



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, April 19, 2012
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room
7pm General Meeting

The Mystery of Bird Song

David Lukas

How do birds learn to sing such beautiful songs? And why do they produce so many different types of vocalizations? David Lukas will help answer some of these questions and share his insights into the magical world of bird song—from the way we study bird song, to the anatomy of how birds produce sounds, to some of the social behaviors that explain common bird vocalizations.

David Lukas has been studying the natural world since he was 5 years old. He started out by memorizing all the pictures in field guides, then when he could read he memorized the text. David has spent his entire life studying the natural world and traveling around the world working on research projects. He's never had a regular job so that he could study nature at every possible moment and he even dropped out of college so he could work on scientific research projects in places like Borneo and the Amazon, and could lead natural history tours in Central America. Today, David lives just outside of Yosemite National Park where he hikes extensively in the park, writes books, and teaches natural history classes all over California. He has written or co-written 45 books and several hundred magazine articles, for two years he wrote a weekly nature column in the *Los*



David Lukas

Farallon Islands Boat Trip

SAVE THIS DATE! SUNDAY, JULY 15, 2012

As part of our usual field trip series, Sacramento Audubon Society (SAS) is sponsoring a trip off the coast of San Francisco to the Farallon Islands. We'll travel out the Golden Gate and cruise around Southeast Farallon Island, one of San Francisco's "desert islands" and part of the Point Reyes-Farallon Islands Marine Sanctuary. We'll be on the same boat we've chartered many times in the past. The capacity of the boat is 45 people, but we will restrict the trip to the first 30 that sign up, to ensure everyone has plenty of room. The trip will last approximately 8 hours, departing out of Sausalito.

This will be the 22nd year SAS has sponsored this trip, and every year is different! It's a great trip to see new birds to add to your life list. We should see many species that are usually only seen offshore or as a tiny speck in your scope from the shore! Highlights from previous trips include Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemot, Tufted Puffin, Black-Footed Albatross, Brown Booby, Sooty Shearwater, three species of cormorants, and Northern Fulmar. A naturalist will give a brief pre-departure lecture and will be with us all day to answer questions and provide information on the Islands and the wildlife. What will we see this year? Join us and discover for yourself.

The boat departs Sausalito promptly at 8am and returns about 3:30pm. The pre-trip lecture starts promptly at 7:30am. The trip cost is \$90; the trip is limited to the first 30 people that sign up, so sign up early to reserve your spot. Sign up deadline is June 15.

Detailed instructions, maps, and pre-trip information will be provided once you reserve your space. Please use the reservation form provided on page 7. Contact Linda Pittman, pittmanl@frontiernet.net, (email preferred) or phone 715-1876, for further information.

Angeles Times newspaper, a monthly nature column in *Sunset* magazine, and columns in other magazines and newspapers. Most recently he is the author of *Sierra Nevada Birds*, the first comprehensive guide to the life history and distribution of all the birds that are found in the Sierra Nevada.

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.

Sally Walters, Program Chair

Field Trip Findings

Mather Field Park (3/15) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Three birders braved the rain on this short two hour trip around Mather Lake. Despite the bad weather 62 species of birds were seen. Highlights included Osprey, White-tailed Kite, Black-crowned Night-heron, Green Heron, Virginia Rail, Violet-green Swallow, Common Yellowthroat and Yellow-headed Blackbird.”

Effie Yeaw Nature Center (3/11) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Eight people joined me to scope out the nests showcased at the Bird and Breakfast the day before, as well as a few new Bushtit nests, some surrounded by California Pipevine blossoms. Wood Ducks and Common Mergansers were searching for tree cavities, and Joanne Vinton spotted House Wren and White-breasted Nuthatch coming and going from small tree cavities. Bird song surrounded us and Gesna Clark’s sharp eyes spotted several bird species, the best, and favorite of the group, being a Cooper’s Hawk actively nest-building, giving everyone great views.”

Beginning Birding Field Trip for Adults (3/10) — Maureen Geiger reported: “Our adult beginner class at William Pond Park consisted of 13 including the leaders (Muriel Parker, Mary Beth Metcalf, and Yoshino Hatanaka). We had a fantastic morning—great weather, birds everywhere posing for us, mating, carrying nest materials, displaying, singing and calling, and a female hummer sitting on her nest. Everyone seemed to have a great time and enthusiasm was high.”

ARNHA Bird and Breakfast Fundraiser (3/10) — Cathie LaZier reported: “A dozen Sacramento Audubon leaders participated in the annual Bird and Breakfast ARNHA fundraiser at Effie Yeaw. Heavy duty birding during the previous week located several Bushtit nests, one Anna’s Hummingbird on a nest, found by Mark Martucci, and one Lesser Goldfinch building a nest, found by Kari Bauer. Red-tailed, Red-shouldered and Cooper’s Hawks were all actively courting, and migrating Sandhill Cranes passed overhead. Participants also enjoyed deer, jackrabbits and displaying turkeys, and Ed Harper’s group found an otter in the pond.”

