

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 68 • NO. 4

APRIL 2016

General Meeting

Thursday, March 17, 2016
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Birding the 49th State: Alaska
Ed Harper

Being the vast and enigmatic state it is, Alaska has wide appeal to those who crave the beauty and mystery of its far-flung scenery and wildlife. Ed Harper first visited Alaska in 1980 when he explored the distant outposts of Attu and Saint Lawrence Islands. Since then he has made numerous visits to Alaska, his most recent trip being made in 2014. Rather than focusing on “extreme birding” in Alaska, he will tailor this presentation to the more conventional aspect of birding Alaska’s more accessible hot spots. The program will visit Nome where the birding is very exciting and rewarding. In addition to seeing Spectacled Eider, Northern Wheatear, Arctic Warbler, and other mouth-watering birds, be prepared for Moose, Musk Ox, and Grizzly Bear! Other birding destinations to be shared in this lively program include Seward and a boat excursion to the exquisite Kenai Fjords National Park, a visit to Homer and its Bald Eagles, and an exploration of Denali National Park and its famed wildlife. Even the bustling city of Anchorage will provide some spectacular birding where Arctic Terns, Red-necked Grebes, and Spruce Grouse are part of the scene.



Western Sandpiper
Breeding Colors
Ed Harper

Ed Harper is well known not only in Sacramento but also across the nation. He has presented many programs over the years to the Sacramento Audubon Society, the Central Valley Birding Symposium, Western Field Ornithologists, and many other birding events. He is a former president of Sacramento Audubon and a past board member of the Western Field Ornithologists. Retired from having taught mathematics at American River College for

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A SACRAMENTO AUDUBON THANK YOU TO TWO OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS: ROBERT THOMAS AND LEA LANDRY

At its February meeting, the Board unanimously voted to honor the many years of work for Sacramento Audubon Society by Robert Thomas and Lea Landry by donating \$250 in each of their names to the American River Natural History Association/Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

Robert maintained Bobelaine Sanctuary as a volunteer for 24! years, mowing trails, cutting back encroaching Himalaya berry and fallen trees, and maintaining the equipment. Robert retired recently. We are truly amazed at the amount of work he did and are grateful he did this for so long.

Until last December, Lea Landry was the Society’s Membership Chair. Her thorough work on the complex tasks of maintaining our membership data is much appreciated. We are also grateful she trained the incoming Chair, Mara Weston, over a period of months to ensure a smooth transition.

Thank you, Lea and Robert!

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY NOMINATIONS FOR 2016-2017

The Sacramento Audubon Board recommends the following slate of officers for the 2016/17 fiscal year. This 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	Sally Walters Schmoltdt
Vice President	Bill Bianco
Treasurer	Marcia Ferkovich
Recording Secretary	Jane Taylor
Corresponding Secretary	Diana Hickson
Directors	Grant Boice
	Karen Cadle
	Thomas Cadle
	Sue Darst
	Keith Wagner

Field Trip Findings

Buck's Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills (3/16) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: There were 19 of us — quite a crowd but everyone had a great time and 45 species of birds were seen and heard. Best bird was certainly a late White-throated Sparrow but sadly only a handful of us saw this bird. Other than that, we had Hooded Mergansers; a couple of American Wigeons (compared to huge numbers on the trip a month or so ago); various woodpeckers, sparrows, and warblers; and Ruby-crowned Kinglets singing their wonderful song instead of their winter scold. Sharp eyes also found two active nests: one for an Anna's Hummingbird and a second for a pair of Bushtits. A nice assortment of bird as usual."

Deer Creek Hills (3/13) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: "Trip canceled, heavy rain and strong winds."

Bushy Lake, Cal Expo Floodplain (3/12) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: "After a very rainy night, nine sturdy people ventured out for a morning of birding. We were not disappointed. Common Goldeneye and mergansers were swimming in the overflow pond. The meadow did not have many birds. Bushy Lake had a number of ducks, including Wood Ducks. Along the Cal Expo fence were bluebirds and House Finches. Our total number of birds was 33."

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (3/7) — Leader Mark Sawyer reported: "Highlights were 2 bittern, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Swainson's Hawk, 2 scaup species, and 2 Great Horned Owls."

