landing
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 916-947-7573
burris.nellieann@gmail.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 lot a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. 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.

Saturday, November 17, 8am
Sacramento Wildlife Refuge
Leaders: Mark Martucci
916-833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com
Paul Cordero, pkcordero@gmail.com

This is a great place to view 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 can be found here regularly. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. 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, Exit #524; go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Road, 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.

There is a fee for each vehicle at the refuge: \$6 for a day pass, or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass. Or for \$25 purchase a Duck Stamp and support all national wildlife refuges. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike.

Saturday, November 17, 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; families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists from the nature center and birders Sheila Green and Wendy Money from Audubon. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, November 18, 8am
Salt Springs Valley
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 916-947-7573
burris.nellieann@gmail.com

This area is located in western Calaveras County about an hour and a half drive from Sacramento. The open valley and its lake are home to many wintering ducks, hawks, eagles, owls and grassland birds. The trip will last into the late afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. Bring FRS radios and scopes if you have them. Meet at "It's a Grind" coffee shop, 19420 Twin Cities Road in Galt. From Sacramento take Hwy 99 south to Twin Cities Road/Hwy 104, Exit #277. Turn left (east) on Twin Cities; cross the freeway and continue east to the shopping center on your right.

Sunday, November 18
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 autumn trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks, and look for some of our returning winter birds, as well as residents. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, put Beginning Birder in the subject line.

Friday, November 23, 8am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Black Friday Trip
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 916-502-2699
empid@earthlink.net

Want to do something non-commercial? Meet Cathie at the main CRP parking lot and we'll walk the boardwalk loop looking for Sandhill Cranes, geese and a wide variety of duck species. Yellowlegs and Wilson's Snipe will be in the shallower water, and other shorebirds are possible. Then we'll take the walking trail to the river looking for smaller passerines. This is a great trip for beginners. From 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

Lincoln Grasslands Trips
#1, Saturday, November 24
Leaders: Richard Barbieri and
Tim Fitzer
#2, Sunday, November 25
Leaders: Scott Hoppe and
Mark Martucci

The grasslands and farmlands surrounding Lincoln provide some of the best winter birding in the Sacramento Valley. Because of the diversity and large area to be covered, back to back trips are being offered again this year. Once again, two teams of experienced field trip leaders will enter a friendly competition to show participants as many birds as possible. Richard and Tim will start Saturday, searching for the largest number of raptors and rarities; Scott and Mark will follow Sunday hoping to produce even better numbers. Both days, they will search the back roads of Placer County for a large variety of raptors, shorebirds, ducks, swans and sparrows plus specialty species such as Tri-colored Blackbirds and Lewis' Woodpeckers. These trips will last into the afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids as well as scopes and FRS radios if you have

them. These are fast-paced trips, some portions on back country roads, so it is necessary to limit the number of participants and the number of vehicles. Sign up to get meeting time and place information.

Trip #1: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207

**Trip #2: Scott Hoppe
shoppe01@surewest.net**

**Saturday, November 24 and Sunday, November 25, 3:15pm till sunset
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds, Cosumnes River and Delta area
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392
yogooombah@yahoo.com**

View Sandhill Cranes and the wide variety of waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors which feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta. Dress for changeable weather and bring binoculars, snacks and water if you wish. Meet on the deck of the Visitor Center at 3:15pm. From 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.

**Tuesday, November 27, 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, and go approximately 6 miles to the refuge entrance on the right. Rain, strong winds, or thick fog cancels. No lunch break, but bring snacks and liquids. This trip will end around 1pm.

**Saturday, December 1, 9am (in Petaluma)
Bodega Bay**

**Leader: Ron Storey, 707-479-0171
ronstorey@ronstorey.com**

Join Ron for a full day of birding around Bodega Bay, taking in a variety of habitats. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and raptors. Bring lunch, water and warm clothes. Meet at Shollenberger Park in Petaluma at 9am and carpool from there. For directions to Shollenberger Park go here: http://colintalcroft.com/Sonoma_County_Bird_Watching_Spots/Shollenberger_Park,_Petaluma.html. This is a full day trip; bring lunch and liquids and layered clothing. FRS radios can be helpful.

**Sunday, December 2, 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.

**Thursday, December 6, 8am
Robinson Road, Rd 113 and Birds Landing
Leader: Bill Bianco, 916-372-3318
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 lot a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. 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.

