

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



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APRIL 2015

General Meeting

Thursday, April 16, 2015
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

No Birdbrains Here: The Latest on Bird Learning, Instinct, and Intelligence

Susan Schneider, PhD

Birds can learn from consequences, as we and many other species can: Baby chicks learn to peck accurately, wild mockingbirds can learn to recognize individual people, and pigeons are able to learn to categorize art and music. Even instinctive behaviors like imprinting can be more flexible than scientists used to think, and songbird song appears particularly malleable. This talk will explore bird learning and intelligence, from everyday foraging, to learning through observing, to tool use. Such adaptability may be critical as wild birds attempt to adjust to the many threats they face. Scientists also take advantage of this powerful learning ability to help save endangered species.

A biopsychologist, Susan Schneider has over 25 years of research and teaching experience in the science of consequences and nature nurture relations. She's also an avid birder, field trip leader, and environmental activist. A board member of San Joaquin Audubon since 2009, she was on the Tropical Audubon board in Miami, and is a past president of Mountaineer Audubon in West Virginia. She's published numerous scientific articles and book chapters, and has been a faculty member at St. Olaf College, Auburn University, and Florida International University. She's currently a Visiting Scholar at the University of the Pacific. Susan's first book for the public, *The Science of Consequences: How They Affect Genes, Change*

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WALK ON THE WILDSIDE – SATURDAY, MAY 16

Walk on the Wildside highlights local efforts to protect and restore Central Valley habitats and it is one of the best family events in our area. This FREE family-oriented event includes hiking tours of local wetlands and forests, presentations, a live animal show by Wildthings, Inc, music by Horse Sense, children's hands-on activities, informational exhibits and more! Running from 10am to 4pm, the event and the parking are both free. Check it out at www.wowsacramento.com. Come early (8am) and you can join Sacramento Audubon leader, John Huls, and Beach Lake Docent, Ray Mendonsa, for a 2-hour birding walk through the forest, across Morrison Creek and onto the Stone Lakes Refuge. After the walk you can enjoy the rest of the event.

Directions: Exit I-5 at Pocket Road and head east. At Freeport Blvd. turn south. Continue 2 miles through the town of Freeport and past the golf course. Turn left at the signs (just opposite Cliff's Marina) and continue until you reach the Beach Lake event parking area.

Farallon Islands Boat Trip

SAVE THIS DATE! SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2015

Sacramento Audubon Society is sponsoring our annual pelagic trip off the coast of San Francisco to the Farallon Islands. This will be the 25th year SAS has sponsored this trip, and every year is different! We'll travel out the Golden Gate and cruise around Southeast Farallon Island, one of San Francisco's "desert islands" and part of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

This a great trip to see new birds to add to your life list. We'll have several experts on board to help spot and identify birds. 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 Tufted Puffin, Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemot, Black-Footed Albatross, Brown Booby, Sooty Shearwater, three species of cormorants, and Northern Fulmar. Will the Northern Gannet be there this year? Join us and discover for yourself!

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. We'll be on the same boat we've chartered many times in the past. The trip will last approximately 8 hours, departing out of Sausalito promptly at 8am and returning about 3:30pm. The pre-trip lecture starts promptly at 7:30am. This trip is limited to the first 30 people that sign up to ensure everyone has plenty of room, so send your reservation and check early to reserve your spot. The trip cost is \$90 per person and the sign up deadline is June 15.

Your space will be confirmed by email after the reservation form and your check is received. Detailed instructions, maps, and pre-trip information will be provided after the June reservation deadline. Please use the reservation form provided on page 7. Contact Linda Pittman, pittmanl@frontiernet.net, (email preferred) or phone 715-1876 for any further information.

Field Trip Findings

North Bay Birding (3/15) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “A small group of 5 of us had a great day of birding the Napa/Sonoma Marshes Area. We made 3 stops: Hudeman Slough and Huichica Creek, which are on the north side of the area; and American Canyon Wetlands, which is to the east. All three were very productive. Highlights included a continuing Red-throated Loon, Lesser Yellowlegs, several Hooded Mergansers, Common Merganser, Wilson’s Snipe, lots of Bonaparte’s Gulls and a nesting Great Horned Owl inside a hay barn at Hudeman. At Huichica, highlights included Cackling Goose, both minima and Aleutian subspecies, over 100 Semipalmated Plovers associating with Least Sandpipers and Forster’s Tern. At American Canyon Wetlands, highlights included a second year Bald Eagle, good views of a Sora out in the open, and thousands of shorebirds over a vast expanse of mudflats. We tallied about 90 species for the day. A very satisfying day and a good group, including Tess who joined us from the Clear Lake area.”