Arrowhead Marsh and the Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline (3/6) — Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Mark Martucci, reported: "Five birders braved what was forecast to be a rainy day, but turned out to be beautiful: sun and a few clouds, with some wind, but not too breezy. Highlights included great views of Ridgway's Rail (Formerly Clapper Rail and a lifer for two of the group), 5 Blue-winged Teals, up to 6 Red Knots, a Burrowing Owl and early Northern Rough-winged and Barn swallows. We tallied about 80 species over all, including 16 species of shorebirds. A really great trip with a great group."

Lake Solano/Putah Creek (3/5) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Ann Burris, reported: "It was a rainy, stormy day and four birders decided, 'oh well, let's go and

see what we can find in the storm.' Lake Solano had the usual variety of normal waterfowl and Putah Creek Picnic area had a few woodpeckers and pouring rain. At noon we had tallied 26 species and decided that Fast Eddy's in Winters sounded good for hot coffee and lunch."

Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach, American River Parkway (3/2) — Leader Sally Walters Schmoltdt reported: "Nine people showed up at 7:30am for the walk along the American River. The parking lot and ball field provided excellent opportunities to study migrating Lark Sparrows and differences in the non-dimorphic Western Bluebirds. Plenty of White-crowned and Golden-crowned sparrows; Common Goldeneyes were now in pairs; a pair of Hooded Mergansers, and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. 43 species were seen."

Beginning Birding Field Trip for Adults in William Pond Park (2/28) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "A dozen interested and enthusiastic beginners joined five SAS leaders for this three-hour walk. Beginning with a Bushtit nest and very close looks at a Red-breasted Sapsucker, we sorted through several small passerine species and a variety of waterfowl including a Hooded Merganser pair. Favorites were the Great Blue Heron rookery and a Red-shouldered Hawk on a nest. We totaled 50 species."

Highway 37 and Schollenberger Park, Petaluma (2/28) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: "Eight birders saw 83 species of birds on a very pleasant day in the Petaluma area. The two best birds of the day were Tufted Duck (Stafford Lake Park, Marin County) and Iceland Gull (Lucchesi Park, Sonoma County). Other highlights included Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Marbled Godwit, Long-billed Curlew, White-faced Ibis, Forster's Tern, Bonaparte's Gull, Mew Gull, Thayer's Gull and Greater and Lesser Scaup."

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley, Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon (2/27-28) — Coordinator Mike Savino reported: "This weekend was the last of the SAS/SOSC crane viewing tours of the "crane season" as the crane numbers have thinned appreciably. During the previous week hundreds of cranes could be seen and heard flying north over the valley and foothills. Still, we had

some good views of cranes both days on Staten Island. It looked like the farm operation was getting ready for planting since the fields were allowed to dry out. There were only two fields that were flooded well enough for cranes to use as roosting sites. The low numbers of cranes still in the area had to squeeze into those two fields. Twenty-three visitors joined us on Saturday and five on Academy Awards Sunday. Besides the usual array of ducks, geese and shore birds, the Great Horned Owl pair in the old water tower was an added treat on Sunday as was a good sighting of a Common Merganser on Saturday."

Bushy Lake (2/27) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: "The morning started out on the cool side. We immediately started seeing many different species of birds. When we walked through the meadow area there were only a few birds. At Bushy Lake there were Wood Ducks, and then we had a Peregrine Falcon in a tree. Also, a Red-tailed Hawk was feeding a female that was on a nest. All 15 people enjoyed the morning. We had a total of 47 species of birds."

Effie Yeaw Nature Center (2/22) — Leader Bob McCleary reported: "Our Monday morning group of enthusiastic birders was treated to a great view of a Merlin, Common Goldeneyes, Wood Ducks on the pond, a pair of Hooded Mergansers, and Yellow-rumped Warblers along the Warbler trail. Great view of nesting Red-shouldered Hawks. Over all, a very productive walk at Effie Yeaw with a total of 46 species."