**Saturday, December 8, 7am
Gray Lodge WA and Colusa NWR
Leaders: Lily Douglas and Tim Ludwick
Lily: 916-524-9340
ldouglas14@gmail.com**

Join Lily and Tim for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, we'll take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes, looking for Sandhill Cranes, raptors, and grassland birds, 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. Meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. A CDFW Lands Pass must be purchased in advance for entry to Gray Lodge.

**Sunday, December 9
Gull I.D trip on the American River
Leader: Ed Harper**

Join Ed for an informative walk along the American River and a chance to sharpen your identification skills. Ed is a great birder who will be looking for any interesting or unusual birds, with emphasis on tricky identification of the many gulls that winter on the river. Herring, "Thayer's" (which is now considered a race of Iceland Gull), Glaucous-winged, California, Ring-billed and Mew Gulls are all possibilities. Spotting scopes will be very useful, and be sure to bring your field guides and bird apps for this intensive study. Trip will end before noon and is limited to 15 people to ensure quality learning opportunity. To register for the trip contact Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net (put Gull Trip in the subject line), or phone 916-502-2699 to find meeting time and place.

**Tuesday, December 11, 8am
Mid-Yolo County Hotspots
Leader: Dan Murphy, 916-541-4213
dmmurpete@gmail.com**

Join Dan for a trip to several mid-Yolo hotspots, beginning with the Davis WTP and ending with the Plainfield Elementary School quadrangle. Target birds include Burrowing Owl, wintering waterfowl, Red-tailed and Ferruginous Hawks, and perhaps a Prairie Falcon. We should finish by noon.

Field Trips continued on page 6

Field Trips continued from page 5

Bring a snack and liquids. 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 lot a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. Meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

SURVEY ABOUT EMAILING THE OBSERVER

The SAS board has decided to start surveying members about whether they would like to receive the *Observer* by email rather than by mail. This survey will start with members renewal notices from January through December 2019. When emailed the *Observer* will arrive as a PDF of 1-2 MB. You must have a PDF reader to view it. Readers are available free online for download. Just as a reminder, a PDF of each month's *Observer* can be found at sacramentoaudubon.org under the Society Info/Archives tab.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

It's winter, and our waterfowl, shorebirds and cranes are back. Here's a great opportunity to work on your wetland bird identification; it's a great trip for families, youth groups and newer birders.

"Ducks In Scopes" is set up at the Cosumnes River Preserve, where from 10am to 2pm CRP 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!). Other possibilities are stilts, dowitchers, yellowlegs, snipe and other "peeps". Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese and various hawks may also be seen.

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:

Saturdays: 11/3, 11/10 and 11/17

Sundays: 11/4 and 11/25. And check next month for further winter dates.

LODI SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

The 22nd annual Sandhill Crane Festival will be held **November 2-4**, at Hutchins Street Square, 125 S Hutchins Street, Lodi. The event is free. Long before Lodi existed, Sandhill Cranes descended into the rich delta wetlands at the end of a long migratory journey, some from nesting grounds as far away as Siberia. In awe-inspiring numbers, and with a prehistoric call, stately gait, and elegant choreography, the Sandhill Crane continues to attract and inspire visitors. They have tours designed to appeal to everyone, led by experienced guides and experts in their field. The choices are many: crane fly-out and fly-in tours; kayaking and cruise tours; birding field trips; expert-led photography field trips; and winery tours. In between the tours, you can check out informative presentations and workshops. Learn more about the event and register for tours at www.cranefestival.com or call (800) 581-6150.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sunday, November 18

*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 empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 502-2699, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL

Mark your calendars for the 20th Annual Snow Goose Festival being held in **Chico** on **January 23-27, 2019**. Choose from over 70 field trips and workshops that are sure to appeal to a wide variety of interests and ability levels. More information will be in next month's *Observer* or look online at snowgoosefestival.org.

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM 2018

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the 22nd annual Central Valley Birding Symposium November 15-18, at the Stockton Hilton Hotel in Stockton. The Great Central Valley, in the heart of California and the Pacific Flyway, is uniquely situated for excellent birding. Please join us as the CVBS again celebrates the best of birding in the Central Valley! Come meet the board and staff members! Reconnect with old friends and meet new ones!