Wolf Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary, North Natomas (3/14) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “Our trip this morning to Wolf Ranch on the Walter Ueda Parkway was really nice. It was mostly overcast but very warm; about 26 of us saw more than 50 species. Best birds were a lone Long-billed Curlew, a handful of American Pipits and 4 gorgeous Ring-necked Ducks with, of course, rings on their bills, the neck ring not visible at this point.”

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco (3/8) — Coordinator Mark Martucci reported: “With leader Ron Storey, 15 birders saw 60 species on a picture-perfect day in San Francisco. We started out the day with great views of the Rustic Bunting that is wintering in the park. Other highlights included Townsend’s Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Pacific Wren, Pygmy Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Allen’s Hummingbird and Mew Gull.”

Lake Solano/Putah Creek (3/7) — Ann Burris, co-leader with Tim Fitzer, reported: “Sixteen people enjoyed sunshine and an absolutely beautiful spring day on Saturday’s trip to Lake Solano. Highlights for the day were a total of six

Brown Creepers, six species of woodpecker, Phainopepla, Purple Finch, Steller’s Jay, Varied Thrush, Osprey and Hooded Mergansers. In addition to the birds, the group also enjoyed the blooming redbud and some early blooming wildflowers. A new Bushtit nest was also found. Everyone agreed it was a very enjoyable day. “Thanks to Mike Yoshihara for sharing some of his birds of the day photos with our Facebook page.”

Beginners Walk at William Pond Park (3/8) — Cathie Lazier reported: “Newer birder Bob Adam was the only participant on this morning walk with Darrell Mohr and me. We began the morning observing the activities at the Red-shouldered Hawk nest, then enjoyed Lark Sparrows, California Quail and all 4 common woodpeckers. At the river we found the Hooded Merganser, Bufflehead and Ring-necked Ducks as well as Common Mergansers and goldeneye. The heron/egret rookery was active. E-bird says we counted 48 species.”

Highway 37 and Shollenberger Park, Petaluma (3/1) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Seven birders saw 85 species on a perfect 70-degree day with no wind. Highlights included Bonaparte’s Gull, Forster’s Tern, Marbled Godwit, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, White-throated Sparrow, Cackling Goose, Mew Gull and Greater Scaup.”

Family Friendly Trip to Cosumnes River Preserve (2/28) — Wendy Warren Money, co-leader with Sandra Bessler, reported: “The much welcome, but intermittent, soft rain showers in the morning enhanced our trip to the Cosumnes River Preserve. What a birdy morning! We traveled the boardwalks and trails and found 42 bird species. Joining up with the last Ducks in Scopes event of the season, the kids were also treated to a vibrant pond study. Some exciting birds were a lone Tundra Swan, many Sandhill Cranes in flight, hundreds of Greater White-fronted Geese, Sora calling, and a close-by dozing Wilson’s Snipe. The eye-popping colorful birds were a hit with the kids and we saw some beauties: Common Yellowthroat, Green-winged Teal, and Cinnamon Teal. We were left with the thought that we can’t wait for our next wetlands trip!”

North Natomas Regional Park (2/28) — Leader Ben Graber reported: “It was a great trip. We had about 7 people. Highlights included Northern Harrier, Ring-necked Pheasant, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Green Heron, Cackling Goose, excellent looks at American Pipits, a flyover of a Band-tailed Pigeon, and last but not least, spotted nearly half a mile away by an intrepid observer at the very end of the trip, a Say’s Phoebe.”

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (2/27) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “The morning’s tour produced a few surprises. A pair of Hooded Mergansers were seen swimming in a canal bordering a rice field. A female Northern Harrier was standing on a large gull carcass guarding its find and eventually fed on the body. Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Black-bellied Plovers, Long-billed Curlews, Eared Grebes, Horned Larks, and a Sharp-shinned Hawk were also seen. The group had close views of a male Blue-winged Teal. The usual ducks were present as well as a tour group favorite, American Bittern. Good trip.”