Upper Lake Natoma and Folsom Lake (2/21) — Leader Chris Conard reported: "A large group enjoyed beautiful weather along Upper Lake Natoma near the Folsom Rodeo Grounds. Highlights included a distant, soaring immature Bald Eagle, a Red-breasted Sapsucker and a hybrid sapsucker, four Hutton's Vireos, Bushtits at a nest, a single Varied Thrush, a group of seven Pine Siskins, and a male Lawrence's Goldfinch. Most of us moved over to the Mormon Island access to Folsom Lake, where we had great views of a Rufous-crowned Sparrow nearly at our feet, Rock Wrens, and a tight group of 21 Horned Grebes on the lake."

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Field Trips



Townsend's Warbler
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, for trips through April 3, contact the scheduler Mark Martucci, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com, 833-6722. For trips after April 4, 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.

Saturday, April 2, 7am Putah Creek Riparian Reserve Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636 calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Join Gary on a trip featuring spring migrant and resident birds. As the name implies, this area includes water and riparian habitats, and draws spring migrants and resident nesters. We can expect passerines including flycatchers, sparrows, thrushes, warblers, woodpeckers and wrens. There will also be forest hawks and river ducks. We will be hiking along Putah Creek on a narrow dirt path for up to a mile. Expect to bird for 3-4 hours. There are tables along the creek for having lunch. Meet at the Park and Ride 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 3, 8am William Pond Park Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722 matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

This area of the American River Parkway offers a variety of habitats and can turn up some surprises. Mark 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.

Wednesday, April 6, 7:30am 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 9, 7:30am Mather Field Park Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457 wayne.blunk@gmail.co

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.

Sunday, April 10, 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 13, 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 16, 10:30 Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

Join Audubon birding leaders Sheila Green and Sue Darst and a Nature Center docent for a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, and other resident birds such as towhees and

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

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.

Saturday, April 16, 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.

Sunday, April 17, 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.

Sunday, April 17

Beginning Birding Field Trip for Adults

William Pond Park

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. We explore the varied habitat at William Pond, looking at spring nesters, including those small confusing bushtits, titmice and nuthatches, some waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as raptors, herons, egrets and woodpeckers. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882. More information and other dates can be found on page 5.

Friday, April 22, 8am

Earth Day Birding and Tree

Appreciation

Estates Drive–American River Parkway

Leader: John Huls, 396-5261

johnhuls@sbcglobal.net

To celebrate Earth Day we will explore the natural history of American River Parkway trees and note the birds, mammals, reptiles and insects that rely on them. This walk will feature magnificent heritage valley oaks that were standing before the arrival of Jedediah Smith, John Sutter and the 49'ers. Tree hugging will be tolerated. From Watt Ave, take American River Drive east to Estates Drive, turn south on Estates and proceed until it dead-ends at the levee.

Saturday, April 23, 7am

Bushy Lake, Cal Expo Floodplain

Leader: Darrell Mohr, 225-3999

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 24,

7:30am

Sweetwater Creek

Leader: Richard

Barbieri, 761-1124

offleash56@yahoo.com

Another chance to bird this favorite hot-spot. See write up for Thursday, April 13th. Meet Richard at the Bella Bru as described in the April 13th write up. This is a great trip for beginners and more experienced birders, and an opportunity to see several good birds.

Monday, April 25, 7:30–11:30am

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661

MarkSawyer3383@yahoo.com

Join Mark in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl as well as raptors. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the

first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A) on your left, at the beginning of the auto tour.

Saturday, April 30, 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 one of Scott's favorite birding spots. 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 early to mid afternoon, and 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 a \$10 per car parking fee at Driver's Flat.

Sunday, May 1, 7am

Humbug Creek, Folsom

Leader: Mara Weston,

208-3222

Mara_weston@yahoo.com

Meet Mara at the Cummings Family Park on the corner of Creekside Drive and Oak Avenue Parkway in Folsom. We'll follow Humbug Creek around an easy 2-3 mile paved loop. This is a good place to look for woodpeckers, sparrows, ducks, Common Gallinule and spring migrants. Sometimes River Otters are seen in the creek. This is a great trip for beginning birders. Trip will end by 11am.