The CVBS kicks off with a scrumptious hors d'oeuvres buffet and no host bar on Thursday night, followed by one of our favorite keynotes, outstanding photographer, birder, and presenter, Ed Harper, with his program entitled *Northern Delights*.

Friday night's keynote program *Bird Migration: The More We Learn, The Less We Know* will be presented by Ed Pandolfino. Saturday night's keynote program, *The Trade Off* will be presented by John Kricher. In this lively and thought-provoking presentation, he will contrast the lives, ecology, and natural history of long-distance migrant passerine birds with bird species that are permanent residents of lowland tropical forests.

Informative and entertaining workshops include: *History of Field Identification* with Joe Morlan, *eBird, Bird Identification, and Alternative Facts: eGads!* by Kimball Garrett, and an update on Central Valley bird conservation and research programs. Build your skills at workshops: Digiscoping (Clay Taylor), Image Editing (Bob Steele), Bird Sketching (Keith Hansen), Beginning Birding (Sal Salerno) and Carving (Jim Burcio).

Field trips, offered Friday, Saturday and Sunday, always turn up exciting birds. Add in the entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, the wonderful selection of optics, art and gifts at the Birder's Market plus the camaraderie of hundreds of like-minded folks, and you know you'll have a good time! To look over the schedule of events, go to: www.cvbirds.org/events/symposium/. Registration has begun.

BUFFERLANDS EVENTS

Sunday, November 11, 9am–12noon, Tones of Fall

Each fall, the riparian forests and wetlands change colors from lush greens to the familiar shades of autumn. Many species of wildlife leave the area, while many others come into the valley to spend the winter. Come see and listen as our biologists explain the physiological and ecological reasons behind these changes.

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.

Saturday, December 8, 9am–12noon, Wetlands and Waterfowl

Come visit our Fishhead Lake mitigation wetlands as we look for waterfowl and other wetland birds and mammals. Hundreds of

thousands of migrating ducks and geese fly into the Sacramento region each fall. Our small wetland is an important place for waterfowl to rest and forage. We typically see northern pintail, American wigeon, green-winged teal, mallards, northern shovelers, gadwall, and a host of other water birds.

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. Online information can be found at regionalsan.com/bufferlands-calendar-events.

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

of shorebirds and other mostly water birds. I had originally wanted to take the group to either Point Reyes or Bodega Bay, but the forecast called for a chance of rain and breezy conditions along the coast. So, I opted for a few spots around the Napa-Sonoma Marshes Wildlife Area where we stayed dry, but didn't escape the winds. The first stop was American Canyon Wetlands, where the outgoing tide afforded us good views of many shorebirds and waterfowl. Two of the highlights here were actually raptors though—a Bald Eagle and a Sharp-shinned Hawk. From there we went to Huichica Creek where we saw the birds of the day—4 Pectoral Sandpipers. They flew in very close giving everyone great views. Later, a huge flock of nearly 3,000 Western Sandpipers arrived. In amongst them were 8 first-of-season Dunlin, and nearby were a couple of Red-necked Phalaropes. Our last stop was on Milton Rd where a pond/wetland area attracted hundreds of shorebirds including over a hundred Black-bellied Plovers and huge flocks of American Avocets and Marbled Godwits. We tallied over 80 species for the day. It was a great day of birding.”

William Pond Park (9/26) — Leader Mike Heacox reported: “Ten people trekked about two miles through the varied habitats of William Pond. We inspected an ancient oak for warblers (three species), moved into dry scrub for White-crowned Sparrows, edged along riparian forest to spot a female Western Tanager, gazed over the water for egrets and mergansers. Returning across an expanse of lawn, we added Lark Sparrows, White-breasted Nuthatches and Western Bluebirds. The highest counts were for Turkey Vultures circling high in a thermal and Cedar Waxwings moving through the tree tops. 36 species of birds and a bonus: a family of otters cavorting on a sandbar across

the river.”

Putah Creek Preserve (9/23) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Twelve people saw sixty species of birds on a cool clear morning along Putah Creek. The highlight of the morning was a Blackpoll Warbler seen well by everyone in the group. Other highlights included Yellow, Wilson's, Orange-crowned and Black-throated Gray Warblers, Western Tanager, Hooded Oriole, Lark Sparrow, Warbling Vireo and Western Wood-pewee.”