Bushy Lake (2/22) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: “The day started out clear and cold. Nine birders started walking the levee and right away we had birds everywhere. Goldfinches, both American and Lesser were in the trees along with Spotted Towhees, House Finches, Northern Mockingbirds and Mourning Doves. Along the trail we spotted a Say’s Phoebe. The best find was a Yellow-shafted Flicker. The recent fires have made the viewing of birds on Bushy Lake much easier. We were all able to have a good view of the Wood Ducks on the water. It was a good day for everyone.”

William Pond Park (2/22) — Leader Cathie Lazier reported: “Dense fog quickly gave way to bright sunshine as 7 beginning birders and 3 leaders began our morning walk. Sorting out finches, sparrows, juncos, bluebirds and other small passerines was quite a challenge, but we managed good looks at very active Red-shouldered Hawks and Northern Flickers. At the river we had Hooded and Common Mergansers, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, egrets, herons, Greater Yellowlegs and Spotted

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Field Trips



Savannah Sparrow
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, contact the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com, for trips through April 5. For trips after April 5 contact 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. In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER contact the trip leader for trip status.

Wednesday, April 1, 8am Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach, American River Parkway Leader: Sally Walters Schmoltdt 710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com

Join Sally for a morning bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the American River. Sally will be looking for migrants and resident breeding birds, wrens, towhees, and other small passerine birds. From Highway 50 take Howe Ave north to Fair Oaks Blvd. Turn left onto Fair Oaks and cross over the American River. Turn right on Carlson Ave, which is the first stop light past the American River bridge. Continue on Carlson Ave to its end, at Glenn Hall Park. Meet on top of the levee. This will be a fairly easy walk, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, and rock cobble. This is an excellent trip for beginners. Sally will lead this walk again at the end of the month; come with her and see the seasonal changes.

Saturday, April 4, 7am Caswell Memorial State Park Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636 calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Caswell Memorial State Park is about an hour south of Sacramento. Located along the meandering Stanislaus River, this riparian woodland with low shrubs and vines provides lush cover, nesting and foraging habitat, and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant bird species. Several species of swallows, sparrows, woodpeckers, thrushes and warblers are resident here in spring and summer. Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks nest here, and soaring Swainson's Hawks are regularly seen. California Thrasher and Wrentit, uncommon on the valley floor except in riparian

habitats, have been seen here. 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; cross over the freeway and go to the second signal light; turn right on East Stockton Blvd and proceed about a ¼ mile to the lot. Bring food and water and plan to spend several hours on the nature trails. Trails are level, but may be damp. There is a day use fee at the park.

Saturday, April 4, 9am Nature and Birding Walk Cosumnes River Preserve

Not an Audubon trip, but this monthly First Saturday morning walk at the CRP is good for beginning birders. Spring is arriving on the preserve, and the docents will share information about the preserve and help you identify the various birds and plant life. Meet at the Visitor Center. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org.

Sunday, April 5, 7am Folsom Lake SRA-Granite Bay Leaders: Scott Hoppe and Mark Martucci Scott: 835-8471, shoppe01@surewest.net Mark: 833-6722, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Join Mark and Scott in exploring this diverse area of Folsom Lake. We will be hiking some of the many trails here in search of resident birds and early migrants. The area is known for Rock Wren, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Phainopepla and migrant warblers and vireos. A Bald Eagle pair has nested on an island in the lake so they are also a possibility. The trip will involve hiking of 2 to 3 miles over hilly terrain.

We will likely end around mid-day or early afternoon, but bring a lunch. Please note, there is a \$12 per car fee, as this is a State Park. Meet at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Wednesday, April 8, 7:30am Mather Field Park Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457 wayne.blunk@gmail.com

Celebrate Spring at Mather Lake with Wayne. There should be a good variety of singing and nesting birds, and Wayne will help you locate them. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Zinfandel for this morning trip. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, April 11, 7 am Putah Creek Preserve Leader: Ben Graber, 844-8682 bgrab984@gmail.com