Saturday, May 7, 7:30am departure

Lake Solano Regional Park

Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311

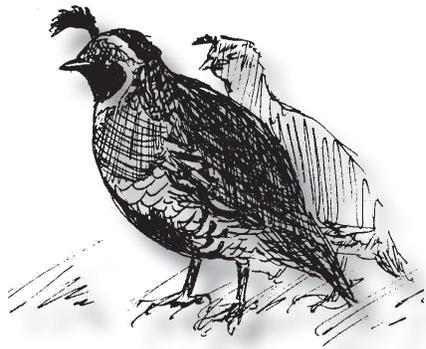
calidris@surewest.net

We can expect a different set of birds today from what we find during the winter months. Although most of the waterfowl have departed, now is the time for spring migrants and summer residents. We will be



Ash-throated Flycatcher
Linda Pittman

looking for Western Wood-Pewee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Ash-throated Flycatcher, and Western Kingbird. It is a good time of year to see migrant Swainson's Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, and Western Tanager. Adding some more color to the scene, Black-headed Grosbeak and Bullock's Oriole should delight us. En route to the area we will want to look for Swainson's Hawk and we may even pick up a Burrowing Owl. This half-day trip will conclude with lunch in Winters for those wishing to celebrate a great morning in the field. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento for a 7:30am departure. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave, Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.



California Quail
Kirsten Munson

Saturday, May 7
Beginning Birding Field Trip for Adults
William Pond Park

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. We explore the varied habitat at William Pond, looking at spring nesters, including those small confusing bushtits, titmice and nuthatches, some waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as raptors, herons, egrets and woodpeckers. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882. See the next column for more dates and further information.

Sunday, May 8, 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 11, 7:30am
Mather Field
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
wayne.blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. Join Wayne to look for a nice variety of resident birds. Targeted birds will be Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Black-headed Grosbeaks, White-tailed Kites, Wild Turkey and Green Heron. Meet Wayne in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Douglas Road turn south on Zinfandel Dr, then turn left into the park for this morning trip. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders. Parking is \$5; your Sac County Park Pass is good here.

FUTURE DATES OF FIELD TRIPS
FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway,

Dates: Sunday, April 17
Saturday, May 7
Sunday, May 15

Trips limited to 10 adult participants:
Registration required

These beginner field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on where to look and what important field marks to look for.

This walk will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Trips are limited to 10 adult participants and registration is required. Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at (916) 457-6882, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

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34 years, he still teaches birding classes and leads trips around the world. An avid birder and excellent photographer, he recently photographed his 800th bird in the USA, a Fieldfare in his home state of Montana.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Carmichael. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions. To keep up with current happenings follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

Sally Walters Schmoldt, Program Chair

Birding Events

PONTOON BOAT TOURS
CLEAR LAKE,
APRIL 30 AND MAY 7

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 two consecutive Saturdays, April 30 and May 7. Boat rides are from 8am to 1:15pm. Bird guides accompany each tour.

Bird life on Clear Lake include nesting Great Blue Herons and blackbirds. Other probable sightings include raptors, grebes, ducks, woodpeckers, great horned owl and much more. Register early at redbudaudubon.org/heron-days-2016/. Tickets sell out fast.

MOUNTAIN BIRD FESTIVAL

The award winning Mountain Bird Festival celebrates the natural wonders of southern Oregon and northern California. The 2016 Mountain Bird Festival will be held in Ashland, Oregon from May 20, 21, and 22. Registration for the Festival will be available on the Klamath Bird Observatory website at klamathbird.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.

Farallon Islands Boat Trip

SAVE THIS DATE! SUNDAY, JULY 24, 2016

Sacramento Audubon Society is sponsoring our annual pelagic trip off the coast of San Francisco to the Farallon Islands. This will be the 26th year SAS has sponsored this trip, and every year is different! We'll travel out the under 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 is 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 presentation 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 presentation 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 \$95 per person. Sign up deadline is June 28.

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 in late June. Please use the reservation form provided below. Contact Linda Pittman, pittmanl@frontiernet.net, (email preferred) or phone 715-1876 for further information. (Note: limited or no access to email or phone first two weeks of July).



Farallon Islands Boat Trip Reservation Form

Sunday, July 24, 2016 Registration deadline: June 28, 2016

Tour departs from Harbor Drive, Sausalito. Trip price: \$95 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

Findings continued from page 2

North Natomas Regional Park (2/20) — Leader Ben Graber reported: "Highlights were a Merlin, Common Gallinules, Ring-necked Pheasants, several Cooper's Hawks, and American Pipits. We also had Meadowlarks, Red-winged Blackbirds, Savannah Sparrows, and most of the usual grassland birds."