Hagan Park (9/22) — Leader Sheila Green reported: “My bird list includes 28 birds in two hours, well over my “double your money back” guarantee of one bird every six minutes! The highlights were: White-breasted Nuthatch, spotted Sandpiper, Western Bluebirds, Snowy Egret, House Wren, Common Merganser, Belted Kingfisher, and my personal favorite: Northern Flicker. We played “spot the Green Heron” and won! even though he was hiding at the river's edge. We had 5 participants, including one newcomer, Dave.”

Teal Bend (9/19) — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “A group of eight set off on a beautiful fall morning in hopes of a productive trip. Starting off was a bit slow but after about an hour things picked up and really got hopping. We had a lot of activity with several warblers and several additional highlights. Noteworthy species were Green Heron, Lewis's Woodpeckers, Hermit, Black-throated Grey, Yellow, and Nashville Warblers, Cassin's and Warbling Vireos, and immature Golden Eagle. All told we had 61 species for the morning.”

Putah Creek Preserve (9/16) — Leader Ben Graber reported: “The trip was excellent. The highlights were 5 species of warblers, Pacific Slope and Willow Flycatchers, Western Tanagers, a Lewis's Woodpecker, Phainopeplas, Violet Green

Swallows, and some outstanding views of a Western Screech Owl.”

Del Paso Regional Park (9/15) — Leader Dan Williams reported: “A dozen of us had a picture perfect morning in the middle of suburban Sacramento, with the immediate highlight being a first fall CHESTNUT-SIDED WARBLER that happened to be the first bird I got the group on in an oak tree right alongside Auburn Boulevard! Admittedly, most of us knew we had peaked early at that point, but nevertheless we carried on! Several migrants put in appearances throughout the morning including Black-headed Grosbeak, Wilson's Warbler, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Say's Phoebe, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, and Vaux's Swift. The resident species were not to be outdone however, as we were serenaded all morning by Bewick's Wrens, Oak Titmice, White-breasted Nuthatches, Spotted Towhees, and Lesser Goldfinches. A Hutton's Vireo laughed a few times from the oaks but we were not able to track it down. Some raucous California Scrub-Jays led us to a roosting Barn Owl which was a nice treat, and we were also treated to multiple Red-shouldered Hawks throughout the morning. The morning wrapped up with nice big flocks of Wild Turkeys and Yellow-billed Magpies near the picnic area. 41 species including an eastern vagrant in about 3 hours all between Auburn Boulevard and I-80. This park is centrally located and worth checking out!”

Ancil Hoffman Park (9/13) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Eleven people saw 58 species of birds on a cool overcast morning along the American River Parkway. Highlights included Caspian Tern, Western Wood-Pewee, Willow Flycatcher, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Chipping Sparrow, Orange-crowned, Yellow, Wilson's and Black-throated Gray Warblers and Violet-green Swallow.”



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon

You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Fred Klass, Ann Kohl, Peter Thomas and R and B Viscuso made donations to the **General Fund**.

Sue Darst made a donation to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

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 continuing restoration and management.



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.

SWAN TOURS WITH THE CA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (YUBA COUNTY)

Witness the sheer splendor of migratory birds of the Pacific Flyway on most Saturdays this November through January. Focal species include tundra swans, snow geese, ross's geese, white fronted geese, ibis and ducks, and an occasional bald eagle in the rice fields north of Marysville. Free guided tours, in caravan style, are through advance registration, and are led by a DFW naturalist at 9:30-11:30am and 1-3pm.

Registration and contact information is online at www.wildlife.ca.gov/regions/2/swan-tours.

Join Us For Family Friendly Field Trips!

Effie Yeaw and SAS Family Nature Walks

Saturday, November 17, 10:30am

Effie Yeaw Nature Walk

Bring the family out for a birding and nature walk led by a Naturalist and our special guest guides, Sheila Green and Wendy Money, from the Sacramento Audubon Society. Birdwatchers of all levels welcomed. No registration is necessary but you might want to arrive a little early.

These walks occur monthly at Effie Yeaw, all led by a Naturalist and 2 Sacramento Audubon leaders. The schedule through May of next year is as follows:

December: No walk because of Christmas Counts

January 19, 2019: With SAS leaders Larry Hickey and Gesna Clarke

February 16: With SAS leaders Dan Williams and Craig DiMartini

March: No walk because of Bird and Breakfast

April 20: With SAS leaders Cathie La Zier and Sue Darst

May 18: With SAS leaders Dan Williams and Larry Hickey

NOTE: Meeting location and other information for all trips is available in our Field Trips column, beginning on page 3, or at sacramentoaudubon.org under Field Trips.