Join Ben for this great trip exploring Putah Creek. This is one of several "Migrant traps", where this time of year a variety of migrating songbirds, including some rare ones, make their biannual appearance. Along the creek, we can expect to see a variety of warblers and flycatchers in addition to some more common resident species. Western Tanagers and Lazuli Buntings have been found here on previous trips. This is a great trip for more experienced birders and an opportunity for beginning birders to

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brush up on their warbler and flycatcher identification skills. We will be walking about 2 or 3 miles over varied terrain, so bring liquids and snacks. For those with the patience for more birding, and more of Ben's alleged sense of humor, there will be an optional extension to Solano Lake and Monticello Dam for Phainopepla, Rock Wren, and several species of woodpeckers. If you do join us for the Solano Lake portion, there is a \$5 parking fee. Meet Ben at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave, Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Sunday, April 12, 7am-noon

Pine Hill Preserve Birding

Leader: Chris Conard

Pre-registration is required through

Pine Hill Preserve

Contact Graciela Hinshaw,

ghinshaw@blm.gov

www.pinehillpreserve.org

The preserve was established to protect rare native plants in El Dorado County that occur only on the specialized soils of the Pine Hill area. 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.

We'll look for California Thrashers, Sage Sparrows, migrating warblers, and, on a clear day, great views of the Sierra and the surrounding geography. Be prepared for three miles of moderate walking.

Thursday, April 16, 8am

Sweetwater Creek

Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris

Tim: 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net

Ann: 947-7573,

burris.nellieann@gmail.com

At this favorite spring hotspot you should find wild flowers in bloom and hear the song of the Yellow-breasted Chat. Other possibilities are Lazuli Buntings, Wrentits, California Thrashers, migrating hummingbirds, and colorful warblers. Meet at the Bella Bru in the shopping center on the northeast corner of El Dorado Hills Blvd and Highway 50. From Hwy 50 east take

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 18, 8am

William Pond Park

Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266

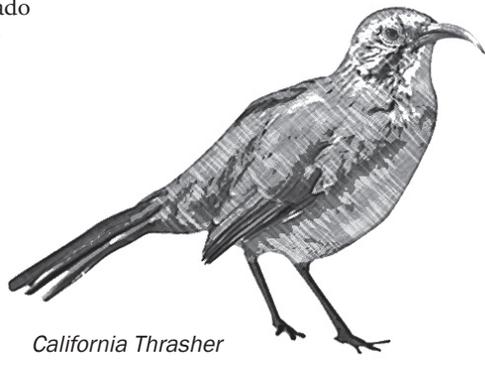
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

This area of the American River Parkway offers a variety of habitats and can turn up some surprises. Dan will be checking the backwaters of the river and the fishing pond as well as the developed park area for late wintering birds and migrants. Meet him just past the entrance kiosk for this half day trip. A Sac 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.

Saturday, April 18, 10:30am

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

Join Ann Burris and Tim Fitzer of Sac Audubon and a Nature Center docent for a



California Thrasher

family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, and other resident birds such as towhees and Bushtits will be active.

Reservations are

not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net.

Sunday, April 19th, 7:30am

Sweetwater Creek

Leader: Richard Barbieri, 761-1124

offleash56@yahoo.com

Another chance to bird this favorite hotspot. See write up for Thursday, April 16th. Meet Richard at the Bella Bru as described above, and again, this is a great trip for beginners and more experienced birders, and an opportunity to see several good birds.

Wednesday, April 22, 8am-11am

Earth Day and National Arbor Day

Birding

Estates Drive - American River

Parkway

Leader: John Huls 396-5261

johnhulsnaturalist@gmail.com

Join us to celebrate Earth Day as we explore the natural history of trees and the birds that rely on them. This walk will feature magnificent examples of native trees and those introduced by gold rush era settlers. From Watt Ave. take American River Drive east to Estates Dr. Turn south on Estates until it dead-ends at the levee. Note: California celebrates an Arbor Day Week in March rather than a single day. National Arbor Day is celebrated on April 24th.

Saturday, April 25, 8am

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.

Sunday, April 26, 7am

Point Reyes National Seashore

Leader: John York, 409-9276

Johnyork157@yahoo.com

John plans to bird the usual places at Point Reyes, including the Fish Docks, Lighthouse and Abbott's Lagoon if the weather is good. If it's too foggy at the coastal spots, he'll bird the onshore locations. Meet John at 7am at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave, Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. Bring fluids and dress for changeable weather. John is planning to stop for lunch in Inverness.