Highway 37 and Ellis Creek, Petaluma (3/4) — Leader Mark Martucci report-

ed: “Fifteen birders saw 94 species of birds on a gorgeous 72-degree day with no wind. Highlights included Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Palm Warbler, Townsend’s Warbler, Purple Finch, Mew Gull, Bonaparte’s Gull, Allen’s Hummingbird, Forster’s Tern and Marbled Godwit.”

North Fork Pleasant Grove Creek (Roseville area) (3/3) — Leader Scott Dietrich reported: “Our trip went very well, we had 22 participants and saw a total of 55 bird species. Highlights were 2 American Pelicans that flew over, a Red-breasted Sapsucker that gave the group some good looks, and a White-tailed Kite that was not shy and seemed to be showing off at times. We had some nest-building activity with the Yellow-billed Magpies bringing sticks to their nest to try to get it ready for the season. Also, White-breasted Nuthatches were checking out some of the local bird boxes. It was also a great raptor day, with 5 raptors including Red-tailed Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, American Kestrel, White-tailed Kite and Cooper’s Hawk. Overall, it was a great day in Roseville and many of the birds showed up and gave everybody something different to look at as well as to meet some new friends.”

Yolo Wildlife Area (2/28) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “On a nice, clear day before a storm, five birders were able to enjoy a morning of bird viewing. The expected waterbirds, raptors, and sparrows were easily seen. Of interest to us were a pair of Northern Harriers, who put on a show of courtship display. We clearly saw the color and size difference between the two and enjoyed their sweeping flight. Since hunting season was over and all roads open to us, we saw plenty of ducks before they begin to migrate north. We are fortunate that the Bypass is available for the birds!”

Northern San Joaquin County (2/26) — Leader Linda Pittman reported: “A great group of 11 birders headed to San Joaquin County on a sunny but chilly 30 degree morning, starting at Mokelumne Day Use Area and Fish Hatchery where there was still frost on the ground and the birds hadn’t warmed up yet. Highlights included an Osprey, several Downy Woodpeckers at work, a pair of Red-breasted Sapsuckers, a Great Blue Heron rookery, Rock Wren,

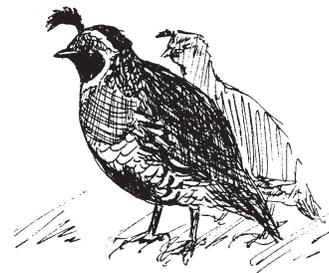
Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Varied Thrushes and Hutton’s Vireos. Continuing on to Johnson Road, we got great views of many Mountain Bluebirds. On Cord Road, a Vesper Sparrow flew into a corral, and while we tried to refind it, a Sage Thrasher popped up and stayed long enough for views for everyone. On the way to Waverly Road, we found a small stock pond with Hooded Mergansers, American Wigeon and Greater Yellowlegs. Western Bluebirds were seen in many areas. Eagles were less cooperative than usual on Waverly Road and were too distant for good identification except for an immature Bald Eagle late in the day. Raptors seen included Northern Harrier, Rough-legged, Ferruginous and Red-tailed Hawks, Prairie Falcon, American Kestrel and Merlin. We also found two Burrowing Owls, one on Waverly Rd and one on Flood Rd. We tallied 85 species for the day and had a great time birding.”

Sandhill Cranes and other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley (2/26) — Jackie Delu reported: “Save Our Sandhill Cranes hosted another successful crane tour at the Cosumnes River Preserve. With almost 30 guests, we walked along the Wetlands Walk trail to view Black-necked Stilts, Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, American Coots and Cinnamon Teals. As we approached the end of the boardwalk we were told that an American Bittern was in view. Because it was concentrating on catching prey, we were able to take many close-up photographs of this Bittern as it picked up critters from the water. We also were near a large group of Sandhill Cranes foraging and dancing. Later we were regaled with a crane fly-in while standing on the platform across from the Visitor Center. We also heard and saw impressive numbers of White-fronted and Snow geese flying overhead. Not bad for the last tour of the crane season!”

Sandhill Cranes and other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley (2/25) — Mary Reilly reported: “Sean Wirth and I led a Save Our Sandhill Cranes (SOSC) tour. We started with about 24 individuals with thoughtful questions and interest in SOSC work to preserve crane habitat. Sean spoke enthusiastically and interestingly on those points. We proceeded to

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Field Trips



California Quail
Kirsten Munson

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, call the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com, for trips through April 8th. For trips from April 9th through May 13th, call the scheduler Carla Barbaro, cbarbaro@comcast.net, 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. Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.