Seasonal Observations

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

As always hoped for in September, there was a nice smattering of rarities among good numbers of common migrants. Signs of the coming fall grew stronger, with building numbers of waterfowl and the arrival of **Sandhill Cranes** by mid-month. Good shorebird reports continued, especially early in the month. The **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** found at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) on 8/31 was seen by many through 9/2. Other notable shorebirds included a **Baird's Sandpiper** at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 9/3, with one to two at YBWA in the first week of the month, and one to two at Lincoln's WTP from 9/4-11. Three **Pectoral Sandpipers** were found at CRP on 9/3, one was at the Davis WTP on 9/13-16, and one to two were found at YBWA from 9/1-3 and again from 9/23-29. **Solitary**

Sandpiper reports included two at CRP on 9/2, a single there on 9/8, one at E Catlett Rd west of Lincoln on 9/6, and one at YBWA on 9/8. A **Franklin's Gull** was a nice surprise at the Woodland WTP on 9/20-21, and apparently a different bird was found at the Davis WTP on 9/20.

Common Poorwills are always a nice surprise on the Valley floor, and one was found at the Wood Duck Lakes (Bee Lakes) south of West Sacramento on 9/20. An **Eastern Kingbird** was photographed along Putah Creek downstream of Pedrick Rd on 9/3, and a **Western Kingbird** was seen in Davis at the Wildhorse Ag Buffer on the late date of 9/27. A **Gray Flycatcher**, especially rare in fall, was photographed at YBWA on 9/23, and a **Townsend's Solitaire** was a nice surprise at the Wood Duck Ponds on 9/19 and 9/21. A **Gray Catbird** was seen by many along Babel Slough Rd and continued from 9/9-18. The same location produced reports a **Dusky Flycatcher**, a

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome these new members:

Darlene Bettencourt
Ken Blomberg
Janet Fox
Donna Haught
Susan Thrower
Sri Vegi
Cassie Webb
Glenn Wilson

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 November 27, 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.

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

sacaudubonmembership@gmail.com

P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Date _____ *The Observer* Newsletter \$25 per address \$ _____

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

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Email _____

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

Observations continued

Green-tailed Towhee, and two **Yellow-breasted Chats**. A **Sage Thrasher** was a nice find at the Folsom Point access to Folsom Lake on 9/8 and 9/13.

An impressive 50 **Lawrence's Goldfinches** were reported along Folsom Lake near Sweetwater Creek on 9/28, and single **Brewer's Sparrows** were found at the YBWA on 9/8 and the William B Pond access to the American River Parkway (ARP) on 9/15. Among the rare warbler reports was a female-type **American Redstart** found at the Wood Duck Ponds on 9/13. A **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was a nice find at Ancil Hoffman (along ARP) on 9/5, and another was found on a field trip to Del Paso Park on 9/15 and seen again on 9/16. A **Blackpoll Warbler** was seen by many from 9/21-29 along Putah Creek near Hopkins Rd, and a **Canada Warbler** at William Land Park on 9/23 was one of just a handful of records for Sacramento County. The **Summer Tanager** continued along Putah Creek, downstream of Pedrick

Rd, through at least 9/20, while another was found at Lake Solano on 9/2, and a third was photographed at Reichmuth Park on 9/8.

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' 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:

Holly Coates, Matt Davis, Lily Douglas, Chris Dunford, Leo Edson, Gil Ewing, Stephen Fettig, Frank Fogarty, Robert Furrow, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Terry Hodapp,

James Holmes, Joan Humphrey, Scott Hoppe, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Sarah Newton-Scott, Frances Oliver, Michael Perrone, Deren Ross, Mark Sawyer, Steve Scott, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, John Trochet, and Dan Williams.

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

The Gray Flycatcher can be found at: ebird.org/view/checklist/S48699145

Chris Conard

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Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, sawise7@sbcglobal.net

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, November 8

NOTE: November's Meeting is always
one week early!
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm

Gesna Clarke and Sandra Steurer:
Education and Birding

There is no meeting in December.
Enjoy the season and happy birding.