President's Day Weekend (2-13/14/15) — Leader Linda Pittman reported: "After a rainy January, we were fortunate to have good weather on the coast for the weekend. The trip was full with 12 participants joining me for exploration of the Mendocino Coast from Point Arena to MacKerricher State Park. Some of the highlights included Rock Sandpiper, Surfbirds, Harlequin Ducks, Red-breasted Mergansers, Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Burrowing Owl and a Trumpeter Swan along with Tundra Swans. A total of about 100 species were seen."

William Pond Park (2/17) — Leader Larry Hickey reported: "Despite some early and unexpected rain showers, six of us began the morning observing a cluster of four Northern Flickers high in a tree, followed by a lone Western Meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*—named because its song was neglected—thank you, Ed Harper). Western Bluebirds were remarkably cooperative—one simply posed while we walked all around his small tree; he did that because no one had a camera. California Quail walked right across our path and the crowned sparrows gave us good views. We missed the Bald Eagle seen the day before, but we observed Ruddy Ducks on the pond, many beautiful Buffleheads and five spectacular Hooded Mergansers. The males were raising and lowering their helmet heads and the females were letting their hair feathers fly. Cathie LaZier pointed out California Pipevine in full bloom and, while looking closely at a Eucalyptus tree, found a Red-breasted Sapsucker working away at his wells. Two articulate and remarkable Mira Loma High School students walked by while we were admiring the sapsucker and joined us for the remainder of our trip. It was another beautiful morning right here, where we all live."

Pete Hayes

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY GARDEN TOURS

April 9, free event: The 6th annual Gardens Gone Native Garden Tour is scheduled for April 9, 9:30am to 4pm. Sponsored by the Sac Valley chapter of the California Native Plant Society, this free garden tour features twenty-three private native plant gardens in the greater Sacramento and Yolo County areas. Registration is necessary to receive garden descriptions and maps. Register at gardensgonenative.eventbrite.com. For more information visit their website: www.Sacvalleycnps.org/gardening/garden_tour.

GREAT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Formatting and/or Photography

Seeking volunteers to help finalize the content of Birdwalk, a phone app for local birding spots.

A new phone app, Birdwalk, has been created as a companion to SAS's book, Birding in the Sacramento Region. The app was developed by two volunteers—Josh Louie as the programmer and Margaret Gabil, his mother, as the content provider. Margaret demonstrated the app at the last SAS Board meeting and we are excited about it!

At this point, the push is on to complete the formatting of the material from the book for insertion into the app before Josh starts full-time work. Specifically, we are seeking volunteers for two tasks. The first is preparing the short descriptive summary of the sites based on text in the book. Summaries for the first two chapters were already completed by Margaret. The second task is to provide photos of the locations described in the Guide. The purpose of the photo is to confirm for the user that they are at the site. The photo is a location documentation rather than a scenic photo or bird photo.

If you are interested in either of these volunteer tasks, please contact Margaret Gabil at mgabil@netscape.net or phone (650) 572-9709. She can tell you more specifically what is needed.

SAS OUTREACH HELP WANTED!

Thank you so much for volunteering. We now have most of the volunteers needed for our Outreach table at the spring events which are on our calendar. We just need a few more for the following two events. 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, May ?, North Laguna Creek Park, Elk Grove, Sacramento Start program

Saturday/Sunday, July 9-10, Wildlife Art Festival

If you can work a morning or afternoon shift on one of the above days, please contact Bill Bianco at 372-3318 or 889-4849.

WALK ON THE WILDSIDE – SATURDAY, MAY 14

Bring the family and join Regional San's Bufferlands staff for our annual Walk on the Wildside event, a celebration of International Migratory Bird Day.

Walk on the Wildside highlights local efforts to protect and restore Central Valley habitats. This FREE family-oriented event includes hiking tours of local wetlands and forests, presentations, a live animal show by Wildthings, Inc, music by Cliff Compton and Mountaintop, children's hands-on activities, informational exhibits, and more!