Sunday, April 1, 8am

Sacramento Bar

American River Parkway

**Leader: Paul Cordero, email preferred
pkcordero@gmail.com, 454-4061**

Paul will lead you on a morning walk along the American River. You will see a nice variety of resident birds and maybe a few early spring migrants. 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. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, April 7, 7am

Caswell Memorial State Park

**Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri.gary@gmail.com**

Caswell Memorial State Park is located in the Central Valley near the town of Ripon, about an hour south of Sacramento. The park's position along the meandering Stanislaus River affords a combination of water, mature cottonwood riparian and valley oak woodland vegetation. Its multi-level tall tree canopy, low scrubs and vines provide lush cover, nesting and foraging habitat, and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant bird species. For more information about the park, go to www.parks.ca.gov, click on "Find A Park" and use the drop-down menu to find Caswell. Passerines, including several species of swallows, sparrows, woodpeckers and warblers are park specialties in spring and summer, and resident Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and Great Horned Owls nest here. The park is surrounded by ag lands, so Swainson's Hawks are seen regularly here this time of year. California Thrasher and

Wrentit, not that common on the valley floor except in riparian areas, are also here.

There is a day-use fee per vehicle to enter the park. We plan to spend several hours in the park along some of the numerous nature trails, so bring food and water. The trails are generally level, but these paths and the vegetation along them may be damp. Dress appropriately. We will meet at the Park and Ride on the east side of Hwy 99 near the Sheldon Rd exit. Take Hwy 99 south from Sacramento to the Sheldon Road exit. The new off ramp here cloverleaf's and then crosses over the freeway. After crossing, proceed to the second signal light; turn right on East Stockton Blvd and proceed about a ¼ mile to the lot.

Saturday, April 7, 8:30am–10:30am

Bufferlands Birds and Blooms Tour A Creek Week Trip

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-dependant, so please contact Roger Jones at 875-9174 or email jonesro@sacsewer.com the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

Sunday, April 8, 8am

Sailor Bar, American River Parkway

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

Join Mark for a morning walk checking out the resident birds, and looking for early nesters and spring migrants. Meet Mark at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. This is a good trip for beginners. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Tuesday, April 10, 7am

Sweetwater Creek

Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207

spkua2@comcast.net

Mark Martucci, 833-6722

matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Join Mark and Tim to look for singing Yellow-breasted Chats, Lazuli Buntings, Wrentits, California Thrashers, migrating hummingbirds, and colorful warblers. Meet them at the Bella Bru in the shopping center on the northeast corner of El Dorado Hills Blvd and Highway 50, (Exit #30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the shopping center on your right.) This will be a half day trip and is a good one for beginners.

Saturday, April 14, 7am–11:30am

Pine Hill Preserve Birding

Leader: Chris Conard

**Pre-registration is required through
Pine Hill Preserve
contact Julie Wynia jwynia@blm.gov
www.pinehillpreserve.org**

The preserve was established to protect rare native plants in El Dorado County that

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occur only on gabbro soils. It stretches from Folsom Lake in the north to Hwy 50 in the south and contains more than 4,000 acres. We plan to visit newly acquired land in Kanaka Valley, with a mix of oak woodland and chaparral. Last year we saw California Thrashers, Sage Sparrows, migrating warblers, and great views of the Sierra. Be prepared for 2-3 miles of moderate walking.

Sunday, April 15, 8am
Lincoln in Spring
Leader: John York, 409-9276
sunofyork@att.net

Meet in Raley's parking lot in Lincoln, off 65 and Sterling Parkway. I will be in the Sterling Cafe getting breakfast and we will head off for various areas around Lincoln at 8am. We will hit some of the usual hot-spots, but will also be looking for the influx of spring birds and local nesters that will be arriving around that time. We will explore some grassland areas for local raptors, waders and little guys as well. Bring lunch and scopes if you have them.

Thursday, April 19, 8am
Beek's Bight, Folsom Lake
Leader: Margaret Martin, 599-0181
martinmargaret@hotmail.com

Join Margaret for a leisurely 2-3 mile walk. A variety of warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Lazuli Bunting, California Thrasher, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Rock Wren, Wrenit, and Phainopepla are all possibilities. For carpooling into the park and on to Beek's Bight, meet Margaret at the Granite Bay Raley's shopping center parking lot on the northwest corner of Douglas Blvd. and Auburn-Folsom Rd. (in the area near the Animal Hospital and Goodwill). This trip will continue into the afternoon, so bring lunch and water. This is a great trip for beginners. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, April 21, 7:30am-noon
Michigan Bar/Latrobe Roads
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Join Maureen in this foothills area as she looks for Lawrence's Goldfinches, Horned Larks, Western Bluebirds, Turkeys, raptors and possible Grasshopper Sparrows. These rolling grasslands are scattered with stands of native oaks and are also home to White-breasted Nuthatches and other oak woodlands birds. The roads are not good, and 4-wheel drive is recommended if it has been raining. Meet in the Raley's shopping center

at 8391 Folsom Boulevard (between Howe Avenue and Watt Avenue). Park on the south side of the Raley's lot facing Folsom Boulevard near the Carl's Junior.