Wednesday, April 29, 8am

Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach,

American River Parkway

Leader: Sally Walters Schmoltdt

710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com

Join Sally and see what changes a month has brought to this area on the American River Parkway. See the write up on April 1st for information and directions to the meeting place.

Saturday, May 2, 7am
Driver's Flat, Ruck-a-Chucky
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. NOTE: there is now a \$12 per car parking fee at Driver's Flat.

Sunday, May 3, 7am
Spenceville WLR
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 761-1124
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 Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Wednesday, May 6, 7:30am
Bobelaine Sanctuary
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Join Cathie for a morning walk in this riparian woodland on the Feather River. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd at 7:30 for voluntary carpooling. (From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1.) If you wish to meet at Bobelaine about 8am, take Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City and about

2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. We'll be walking about 3 miles on level trails. Trip will end about noon. Bring snacks and water, and if you wish you can lunch at the picnic table near the cars at the end of the trip.

Saturday May 9, 7am
Beals Point
Leaders: Mara and Deb Weston
Mara: 208-3222,
mara_weston@yahoo.com
Deb: 337-2818, notsewbed@mac.com

Join Mara and Deb for a 1-2 mile morning walk at Beals Point. A variety of oak woodland birds should be seen. Phainopeplas, Rock Wrens, Lark Sparrows and Rufous-crowned Sparrows are possibilities. We'll scope the lake and shore, hopefully we'll see something interesting. Last trip a juvenile Bald Eagle was seen flying in and landed on a rock near the water. Bring plenty of water and sun protection. The trip will end before noon. Meet in the parking lot of the Beals Point unit of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (turn left as you enter the parking lot, to park near the first row). The entrance to Beals Point is on Oak Hill Drive off Auburn-Folsom Rd, about 2 miles south of Douglas Blvd and about 3 miles north of Greenback Lane. This is a great trip for beginning birders. The entrance fee is \$12 per car, or you may use a state (not county) park pass.

Sunday, May 10, 6am
Sand Creek Road
Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Mark Martucci
Tim: 870-5207, spkua2@comcast.net
Mark: 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.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY TRIPS

Sacramento Audubon has joined with the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael to offer birding/nature walks as a way of maximizing efforts to serve families with children who are looking for outdoor experiences.

The family friendly trips will be offered on the 3rd Saturday of each month at 10:30am. The trips are listed with our regular field trips, and on the Effie Yeaw website, www.sacnaturecenter.net. Reservations are not needed. Simply show up at Effie Yeaw Nature Center at the appropriate day and time and walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. Our next trip takes place on April 18, followed by May 16.

THE BUFFERLANDS

Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District or Regional San provides wastewater conveyance and treatment services to customers throughout Sacramento County and the city of West Sacramento in Yolo County. The Bufferlands was named appropriately for the acreage it occupies as a buffer between the sanitation facilities and its neighbors. Public field trips take place there occasionally and in May they sponsor an event called Walk on the Wildside (complete information is on page 1.)

The staff have trail cameras stationed around the Bufferlands and they post some of the most interesting clips each week at the RegionalSan Facebook page. You don't need to join Facebook to see them. Here's the link if you would like to see what some of their mammals, birds and reptiles are doing when no one is watching. Be sure to scroll down quite a ways to catch all the action. Go to www.facebook.com/SacRegionalSan



This coyote pup was captured on camera last September. Only 5 to 20 percent of coyote pups survive their first year, as they are especially vulnerable to predators, disease, and food scarcity during this time. Young coyotes in more urbanized areas actually seem to do better.

Birding Events

HERON DAYS RETURNS TO CLEAR LAKE, MAY 2-3

Thanks to the dedication of Redbud Audubon Society members, and enough rain this winter to bring the level of Clear Lake high enough for boat navigation, the popular Heron Days on the lake will take place this year on May 2 and 3. Boat rides last an hour and a half and tickets are \$25 per person. Redbud Audubon guides are on each boat.

The event will feature only pontoon boat rides; no craft or informational booths. On Saturday, the boats will venture along the shoreline of Clear Lake to the Corinthian Bay area where viewers are likely to see nesting Great Blue Herons along with a variety of other waterfowl and songbirds, including Western and Clark's Grebes.