Guided and self-guided tours are offered throughout the day. Explore a pristine valley oak riparian forest in search of migratory songbirds. Visit numerous wetland and riparian forest restoration projects. Take one of the Bufferlands guided tours and enjoy a unique opportunity to see a rare heron and egret rookery—one of only four in Sacramento County. This rookery contains more than 120 active nests of great blue herons, great egrets and double crested cormorants. Spotting scopes will be available for optimum viewing of these fascinating and beautiful birds.

Walk on the Wildside has grown to be one of Sacramento's favorite outdoor environmental events, and both the event and parking are FREE!

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.

Birding and Nature Events

OLYMPIC BIRDFEST 2016, SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

From **April 15-17** the 13th annual 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. Pre and post-festival trips are also offered in this fascinating area. More information can be found at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 21st annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 13-19** 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 22-24** 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. For more information and to sign up for their email newsletter, visit www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. Tickets are scheduled to go on sale in February, and all proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Ed Harper made a donation in memory of Les Lahr.

Bill Hanlon made a donation to the **General Fund**. Brandy Alexander, Nancy and Bill Bittner made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**. Linda Melching made a donation to the **Bobelaine Sanctuary**.

The Board of Directors would like your help in raising \$15,000 for Education and Conservation projects in 2015-16. Please donate generously. You may make either one-time or recurring monthly donations in any amount at sacramentoaudubon.org/payments.html.

TUESDAY TRAILCAMS AT THE BUFFERLANDS

Roger Jones and Steve Scott of the Bufferlands, have added some more great wildlife videos with their trail cameras. A new video or photo is added each Tuesday, and on February 2 there is a video of three otters feasting on crawfish in a small pond. Top secret video includes otter sounds from inside a culvert. Videos from January 19 show Sandhill Cranes. The March 9 video shows turkeys in full spring breeding mode. February 23 is a photo of a Bald Eagle searching for lunch with no video included. Can you ID the March 1 and 15 trailcam photos? You don't need to be signed up to Facebook to watch the videos: www.facebook.com/SacRegionalSan

BOBELAINE STILL NEEDS VOLUNTEERS AND DONATIONS

The Bobelaine Sanctuary is a treasure that Sacramento Audubon has maintained for decades. We are still looking for volunteers and donations so that we can continue in our stewardship of this special sanctuary.

If you are at all curious about Bobelaine a beautiful Guide Book is available at our monthly General Meetings and at "Wild Birds Unlimited" 2533 Fair Oaks Blvd, Sacramento and "Wild Bird Center", 5339 Sunrise Boulevard, Fair Oaks.

Or see Bobelaine for yourself. Directions: From Sacramento, take Hwy 99/70 north, when Hwys 99 and 70 split stay on 99 and cross the Feather river bridge. Turn right at the second signed street after crossing the bridge—this is Laurel Ave. On Laurel Ave, go till you reach an "End" sign. At this point the road turns to dirt and gravel and is over private land. Continue on until you reach the "Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary" sign, parking lot, kiosk and metal barn. There is a large color map in the kiosk showing the trails and the three entrances to the sanctuary. Map handouts should be available in the mail box adjacent to the kiosk.

For more information about Bobelaine, please visit the website: sacramentoaudubon.org/resources/bobelainesanctuary.html. Bobelaine also needs your donations. Please donate at: www.sacramentoaudubon.org/payments.html. Click the Bobelaine Donations button and make your contribution.

SPEAKING OF BIRDCAMS

It's spring again and birdcams focusing on the nesting of many species are becoming available. Perhaps you've heard in the news of the two eaglets who have hatched at the National Arboretum in Washington DC. The parents are named Mr President and First Lady of course. The chicks hatched March 18 and 19 from eggs laid February 10 and 14. The first family's progress can be viewed at www.eagles.org/dceaglecam/.

At cams.allaboutbirds.org/ where links to live nest cams around the country are located, they are currently highlighting a Barred Owl nest in Indiana. The female has laid three eggs and they are scheduled to begin hatching about the time you should receive this newsletter.

Two Great Horned Owl chicks hatched the end of February in Savannah, Georgia and at press time are downy balls of fluff. Check in with them and see them get their flight feathers and fledge from the nest.