Saturday, April 21
Family Friendly Trip
Maidu Park, Roseville

These monthly birding and nature walks are specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. There is a trip limit to ensure a quality experience for all. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net, or 444-0804.

Sunday, April 22, 7:30am
Sweetwater Creek
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com

At this favorite spring hotspot you should find wild flowers in bloom and hear the song of the Yellow-breasted Chat. Richard will scout for Lazuli Buntings, Wrentits, California Thrashers, migrating hummingbirds, and colorful warblers. Meet Richard at the Bella Bru in the shopping center on the northeast corner of El Dorado Hills Blvd and Highway 50. This will be a half day trip and is a good one for beginners.

Saturday, April 28, 7:30am
Mather Field Park
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
wayne.blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. The lake and its surrounding grasslands host a wide variety of birds. Great-tailed Grackle and Yellow-headed Blackbirds both nest at the lake. Meet Wayne in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Eagle's Nest Road. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Sunday, April 29, 7:30am-3pm
Birding Sutter Buttes
Leader: Don Schmoltdt, 739-6465 (H), 710-1077 (cell)
Address: 5141 Moddison Ave., Sacramento, CA 95819
bajaowl@gmail.com

Join Don in birding on private lands in the Sutter Buttes' interior. Access into the Buttes is coordinated by the Middle Mountain Foundation (MMF) a private non-profit organization that works with private landowners to protect the land and natural resources of the Buttes. Cost

is \$30/person, with a minimum of 10 and maximum of 20 people/group. Please send checks payable to Middle Mountain Foundation to Don at the above address. Include your phone number and email. Folks will be added to the participant list on a "first come-first serve" basis. Meet near the big fountain in the Featherdown Shopping Center in Yuba City. From Sacramento, take I-5 to Hwy 99 north to Yuba City. In Yuba City, turn left (west) onto Hwy 20 and drive about 0.25 - 0.5-mile to Stabler Lane. Turn right onto Stabler and go about 0.25-mile (past Poole Blvd), and turn left, just past McDonalds, into the shopping center. The fountain is near Roundtable Pizza. Look for Don's red Toyota 4-Runner with plates "BAJAOWL". Expect moderate to easy hiking (some short steep climbs) and poison oak. Bring lunch and water. Spring migrants and summer resident birds should be providing a good show, and hopeful highlights include Lawrence's Goldfinch, Phainopepla, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Rock and Canyon Wren. With luck we may find a rattlesnake or two. Heavy rain cancels.

Saturday, May 5, 7am
Driver's Flat, Auburn State Recreation Area
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net

We will be exploring the beautiful canyon of the Middle Fork of the American River off Foresthill Road to look for spring migrants and resident breeding birds. This is Scott's favorite 'secret' birding spot. Possibilities include several species of flycatcher, including Gray, Hammond's and Pacific-slope; Hutton's, Cassin's and Warbling Vireos; up to 7 species of warbler; Black-headed Grosbeak; Lazuli Bunting and Bullock's Oriole. Walking will be up to a mile at a time with moderate inclines. This trip will end mid-day, but plan to lunch on the banks of the river. Meet at the Horseshoe Bar Road Park and Ride in Loomis, Exit 110 off I-80 at 7am. NOTE: there is now a \$10 per car parking fee at Driver's Flat.

Sunday, May 6, 7am
Spenceville WLR
Leader Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com

This scenic recreational area of rolling hillsides, streams, reservoirs and ponds offers a variety of wildlife. This trip will include several short hikes over uneven terrain. Possible birds include Yellow-breasted Chat,

Lewis's Woodpecker, warblers and more. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and dress for changeable weather. Meet Richard at the Brookfield's Restaurant parking lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfield's is behind Shell.

Wednesday, May 9, 7:30am
Bushy Lake, Cal Expo Floodplain
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 973-9841
mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident 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 great trip for beginners.

Saturday, May 12, 8am
William Pond Park
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie along the first parking area just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk down to some different spots on the river, where wrens and towhees call from the bushes. We'll check out the heron rookery, then look at the pond area for Red-winged Blackbirds and Green Heron. California Quail, Western Bluebirds, Western Kingbirds and Ash-throated Flycatchers may be found in the park area. Trip will end before noon. A Sacramento County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east and it runs into the park. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Sunday, May 13, 6am
Sand Creek Road
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spkua2@comcast.net
Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Join Tim and Mark for a trip to Arbuckle and then up Sand Creek Road. Target birds include Sage Sparrow, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Western Kingbird, Roadrunner, Western Screech Owl, Pileated Woodpecker, Mountain Quail, and other migrants. The road can be rough and all wheel drive is recommended. Bring a lunch and liquids and be prepared for an afternoon return.

We will meet at the Woodland Jack-in-the-Box. Take 1-5 north toward Woodland; exit at County Road 102 (#536); turn right (north) on 102 and turn right into the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2012

Location: William Pond Park on the American River

Dates, (all Saturdays): April 14
Time: 8am, ending by noon
Each Trip Limited to 10 participants
Registration required.

These outings are geared toward people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. A brief parking lot talk will focus on choice and use of binoculars and a brief overview of birding etiquette and ethics. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the costs of hand-out materials. (If you're a repeat participant and already have the materials no donation is requested.) You do not need to be a member of Audubon to participate.

The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats and will be led by two or more experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. 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 by calling Cathie at (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

FAMILY FRIENDLY TRIPS

Saturday, April 21, Maidu Park,
Roseville, Scott Dietrich

These monthly birding and nature walks are specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. There is a trip limit to ensure a quality experience for all. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net, or 444-0804.

2012 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT SMASHES RECORDS!

You did it! Or, as one participant tweeted: "Way to go, citizen scientists!" Participation in the 15th Great Backyard Bird Count, February 17-20, shattered all previous records. Bird watchers in the U.S. and Canada submitted more than 104,000 checklists, reported 623 species, and observed more than 17.4 million birds. New checklist records were set in 22 states and in 6 Canadian provinces.

GBBC Summary Report

A detailed summary of some trends noted in this year's GBBC is now available on the website at birdsource.org/gbbc/science-stories. For example, GBBC maps showing reports for Snowy Owls plainly show the massive influx compared to previous years. Common Redpolls also moved farther south in western areas in search of food. One straggler even made it all the way to California (see Observations on page 10 for this sighting.) Lack of acorns may have reduced reported numbers of Blue Jays in the Northeast. Sandhill Cranes and Red-winged Blackbirds were already migrating during the count. A flock of more than a million Tree Swallows turned the sky dark in Ruskin, Florida.

Feel free to explore the reports from across the continent or here in Sacramento and California. Check out this year's Top-10 lists at gbbc.birdsource.org/gbbcApps/results. California was first this year as the state reporting the most species AND Sacramento was number one in California with the most checklists. Great work!

Keep Counting Birds

Can't get enough of counting birds? It doesn't have to stop with the GBBC. Consider getting involved in the NestWatch project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at birds.cornell.edu/citsci/projects (then click NestWatch on the list of projects.) Participants monitor nests and nest boxes to let scientists know when eggs are laid, when they hatch, and how many chicks fledge. It's an important way to measure the impact of climate change and other factors on breeding birds. On that same page of Projects there's also eBird for recording birds you've seen and Project FeederWatch for recording your own feeder birds. Participation is free and it's a great way to connect with nature and contribute to science.

The next GBBC takes place February 15-18, 2013. Save the date now!

Sacramento Events

SACRAMENTO EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Build a Greener Future, Sunday, April 22, 11am to 5pm, at Southside Park

The 6th Annual Earth Day Celebration will be filled with diverse business, non-profit, cultural and government vendors with practical information, goods and services for saving money, living healthier, and protecting the environment. There will also be great entertainment, activities and cuisine! A crowd of more than 6,000 is expected. Sustainability is meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Don't miss the chance to make YOUR sustainable connections at the ECOS Sacramento Earth Day Celebration. More information can be found at www.sacramentoearthday.net/

WALK ON THE WILDSIDE!, MAY 19, 10AM-4:30PM

If you'd enjoy a fun, FREE family-oriented day in the country with lively entertainment and up-close and personal views of many wildlife species, mark your calendar and plan to attend Walk on the Wildside on Saturday, May 19. Join Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge and local partners in celebrating International Migratory Bird Day and local conservation successes. The free event is held from 10am to 4:30pm near the town of Freeport, California, at the Beach Lake Picnic Area. Info: 875-WILD.

Event Highlights:

- Live wild animal presentations by Wild Things, Inc.
- Live folk music by Horse Sense and children's puppet show by Jason Adair
- Tours of wetlands, riparian forests, and heron rookeries
- 30+ Conservation exhibitors and hands-on activities
- Children's activity center with games and prizes hosted by the Girl Scouts
- Food Vendors and free parking

22ND ANNUAL CREEK WEEK

The Sacramento Area Creeks Council is holding their 22nd Annual Creek Week from April 6-14th. Many activities are planned and Creeks Week's annual clean-up day is on Saturday the 14th. Clean-up begins at 9am and goes until noon. From noon until 2pm everyone is invited to Carmichael Park, for a picnic, radio road show, earth friendly exhibits and interactive displays. Clean-up is taking place in 9 different areas with leaders coordinating the event in each area. If you'd like to volunteer go online at creekweek.net and click on Volunteer Online or call Alta at 454.4544 for more information. The American River Parkway Clean-up is scheduled for April 21st and is held annually by the American River Parkway Foundation. Their volunteer information can be found at arpf.org or by calling 486-2773.

Other events during Creek Week include: Finding Fish in Arcade Creek, Get into Your Local Creek at Effie Yeaw, Bufferlands Birds and Blooms Tour, Mather Vernal Pool Flower Walks, Local Fish Fauna, Steelhead Creek Beaver Pond Walk, Worm Composting and Gardening, and Elk Grove Greener Gardens Project.

FREE E-WASTE COLLECTION FUNDRAISER

Creek Week has also partnered with CEAR (California Electronic Asset Recovery) to recycle all e-waste that is brought to the Celebration, April 14th, from 9am to 1pm at Carmichael Park. CEAR is a CA State approved Collector and Recycler of Electronic waste. For a complete list of what you can recycle check the Creek Week website (creekweek.net) or call 44-4544. So load up your e-waste before Clean Up, then at Celebration they'll unload your donations for you.

Findings continued from page 2

Desmond Road where most guests signed up for emails of our future tours and crane info. A handful had attended Paul Tebbel's and Sean's REI presentation and were quite complimentary of the talk and eager to see a crane fly-in. We then moved on to Staten Island. As we drove down to the Great Horned Owls' location, Sean and I were anxious about the apparent lack of water, knowing that a fly-in would not occur unless water was available. We met the caravan at the owl-site and as we arrived so did a family of cranes, just south of us. They were joined by another crane family and we felt more confident of a fly-in opportunity for our guests. There was lively conversation about cranes and their habits and what is needed to keep "our cranes" here. Once the sun began to set, the cranes arrived in greater numbers, maybe 200 by nightfall, and the cacophony arose. The thrills of the crowd met the crane calls. Sheer delight... and much activity for such a late crane season tour."

President's Day Weekend, Eureka/Arcata Area (2/18-19-29) — Leader Dan Brown reported: "We had good weather, despite the rainy forecast. We missed most of the specialty birds this year. We did see a Palm Warbler, lots of Black-legged Kittiwakes and a Short-eared Owl. This field trip will be limited to 12 participants next year."

Yuba County Wetlands (2/12) — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: "We had a cold foggy start to our day with limited visibility but, as the day progressed we were able to see what we had come for. Highlights were Great Horned Owls, Loggerhead Shrikes, American Avocets, Long-billed Curlews, a few Ross's Geese, along with hundreds of Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese. We ended the day with a dozen pair of Ring-necked Ducks and two Bald Eagles stirring up the flocks of ducks."

Family Friendly Owling Trip Near Auburn (2/1) — Leader Sandra Beseler reported: "No owls actually sighted but, we heard screech owls all around and a pack of coyotes singing. According to Malik, one of our young ones, we also saw a reindeer and a bear cave. :) The flashlights with the kids in the dark added lots of fun to the trip. We had 10 kids and 10 adults."

Pete Hayes

RETURN OF THE SWAINSON'S HAWK EVENT

On **April 14th**, beginning at 9am at Sutter's Landing Park there will be a presentation on Swainson's Hawk with live Swainson's Hawks present. The presentation is given by the California Raptor Center and starts at 9am sharp. The event is free and there are refreshment and information booths. This is an event for the whole family and there will be guided nature walks on the American River Parkway to see Swainson's in the wild.

Sutter's Landing is at 20 28th Street, Sacramento (28th and C Streets, next to skate board park) The event is hosted by Friends of the Swainson's Hawk and co-sponsored by Sacramento Audubon Society, Friends of the River Bank, and Save the American River Association. RSVP to 447-4956 (not required).

Directions: heading north on 28th Street from J Street, cross C and then the railroad tracks. Continue through the parking lots to the last parking lot where the park abuts the American River Parkway.

WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS CONFERENCE: PETALUMA, CA - SEPTEMBER 26-30, 2012

Each year WFO holds a multi-day conference with scientific papers, field trips, workshops, panels, a keynote address, the annual membership meeting, and other events. The location varies each year as WFO attempts to span its region of coverage while also making its conferences accessible to the bulk of its members. This year's Annual Conference will be held close to home in Petaluma, CA Sept 26-30, 2012. Mark your calendars and start planning now. Check the WFO website for more information from time to time. Registration will open April 2012.

To register and see full details go to www.westernfieldornithologists.org and click on the 'Annual Conference' banner in the middle of the page. You will probably want to download the Conference Details document and review before you begin registration.

2012-13 SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY PROPOSED BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nomination Committee Chair Tim Fitzer announces the following slate of officers for the 2012-13 fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2012. The slate will be presented for a vote at the April general meeting. Additional nominations may be made from the floor, with the permission of the person nominated.

President	Don Schmoltdt
Vice President	Sally Walters
Treasurer	Cathie LaZier
Recording Secretary	Jonilynn Okano
Corresponding Secretary	Karen Zumwalt
Directors	Tim Fitzer
	Gary Fregein
	Darrell Mohr
	Linda Pittman
	Subhash Chand

Keith Wagner will be Past-President, a board non-elective position.

Farallon Islands Boat Trip Reservation Form

Sunday, July 15, 2012 Registration deadline: June 15, 2012

Tour departs from Harbor Drive, Sausalito. Trip price: \$90 per person

Name _____

Telephone _____ Cell Phone _____

Address (with zip) _____

Email (for confirmation) _____

Number of people _____ Total Payment \$ _____

Return this form and your check made out to Sacramento Audubon to:
Linda Pittman, 9849 Alta Mesa Rd, Wilton, CA 95693



Birding and Nature Events

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 17th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 19-25** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days this year 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. The selection of over 100 small group field trips, lectures, workshops, boating excursions, and community activities are led by experienced local guides. For further information and registration visit www.godwitdays.com or call 1-800-908-WING.

POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

This year's Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival is being held **April 27-30**. The Point Reyes region, endowed with unique geography and extensive wildlands and ranches, is home base for some of the nation's top birders and naturalists, and offers the ideal setting for a spring festival for bird and nature enthusiasts of all levels. This year the Festival will again offer a lineup of over 70 outings and presentations, including events for beginners and kids. Registration is now available online, and many field trips are already full, so, go quickly to www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org, register and enjoy.

KERN RIVER VALLEY FESTIVAL

The 18th Annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival exhibits and activities will take place the weekend of **April 21**. The Kern River Valley is one of nature's most diverse homes: 350 bird species (on average 233 species per Nature Fest and over 200 nesting species!). Spring bird migration creates an exciting time for birders visiting the Kern Valley Spring Nature Festival. The last five festivals have averaged 233 bird species! For further information including activities, trip descriptions, accommodations, and a list of last year's birds visit kern.audubon.org/KRVSNF.htm.

HERON FESTIVAL

Held in Kelseyville, CA on **May 5th**, the Heron Festival is a celebration of the Great Blue Herons return to their nesting sites around Clear Lake. Clear Lake is the largest natural lake entirely within California's borders and one of the oldest lakes in North America. The festival activities are from 8am to 4pm on Saturday, May 5th. More information, including event, schedule and registration, can be found at www.heronfestival.org or call (707) 263-8030.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL MONO BASIN BIRD CHAUTAUQUA

The 11th Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua will take place this year from **June 15-17** so make your plans now to attend. Held every year in the unique Mono Basin, festival headquarters are in Lee Vining, but field trips extend as far south as the White Mountains where bristlecone pines are found. Besides field trips the festival offers music, art and science exhibits. Registration begins April 15th and more information can be found at birdchautauqua.org.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON 2012 PROGRAMS

May 17	Julie Serences, <i>Native Bees in Our Yards</i>
June-August	Summer Break
September 20	Glen Holstein, <i>Sacramento's Unique Ecosystems</i>

ECOS AND HABITAT 2020 REP STILL NEEDED

Sacramento Audubon is seeking a volunteer to serve as the chapter's representative to the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) and Habitat 2020.

Originally founded in the 1970's, ECOS is a coalition of environmental organizations and individuals whose broad focus is protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of the Sacramento Region (including air quality, land use, planning, and open space). The ECOS Board of Directors meets from 6:30pm to 8:30pm on the third Monday of every other month.

Habitat 2020 is a coalition of Sacramento wildlife/habitat organizations, including Sacramento Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, Sierra Club—Mother Lode Chapter, Friends of the Swainson's Hawk, Save Our Sandhill Cranes, Sacramento Area Creeks Council, and others, whose focus is specifically on protecting and enhancing the Sacramento region's wildlife populations and the habitats upon which they depend. Habitat 2020 meets monthly, on the first Tuesday of every month. Habitat 2020 serves as ECOS' Habitat and Conservation subcommittee, and advises the full ECOS Board on regional wildlife and habitat conservation issues of import to the Sacramento region.

This position is an excellent opportunity for anybody interested in learning more about and getting involved in the local environmental community on a range of important issues that will shape the Sacramento region's future. Duties include attending and participating in ECOS and Habitat 2020 Board meetings, and reporting back to the SAS Board on any matters of import that may arise at those meetings.

Interested persons should contact SAS' Conservation Chair, Keith G. Wagner at 916-709-2308, or by e-mail at conservation@sacramentoaudubon.org.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Anthony Asay Jill Munyan
Filippo Cardella Carol Thomas
Amy Carlson Laura Valoppi
Richard Gerber Jane Woehl
Wanda Kilbourne

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 April 24, 2012 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Filippo Cardella, Carol Elzey, Maurice Getty, Carey Johnson, Carol Livingston, Gerald Swafford, Arthur Watkins and Kirstie Wilson to the **General Fund**.

Carol Elzey, Peggy Gerrick, Jane Jackson, Carey Johnson, Marya Liberty, Pedro Marengo, Eugene Masuda, Robert Norris, Andi Salmi, Carol Sughrue, Carol Thomas, Dee Warenycia, Peter Watkins, Kirstie Wilson and Jane Woehl to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

- Promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds;
- Promote the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach;
- Provide, encourage and support environmental educational opportunities; and
- Provide proactive leadership in the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

JOIN 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

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry46@earthlink.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

Observations continued from page 10

Rd at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 1/23 continued into early March. Apparently there were two, with one farther south on a closed road. Additional highlights included 40+ **Mountain Bluebirds** on private property in southeastern Sacramento County on 2/20, a **Townsend's Solitaire** on Rayhouse Rd on 2/2, the continuing **Black-throated Sparrow** near Esparto, and a **Chestnut-collared Longspur** at the Valensin portion of CRP on 2/9.

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

Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve (cvbirds.org) and eBird. It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Roger Adamson, Terry Colborn, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Gil Ewing, Maureen Geiger, Cory Gregory, Steve Hampton, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Linda Pittman, Ron Pozzi, William Rockey, Jackie Shulters, Zach Smith, John Sterling, Dan Tankersley, John Trochet, and Magill Weber.

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

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

February 1 to February 29

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

The bird of the month was a **Common Redpoll** photographed at a backyard feeder in Woodland on 2/22, continuing on and off until 2/25. This first for Yolo County and the Sacramento Area was seen by several birders and photographed, but was probably not seen by most who looked, as it never developed a consistent pattern of visitation during its short stay. The (eastern) **Winter Wren** first found on 11/27 was refound at a closed portion of Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 2/25, but was not subsequently detected.

The continuing **Falcated Duck** at Colusa NWR was seen through at least 2/10, and two blue morph **Ross's Geese** were found on that date as well. Other interesting waterfowl, reported on 2/5 at Bridgeway Island pond in West Sacramento, included a continuing hybrid male **Northern Shoveler X Blue-winged Teal**, nine **Blue-winged Teal**, and a male looking like a **Blue-winged Teal**, but with a cinnamon belly. A hybrid male **Blue-winged Teal X Cinnamon Teal** was at Yolo Wildlife Area, also on 2/5. The **Brown Pelican** in West Sacramento continued through the month and a banded juvenile was seen on 2/8 at the Yolo County Landfill. Upon reporting the large readable band code, it was learned that the bird was initially picked up on Lakeville Hwy in Petaluma, banded at a rehab center, and released on 11/18 in Monterey with other pelicans.

Sacramento Audubon Society
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A raptor search on 2/10 in the Dunnigan Hills north of Esparto produced 18 **Northern Harriers**, a **Red Shouldered Hawk**, 55 **Red-tailed Hawks**, three

Ferruginous Hawks, two **Golden Eagles**, 27 **American Kestrels**, and an impressive 34 **Loggerhead Shrikes**. A **Rough-legged Hawk**, several **Ferruginous Hawks**, two **Golden Eagles**, and a **Prairie Falcon** were reported mid-month along Hwy 104 east of Galt. On 2/17, 6-8 **Short-eared Owls** were found along Rd 30 east of Davis and seen by many in the following days.

Most of the month's gull reports came for the vicinity of the Yolo Landfill and Davis WTP. Several gulls approaching the **Iceland Gull** end of the spectrum (from the paler **Iceland** to the darker **Thayer's Gull**) were reported, including an apparent nominate **glaucoides** on 2/12-18. At least two **Western Gulls** and three **Glaucous Gulls** were present in February, along with up to 350 **Thayer's Gulls**. A first-winter **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was reported from Doton's Point at Folsom Lake on 2/1.

The **Harris's Sparrow** in north Davis continued through at least 2/19, and the **Harris's Sparrow** found on Desmond

Observations continued on page 9

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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.

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