On Sunday, boats will leave from Redbud Park in Clear Lake and head down Cache Creek and into Anderson Marsh. There is also a Heron nesting site that can be seen on this trip as well.

Redbud Audubon started Heron Days 20 years ago. It has gone from a small event at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park to a simplified version that includes only boat rides to view the birds on Clear Lake. Go to www.redbudaudubon.org for information and registration for boat rides.

MOUNTAIN BIRD FESTIVAL

The award winning Mountain Bird Festival is back, celebrating the natural wonders of southern Oregon and northern California. The 2015 Mountain Bird Festival will be held in Ashland, Oregon from May 29th-31st. Registration for the Festival will be available on the Klamath Bird Observatory website at www.klamath-bird.org. The Mountain Bird Festival offers guided bird walks, a keynote presentation, fine art galleries, local wine, microbrew and food vendors, and a feel-good community atmosphere. Registration includes half-day or full-day field trips offered on both Saturday and Sunday.

RETURN OF THE SWAINSON'S HAWK EVENT

Come join Friends of the River Banks (FORB) as we welcome the Swainson's Hawk back to Sutter's Landing. Each year our resident Hawks set up housekeeping on the river at this time. We have been fortunate in watching them court and mate, build nests, and raise chicks who have fledged. We've also observed drama, such as the year when a Great Horned Owl set up its nest too close to a Swainson's tree. What will we see this year?

Return of the Swainson's Hawk will be held on Saturday, April 11 at 9am at Sutter's Landing. There will be a short talk with birds from the Raptor Center, and tables staffed by SARA, FORB, and other groups, including SAS. And, of course, refreshments. Then we'll go down to the river to look for birds. Bring your binoculars, sunblock, and a hat. FORB events are designed for all ages. Please leave your dogs at home and try to walk, bike, or carpool to help reduce the carbon footprint of this FREE event.

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.

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. There is no parking in the pavillion area.

Findings continued from page 2

Sandpiper. And we all enjoyed the active heron rookery. We totaled 50 species for the morning."

Michigan Bar and Vicinity (2/21) — Leader Chris Conard reported: "Despite thin fog that never quite cleared, we had a great trip to eastern Sacramento County. Highlights included four Hooded Mergansers on the Cosumnes River, four Bald Eagles, a Ferruginous Hawk, two Wilson's Snipes, more than 50 Band-tailed Pigeons, a Burrowing Owl, a Merlin, two Prairie Falcons, Lewis's Woodpeckers, a calling Steller's Jay, Violet-green Swallows, several Varied Thrushes, and Tricolored Blackbirds."

Merced County Refuges and Grasslands (2/21) — Dan Brown, co-leader with Dan Azavedo, reported: "14 of us had a great weekend birding Merced and Mariposa counties. We had access to a couple of private duck clubs and visited Merced NWR on Saturday and on Sunday, birded Eastern Merced and Western Mariposa Counties. We saw 111 species, highlights being 6 Bald and 2 Golden Eagles, 4 Ferruginous Hawks, 2 Peregrine and 2 Prairie Falcons and at least 10 Great Horned Owls. Also of note was a Chukar at one of the private clubs along with MANY Sora and Virginia Rails heard! Terry, Valerie, and Harlin also saw and photographed a Red-crowned Parrot at the Marriot Hotel in Merced (undoubtedly an escapee). A HUGE THANK YOU to Dale Azavedo and Bobby Jones for

giving us access to the private duck clubs, such a treat!"

Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach, American River Parkway (2/18) — Leader Sally Walters Schmoltdt reported: "Seven folks meandered from Glen Hall Park to Paradise Beach, finding 32 species of birds. Cloud cover kept it a cool 45 degrees. Highlights were 2 pairs of Belted Kingfishers rattling constantly. One pair displayed by facing each other, flaring out their wings and puffing up body feathers. A Common Goldeneye male demonstrated its head-on back neck-breaker courtship display. Other duck highlights were Bufflehead, Hooded Mergansers, and Common Merganser. Sightings are posted in eBird."