Other links include the Laysan Albatross in Hawaii, Barn Owls in Texas and the well-known Red-tailed Hawks in Ithaca, New York who have three eggs as of March 16. The red tails, appropriately enough, are on the Cornell University campus. Many of the nest cams have infrared light so you can watch them at west coast hours even when they're on the east coast. Informative information is also included on each cam page and many offer chat lines where you can ask questions and view others' answers.

Seasonal Observations

February 1 to February 29 Rare and Unusual Bird Reports www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

Spring-like weather for much of the month allowed for a lot of activity outdoors, but rekindled fears of continued drought. By the end of the month, **Sandhill Cranes** were seen in high circling flocks on their way north and the first of a wave of returning **Swainson's Hawks** were reported. **Surf Scoters** continued on the San Joaquin River near Sherman Island, with six seen on 2/15, and a female **Red-breasted Merganser** was a nice find among **Common Mergansers** on the American River near the Upper Sunrise access on 2/21.

The dark morph **Rough-legged Hawk** continued throughout the month along Riley

Rd north of Galt and another was found on Meiss Rd on 2/13. Five **Mountain Plovers** continued on Yolo County Rd 103 through at least 2/9. Two **Lesser Black-backed Gulls** were reported at Folsom Lake near the Granite Bay boat ramp on 2/3, an adult and a first-cycle, with the adult continuing on 2/6. At least three **Short-eared Owls** continued in the ag fields along Yolo County Rd 30 northeast of Davis, and two were found along Waltz Rd, west of Dowd Rd, just north of Lincoln from 2/20 to at least 2/25. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was found along the American Parkway bike trail just downstream of the Nimbus Hatchery on 2/10, and was seen by many through 2/12. A continuing **Hairy Woodpecker** was at the Young Wo access to Lake Natoma through at least 2/29.

The **Black-chinned Sparrow**, exceedingly rare for the Central Valley floor, continued until at least 2/27. A **Grasshopper Sparrow** photographed at close range at Deer Creek Hills on 2/20 was a nice find for winter. A **Red Fox Sparrow** was reported from CRP around the Tall Forest on 2/28. Two **Swamp Sparrows** continued from the Sacramento CBC just off the auto route at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on 2/13. While caution is advised with rare out-of-range races of **Dark-eyed Juncos**, a **Pink-sided Junco** was well-described near the Mace Blvd bridge over Putah Creek on 2/14. **Lawrence's Goldfinches** showed up several times this month, including two flyovers in Davis on 2/7, four in Fair Oaks on 2/13, a male at the Folsom Rodeo Grounds on 2/21, and a flyover at the Orr Ranch at CRP on 2/27. **Red Crossbill**

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Jesse Armstrong Mary Jane Sutliff
Donna Parenti

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 26, 2016 at 7pm. Board meetings are held at the Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room, 601 Munroe St, Sacramento, 95825.

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

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON FUTURE PROGRAMS

May 18 Lou Regenmorter, *Birds
Seen in Saudi Arabia*

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

Mara Weston, Membership Chair, mara_weston@yahoo.com
7708 McClintock Way, Sacramento, CA 95828-4321

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.

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



Observations continued

reports began drying up in Sacramento, with the last report from the Old Cemetery on 2/5 and a report of two flyovers near Sac State on 2/9. Up to 10 **Evening Grosbeaks** continued in north Davis until mid-month. Based on their call-type, they are not birds that summer in the Sierra, but are from farther north.

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. 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:

Ralf Baker, Virginia Bonham, Dan Cook, Lyann Comrack, Lisa Couper, Laura Davis, Lily Douglas, Todd Easterla, Gil Ewing, Claire Gallagher, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, James Holmes, Jeri Langham, Amy McDonald, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Ron Pozzi, Dave Quady, John Robinson, Jim Rowoth, Mark Sawyer, Mary Schiedt, Judy Spitler, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, John Trochet, Amy Welsh, Daniel Welsh, Deb Weston, and Mara Weston.

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

Chris Conard

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.

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White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Send all copy to the Editor. Observations must reach the Seasonal Observations Editor by the 8th of the month.

The Observer is published monthly January through December, except June and August, by the Sacramento Audubon Society.

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

April 21, 2016

Ed Harper: *Alaska: Birding the 49th State*
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm



Musk Ox
Ed Harper