President's Day Weekend (2-14/15/16)—Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Joe Ceriani, reported: "The weekend's weather could not have been any better, the sun shone and the wind was very light. Fourteen eager birders spent the weekend exploring the environs of Eureka, Arcata and Crescent City. The species tally for their efforts was 117. Some of the highlights were Long and Short-eared Owl, Tropical Kingbird, Red-naped Sapsucker, Harlequin Duck, Surf Bird, Rock Sandpiper, Red-breasted Merganser, Black-legged Kittiwake, Surf Scoter, White-winged Scoter, Black Scoter, but we missed the Common Scoter. A fun time was had by all."

Pete Hayes

General Meeting continued from page 1
the Brain, and Impact our World, was a selection of the Scientific American Book Club, and will be available for purchase at the meeting.

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://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

NATURE and BIRDING MAGAZINE EXCHANGE

At the next general meeting take time to check out the birding and nature magazines on offer on the magazine counter. Browse, and take home any of interest to you.

Finished with your birding and nature related magazines, but hate to throw them away? Bring them to our general meeting and leave on our magazine counter for others to enjoy.

Birding and Nature Events

OLYMPIC BIRDFEST, SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

From **April 10-12** the Olympic Birdfest will take place in Sequim, WA. The festival offers a most spectacular setting where you can visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest—Marbled Murrelets, Rhinoceros Auklets, Harlequin Ducks, dippers, Black Oystercatchers, Long-tailed Ducks, and more. Guided field trips, a boat cruise in the Strait of Juan de Fuca, silent auction, and a gala banquet are also offered. Join the Birdfest Pre-trip on April 8-9, which is two days exploring northwest coastal Washington, a region rarely seen by birders. More information can be found at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

Immediately following BirdFest, there is a three-day, two-night birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 12-14, 2015. Cruise registration can be found separately at www.pugetsoundexpress.com/audubon.

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 20th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 16-21** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. The northern coast of California offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats on Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where over 270 species of birds have been sighted. Held at the peak of spring migration, shorebirds abound and special opportunities are planned to see many other species, including Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Snowy Plover and even whale watching. Further information can be found at www.godwitdays.org or call 1-800-908-WING.

POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL!

Save the dates of **April 24-26** for the Bay Area's best birding and nature extravaganza! Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. The keynote speaker will be Steve Howell: *SHIFT HAPPENS: Rare (Vagrant) Birds in North America*.

For more information, visit www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. Tickets are scheduled to go on sale February 20, and all proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

Farallon Islands Boat Trip Reservation Form

Sunday, July 12, 2015 Registration deadline: June 15, 2015

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



BIRD CAM SEASON IS UNDERWAY

As if you didn't know it was spring already these bird cams confirm it. Though these young Great Horned Owls will already have fledged by the time you get this *Observer* you can still go to cams.allaboutbirds.org/channel/46/Great_Horned_Owls/ for saved videos of the owlets stepping out of the nest and testing their wings. There are also photos of dad delivering squirrels and their other prey includes Clapper Rails, Little Blue Herons and Common Gallinules. Oh, yes, this all takes place down in Savannah, Georgia, but it gives you a sense of what has also taken place out here in Sacramento, as Great Horned Owls nest very early.

On the other side of the United States there is a cam focused on a Laysan Albatross nest. Go to cams.allaboutbirds.org/channel/41/Laysan_Albatross/

The cuteness factor abounds—who wouldn't love a little darling that looked like this. Previous video is saved from the cam showing courting, nesting, hatching and feeding. Follow the cam now for the fledging and enjoy the Hawaiian island ambiance.

Laysan Albatross chick

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.



SAS OUTREACH HELP WANTED!

Spring events are on the calendar and we need volunteers to work at our table. You do not need to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding, and talking to people about our field trips and you would work with an experienced volunteer.

Saturday April 11, Return of the Swainson's Hawks, Sutter's Landing Park

Thursday, April 16, Sacramento State Earth Day

Saturday, April 18, Wildflower Wonders, California Native Plant Society

Saturday, April 18, Creek Week, Carmichael Park

Saturday, May 16, Walk On The Wild Side, Beach Lake

Saturday, May 30, North Laguna Creek Park, Elk Grove, Sacramento Start program

If you can work a morning or afternoon shift on one of the above days, please contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, or 457-6882.

Seasonal Observations

February 1 to February 28

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

This month was most notable for the continued reports of unprecedented numbers of **Band-tailed Pigeons**, **Steller's Jays**, **Varied Thrushes**, and **Pine Siskins**. Most interesting among the waterfowl was a reported flyover **Emperor Goose** at County Line Rd at the Yolo/Colusa boundary and the **Falcated Duck** at Colusa NWR that continued through at least 2/17. The male **Red-breasted Merganser** at the Gristmill access of the American River Parkway (ARP) was reported from 1/22-2/17, and up to two **Red-throated Loons** were reported from various locations on Folsom Lake through 2/12. For sheer numbers, the most impressive raptor report was from Yolo County Rd 96B, between Rds 25 and 25A, where a few minutes with a scope produced 39 **Red-tailed Hawks** and 9 **Ferruginous Hawks** on 2/3.

County Line Rd east of I-5 hosted 54 **Mountain Plovers**, the highest num-

ber from Yolo County in many years. A **Marbled Godwit**, quite rare in winter away from the coast, was found at Colusa NWR from 1/31-2/1. Gull reports were relatively few this month, with a first-cycle **Western Gull** at Folsom Lake's Beals Point on 2/1 and a second-cycle **Western Gull** at the Yolo County Landfill Pond on 2/14 being most notable. A **Greater Roadrunner** reported between Davis and Winters on 2/22 where Rd 91A almost meets Rd 31 may have been the same bird seen at that location on the Putah Creek CBC. A nearby private orchard hosted a **Northern Saw-whet Owl**, first noticed on 2/19, and a **Long-eared Owl** on 2/25. The male **Costa's Hummingbird** that has been reported along Putah Creek between Davis and Winters continued for another month.

The **Red-naped Sapsucker** found last month continued at Lake Solano through at least 2/15, and a male and female **Hairy Woodpecker** along Lake Natoma between Young Wo Circle and Parkshore Drive continued into March. A **Cassin's Vireo** with a slightly deformed bill near

the Gristmill access to ARP on 2/5 was a surprise for the winter season. Even more surprising was the report of calling and briefly seen **Bohemian Waxwings** among a huge flock of **Cedar Waxwings** near Carmichael on 2/7. Unfortunately they were not refound despite considerable effort. A **Lark Bunting** was found and photographed along Robinson Rd south of Dixon on 2/10. The **Swamp Sparrow** at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area was reported from 1/23 through at least 2/10. Up to five **White-throated Sparrows** were found between the Howe and Watt accesses to ARP throughout the month, while the **Harris's Sparrow** in N Davis continued, but was not always easy to find. A male **Cassin's Finch** was reported in Davis on Feb 10 and may have been the same bird found earlier in the winter.

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

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Bob Adam

Donna Douglass

Michael Geminder

Bill Johnson

Jeff Kozlowski

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 28, 2015 at 7pm, at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

[facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon)

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. It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Patricia Bacchetti, Lyann Comrack, Chris Dunford, Gil Ewing, David and Denise Hamilton, Steve Hampton, David Hartley, Cliff Hawley, Jim Holmes, Scott Hoppe, Joan Humphrey, Jeri Langham, Karen Keinitz, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Eric LoPresti, Tim Manolis, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Janet and Mark Scheel, Mary Schiedt, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, Dan Tankersley, John Trochet, Kent Van Vuren, Bruce Webb, Dan Williams, and Roger Willmarth.

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

Chris Conard

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, llandry46@comcast.net
11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

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.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY NOMINATIONS FOR 2015-2016

The Sacramento Audubon Board recommends the following slate of officers for the 2015/16 fiscal year. The slate will be announced at the April general meeting; other nominations may be made from the floor. A vote will be held at the May general meeting.

President	Larry Hickey
Vice President	Subhash Chand
Treasurer	Marcia Ferkovich
Recording Secretary	Keith Wagner
Corresponding Secretary	Diana Hickson
Directors	Bill Bianco
	Jenner Junghans
	Jayne Taylor
	Darrell Mohr
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White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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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 monthly January through December, except June and August, by the Sacramento Audubon Society.

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

April 16, 2015

with Susan Schneider, PhD

*No Birdbrains Here: The Latest on Bird
Learning, Instinct, and Intelligence*

At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm