



The *OBSERVER*

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, April 16

Shepard Garden and Art Center
7pm General Meeting

Exploring the Sierra Nevada as Naturalist and Artist

One of Sacramento Audubon's favorite speakers, John (Jack) Muir Laws, will present an illustrated lecture about the natural history of the Sierra Nevada and the process of creating a field guide. This engaging program will highlight some of the beautiful and amazing species in the Sierra and the relationships between them. Jack will also discuss some of the conservation challenges in the Sierra Nevada and what stewards of nature are doing to confront them.

After getting his Masters in Wildlife Biology at University of Montana, he returned to California Academy of Sciences as the senior environmental educator, then became manager of field studies. Now he is an Associate in their Research Division. Jack is a naturalist, educator, and artist who resides in northern CA. For 6 years he backpacked the Sierra Nevada to research and illustrate "The Laws Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada".

There is also a Bird Drawing Class with Jack during the day on the 16th at Effie Yeaw. See page 6 for more information.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Art Center in McKinley Park. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions.

Lea Landry, Program Chair

SMART GARDENING - SAVING MONEY AND SAVING BIRDS

Sacramento Audubon Society and the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society invite you to a special Smart Gardening Presentation.

Smart Plant Choices: covering invasives to exotics to native plants. Less water, less maintenance, but more bird habitat. A 45 minute Smart Garden presentation by Julie Serences.

Learn how to make smart plant choices for your backyard garden—become a “backyard habitat manager”! English Ivy, Pampasgrass, some Brooms, Tree of Heaven... Did you know that these and other familiar plants pose a growing threat to native wildlife? Invasives are a growing problem—especially along our waterways. The increase of invasive and exotic plants has recently been linked to the decline of songbirds.

Learn more about these and other plants that nurseries typically sell for the home gardens and how you can save money while helping to create urban backyard habitat.

Presentations will be given at the following locations:

For Location Info check <http://www.saclibrary.org/?pageId=2>

Saturday, April 4, 10am, Fair Oaks Library and 1pm, Franklin Library

Monday, April 13, 6pm, Belle Cooledge Library

Tuesday, April 14, 6pm, Elk Grove Library

Wednesday, April 15, 6:30pm, Arcade Library

Saturday, April 18, 11am, North Natomas and 1pm, Colonial Heights Library

Thursday, April 23, 6pm, Central Library

Sunday, April 26, 2pm, Earth Day Wildflower Wonders,

Southside Park, T St and 8th

Monday, April 27, 6:30pm, South Natomas Library

Saturday, May 2, Soil Born Farms, Rancho Cordova, for details go to <http://www.soilborn.org/events.html>

For more information contact: Sacramento Audubon Society at education@sacramentoaudubon.org, 548-0618

EDUCATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

Our remarkably industrious Education Chairperson, Julie Serences, was honored at the March meeting with an award plaque stating, “The Sacramento Audubon Society extends sincere and grateful appreciation to Julie Serences for her exemplary service and dedication to providing quality environmental education opportunities for SAS members and school age children of the Sacramento region. Thank you, Julie!” Along with the framed award Julie was presented with a \$50 gift certificate for Wild Birds Unlimited.

Field Trip Findings

Effie Yeaw Nature Center (3/15) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “On this damp, gray morning a varied group of birders, ranging from beginners to very experienced, walked the trails of the nature center and over to the picnic area of the golf course. Capitalizing on the previous day’s ARNHA “Bird and Breakfast” fundraiser, we refound nests of Anna’s Hummingbirds, Hutton’s Vireo, Red-shouldered Hawk, Yellow-billed Magpie and Bushtits. House Wrens, California Towhees and Spotted Towhees were singing, and an Oak Titmouse was coming and going from a hollow tree. The ubiquitous Turkeys put on quite a display as well. Mark Martucci found our two best birds, a singing Varied Thrush and a Red-breasted Sapsucker.”

ARNHA Bird and Breakfast (3/14) — A Canada Goose driving off an Osprey? Jack Hiehle reported it happened at this American River Natural History Association fundraiser at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Jack, coordinator of the bird walks for the event, said his group watched as an Osprey caught a 12-15 inch fish, started to fly off, and dropped the fish on a gravel bar occupied by three geese. When the Osprey tried to retrieve the fish, one of the geese stormed over and forced the big raptor to take flight without its catch. “That was the darnedest thing,” Jack said. “Canada Geese just don’t do that!”

Eight Sacramento Audubon volunteers led 75 participants through the nature area and recorded a better-than-average total of 57 species. A Merlin was a highlight and one Hutton’s Vireo and two Anna’s Hummingbird nests were found, with a partially-built Bushtit nest.

Riverbend Park (3/10) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Early on a cold morning Carey Johnson joined me for a walk through the oak woodland to the river. We spotted a Sharp-shinned Hawk puffed up against the cold, and Carey pointed

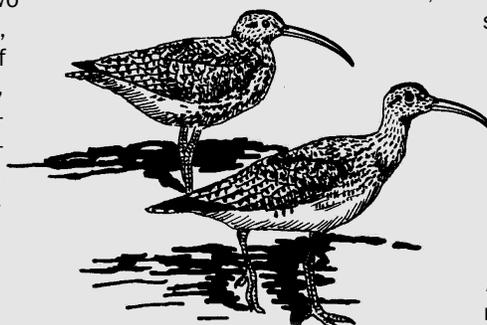
out the early Dutchman’s Pipevine blossoms. We flushed a Great Horned Owl and a Red-shouldered Hawk checking out a nest, and spotted a couple of Anna’s Hummingbirds on nests. Carey found a pair of Wood Ducks on the river and we ended the trip with a total of 43 species.”

Upper Lake Natoma and Folsom Lake (3/8) — Leader Chris Conard reported: “It was a beautiful day with a large turnout, 25 people. Highlights included singing Varied Thrush, with only fair views of one bird, and several singing Orange-crowned Warblers near the Rodeo Grounds and upper Lake Natoma. At Folsom Lake, we had two Common Loons, a small group of Horned Grebes, with one molting into breeding plumage, a very cooperative male Phainopepla, close views of Rock Wrens, and a last-minute arrival of two Rufous-crowned Sparrows among the rocks at the parking lot when the group was departing. The lake had a lot more water than it did during the Folsom CBC.”

Bushy Lake (3/7) — Leader Dan Brown reported: “Fifteen participants tallied 58 species on a very nice, sunny morning. We had great scope views of White-tailed Kite, Spotted Towhee, Cooper’s Hawk and Lincoln’s Sparrow. Other sightings were Wood Duck, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Western Bluebird and Orange-crowned Warbler.”

Yolo Wildlife Area (3/4) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “Four participants enjoyed a break in the rains by

beginning the tour with a gull watch of the Yolo County Landfill from Road 28H. Among the thousands of gulls, we saw at least two adult Glaucous Gulls. This was a treat for us as we don’t see this species very often. After getting excellent scope views of the Glaucous Gulls and a Great Horned Owl sitting on a nest with her mate nearby, we headed to the Yolo Bypass at the Auto Loop. Since there was a lot of water, the birds had dispersed throughout the wildlife area. We did, however, see a good variety of birds. Highlights included American Avocets in breeding plumage, a very large flock of Long-billed Dowitchers with a few Dunlins, several American Bitterns, Blue-winged Teals, many singing Marsh Wrens, a lone Great Horned Owl sitting in a bare tree at the entrance to Parking Lot C, and another Great Horned Owl sitting on a nest in a cottonwood tree near the pump station. A good morning with no rain.”



Stephen D’Amato

Shollenberger Park and Petaluma Adobe State Park

(3/1) — Rained out.

President’s Day Weekend (2/14-16) — Dan Brown, co-leader with Joe Ceriani, reported: “Ten participants had a great trip to Arcata and Crescent City for Presidents Day weekend. The main highlight was the fine weather after we got past the snow from Ukiah north on highway 101 (Friday night only). We tallied 133 species including Red-necked Grebe, Harlequin Duck, Rock Sandpiper, Black Scoter, Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Rusty Blackbird, Glaucous Gull and Black-legged Kittiwake.”

Pete Hayes

EARTH DAY

Sacramento’s Earth Day Wildflower Wonders is being held Sunday, April 26, from 11am to 6pm at Southside Park (T Street between 6th and 8th Streets) There will be a wildflower and plant exhibit plus a native plant sale with plant experts to answer your questions about good plants for habitat. At 11am there will be someone speaking on Gardening with Natives and at 3pm on Birds of Our Region. For more information or to volunteer, please email Chris: lewisc916@yahoo.com

THE ANNUAL MAY BOOK SALE

Our May 21st General Meeting will begin early with our annual Book Sale. Please go through your bookshelves and consider donating items to the sale. Anything with a natural history theme is welcome, including of course, birding books, CDs, and videos. Look for information in future issues of *The Observer* about where to bring your books prior to the sale. Hopefully John Gin will volunteer again to price the books for us. This is a great fundraiser for SAS and lots of fun as there are always great finds and bargains. See you there!

Field Trips



Kirsten Munson

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com, for trips through April 14. For trips from April 18 through May 17, call the scheduler Carla Barbaro, 486-1198, cbarbaro@comcast.net. Consider car pooling 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.

Friday, April 3, 8am – noon

Bannister Park

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Explore another beautiful area along the American River with Jack. As always, you can share in his knowledge of the natural history of the parkway. Meet Jack in the parking lot at the end of Bannister Road, south off Fair Oaks Blvd, west of Sunrise Blvd.

Saturday, April 4, 8am

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area and Davis Wetlands

Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com

Depending on the extent of the flooded fields, there may be good numbers of shorebirds, Black-necked Stilts and American Avocets. Tri-colored and Yellow-headed Blackbirds are also a good possibility, as are Marsh Wrens and Common Yellowthroats. 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.

Sunday, April 5, 7:30am

Mather Field Park

Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
wayne.blunk@worldnet.att.net

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

Thursday, April 9, 8am – 12pm

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area

Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
Ishim2000@comcast.net

Meet Marlene in the first parking lot on your left as you enter the Wildlife area. Depending on the extent of the flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds, American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts. Tri-colored and Yellow-headed Blackbirds are also possible. 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. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them.

Saturday, April 11, 7:30am

Lake Solano/Putah Creek

Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
rey_ality@hotmail.com

Dan will be looking for spring migrants and resident birds along Putah Creek and Solano Lake. Phainopepla, Hairy Woodpecker and Pileated Woodpecker are also possible. There is a \$5 parking fee at Lake Solano. Meet Dan 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, on the north side of the freeway. This trip will last into mid afternoon, so bring a lunch and liquids.

Sunday April 12, 8am

Sailor Bar, American River Parkway

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

Join Mark for a morning walk checking out the resident birds, and looking for early nesters and migrants. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee. Meet Mark at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. This is a good trip for beginning birders.

Tuesday, April 14, 9am – noon

Phoenix Field

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack at Phoenix Field (Jim David Park) for a walk around the beautiful vernal pools. This trip will feature rare plants and spring blooms in the vernal pools. Jack will lend his expertise in identifying these unusual plants. Phoenix Field is located on Sunset Blvd just east of Hazel Ave. Don't forget your binoculars to view the resident birds.

Saturday, April 18, 7am

Clarksburg area/A Yolo Audubon Trip

Leader: Sami LaRocca

(530) 908-0288

sami182@wavecable.com

Come explore the southeastern end of Yolo County, along the Sacramento River and Elk Sough in early spring. The town and environs of Clarksburg should be a great place to find spring migrants. We will ride and walk with the intention of covering a large portion of this agricultural community, including the adjacent Sacramento River and Elk Slough. Some of the birds we'll be searching for will be warblers, grosbeaks, various flycatchers and Swainson's Hawks. I'll meet you in Clarksburg at the Marina at 7am. Travel south from Sacramento on I-5 to the Freeport exit to Highway 160,

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

go south and cross the Freeport Bridge. Go south on South River Road to Clarksburg. Bring binoculars, scope, water and food. This could go until early afternoon. If you have never been there, you'll also find a thriving wine industry to enjoy after birding.

**Sunday April 19th, 7am SHARP
Beek's Bight, Folsom Lake
Leader Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net**

Come celebrate spring! We will be looking for nesting hummingbirds, gnatcatchers, Lazuli Buntings, California Thrashers, Rufous-crowned Sparrows, and may find Yellow-breasted Chats. Wear sturdy boots or shoes for this 2-3 mile hike. Meet Tim in the shopping center parking lot next to the AM/PM on Douglas Blvd, just east of the intersection with Folsom-Auburn Road. The trip will continue into early afternoon so bring lunch and drinks. There is an entrance fee to Folsom Lake.

**Saturday, April 25, 7:30am
Sweetwater Creek
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com**

At this favorite spring hotspot you should find wild flowers in bloom and the song of the Yellow-breasted Chat. Richard will scout for Lazuli Buntings, Wrentits, California Thrashers, hummingbirds, and colorful migrating songbirds. Meet Richard at the Bella Bru 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.

**Sunday, April 26, 7am – 11:30am
Spring Migration at the Bufferlands
Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942
conardc@gmail.com**

This morning tour of the Bufferlands will focus on finding migrant songbirds, resident breeders, and lingering winter residents. The heron, egret and cormorant rookery will be in full swing, and if water levels are right, we could have excellent shorebirding conditions. The Sac Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands contain 2,650 acres of wetlands, riparian forest, grasslands, vernal pools, and restored habitats. From Sacramento, take I-5 south. Exit at Meadowview/Pocket Rd (just south of Florin Rd) and turn left (east) over the freeway. Turn right (south) on Freeport

Blvd (the third light). After one mile, just before the town of Freeport, turn left on Stonecrest and follow it over the freeway and south to a locked gate. Be prepared for potentially muddy trails and up to 3 miles of walking.

**Saturday, May 2, 7am
Auburn State Recreation area/
Drivers Flat and Ruck-a-Chucky
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
Shopp01@earthlink.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 Rd Park and Ride in Loomis off I-80 at 7am.

**Sunday, May 3, 7am
Sand Creek Road Ridge
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Dan Brown, 362-2458
naturestoc@aol.com**

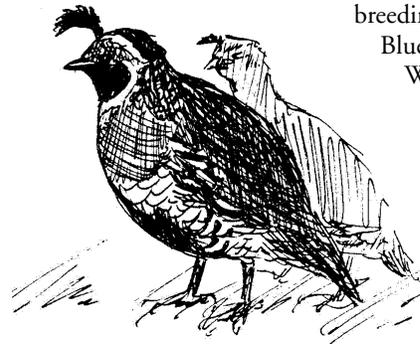
Sand Creek Rd is out of Arbuckle, off I-5 North about an hour drive from the meeting place. We will be looking for Black-chinned and Sage Sparrows, Wrentits, Mountain Quail, Roadrunners and migrating birds. The road could be muddy if it has been raining, then 4-wheel drive vehicles will be necessary. Bring lunch and FRS Radios, we will return mid-afternoon. Meeting place is the Woodland Jack in the Box. Take I-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.

**Tuesday, May 5, 8am – noon
Sailor Bar Area
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Meet Jack at the end of Emperor Street to explore the plants, birds and animals of this riparian corridor along the American River Parkway. From Winding Way, turn south on Kenneth, then east on Emperor Street to the end.

**Thursday, May 7, 7am
Sand Creek and County Road 41
A Yolo Audubon trip
Leader: Sami LaRocca
(530) 908-0288
sami182@wavecable.com**

For this trip we'll go north to Colusa County on I-5 to Arbuckle. Proceeding west we'll begin our trip on Sand Creek Road. At this time of year there will be breeding birds such as Western Bluebird, Bullock's Oriole and Western Kingbird. In the dry creek bed can be found Greater Roadrunner and Lesser Nighthawk. Other birds that are found in this chaparral habitat are California Thrasher, Downy Woodpecker and Lawrence's Goldfinch. In addition we may see both Blue and Black-headed Grosbeak. Meet at the Marketplace Shopping Center (near Big 5 Sporting Goods, 1301 W. Covell in Davis, just east of Hwy 113) at 7am. We'll plan on getting back to Davis about 2:30. All levels of birders are welcome. Bring water, snacks/lunch and binoculars.



Kirsten Munson

**Saturday, May 9th, 7:30am
Spenceville Wildlife Area
Leader: Richard Barbieri: 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com**

This scenic recreational area of rolling hillsides, streams, reservoirs and ponds offers a variety of wildlife. This trip will include several short hikes over uneven terrain. Possible birds include Yellow-breasted Chat, Lewis's Woodpecker, rails, warblers, and more. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and dress for changeable weather. Meet Richard at the Brookfield's Restaurant parking lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfield's is behind Shell.

Sunday, May 10, 7:30am
Riverbend Park on Mother's Day
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie in the first parking lot on your right, just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk through the oak woodland, looking for wrens, nuthatches and other small birds with young, also nesting Red-shouldered Hawks and possibly some other birds still in nests. We should also find some spring wildflowers and Pipevine Swallowtail butterflies. This is a good trip for beginners, and will end before noon. From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field Road, take Rod Beaudry Drive north into the park, (formerly called Goethe Park). There is a \$5 per car park entrance fee.

Saturday May 16, 7am
**San Mateo County Coast/
Half Moon Bay**
Leader: Dan Williams, (714) 943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Join Dan as he explores the coast just south of San Francisco. McNee Ranch State Park near the town of Pacifica is known for its spectacular sea views and vibrant spring wildflower displays. From there we will continue south to Half Moon Bay and bird Princeton Harbor and Pilarcitos Creek. Birds we hope to see include California Thrasher, Hermit and Townsend's Warblers, Surfbird, Snowy Plover, Red Knot and much more (all in brilliant breeding plumage)! Bring a lunch to enjoy in the fresh sea air, and meet 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, on the north side of the freeway.

Sunday, May 17, 7:30am
Sacramento Bar
American River Parkway
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Mark will lead you on a morning walk long the American River Parkway. You will see a nice variety of resident and summer nesting birds. From Hwy 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd, turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd, and take the first left on Pennsylvania. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee.

CREEK WEEK FIELD TRIPS, SPONSORED BY THE SACRAMENTO AREA CREEKS COUNCIL

MATHER VERNAL POOL FLOWER WALKS

Sundays, April 12, 19 and 26th, at 10am and 1pm
Reservations required: 737-WILD (9453)

Join the Mather vernal pool docents of the Sacramento Chapter of the California Native Plant Society for a 2 hour tour to explore this magic carpet of flowers. These unique wildflowers bloom only for a brief period in the spring. Meet at the Splash Center at 4426 Excelsior Road, Mather, CA 95855. For more information and to sign up, call 737-9453. Reservations are required. The tour is provided free of charge by trained CNPS docents; however, donations are greatly appreciated.

Saturday, April 18th, 1:30pm to 3:30pm
Bufferlands Birds and Blooms Tour

The Fishhead Lake mitigation wetland is a nice example of wetlands created as mitigation for earlier wetland losses. The wetland has both a permanent and seasonal component as well as a surrounding upland buffer. Thousands of waterfowl winter at the wetland and many remain year-round to nest and raise young. Much of the area is planted to native wildflowers that bloom in early spring. California poppies, lupines, owl's clover, baby blue-eyes, and many others can be seen spreading about the uplands and wetland edges. Visitors will receive a packet of native flower seeds to start their own native garden. The meeting location is weather-dependant, so please contact Roger Jones at 875-9174 or email jonesro@sacsewer.com the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions

Wednesday, April 22nd, 12 noon to 2pm
Local Fish and Fauna

What lurks in the murky depths of Sacramento's urban creeks? Join SRCSD Bufferlands staff for an introduction to the local fish fauna. Bufferlands staff will demonstrate fish sampling techniques in a local lake, practice hands-on (for those who aren't too squeamish) fish identification, and discuss the natural history of California's diverse fish communities. In addition, we will be able to view one of the direct consumers of the local fish populations as we spy on a large heron and egret rookery. This tour includes a short, 1/2 mile walk and an opportunity to see some of the Bufferlands riparian and wetland habitat restoration projects. The meeting location is weather-dependant, so please contact Steve Scott at 875-9307 or email scottss@sacsewer.com the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

Wednesday, April 22nd, 6:30pm
Steelhead Creek Beaver Pond Walk

Early evening is the best time to see beaver activity and lots of other local wildlife. Take a stroll with Mary Tappel through Wolfe Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary. Meet at the Ueda Parkway Staging area parking lot on Elkhorn Blvd and Sorento Rd east of Steelhead Creek. Call 925-1933 or email marye.tappel@jps.net before April 22nd for further information or directions. No need to sign up in advance. NOTE: this event will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain.

Saturday, April 25th, Noon - 2pm
Clean Up Celebration

Be sure to stop by the Sacramento Audubon Outreach table at the Creek Week Clean Up Celebration, held from 12 noon until 2pm at American River College, 4700 College Oak Drive, Sacramento. We'll be in the grassy area south of the stadium.

2009 Sacramento Purple Martin Project Starts Up

Purple Martins are making their way back to Sacramento, with first arrivals in mid-March. SAS encourages its members to consider volunteering or making a special donation to assist in efforts to protect and enhance this local species of special concern.

Sacramento's Purple Martins are the last remnant of the Central Valley population. In 2008, the California Department of Fish and Game designated the Purple Martin a Species of Special Concern: "Following the arrival and increase of the European Starling, [Purple Martins] were extirpated in this region, except in the city of Sacramento, where they have persisted by nesting in hollow-box bridges." CDFG further notes that recent declines in the City's remnant populations (which have largely been spurred by redevelopment and maintenance projects that fail to adequately protect the species) "has raised renewed concerns for these urban colonies."

The Sacramento Purple Martin core volunteers (Dan Airola, Dan Kopp, Stan Kostka, and Kevin Thomas) are gearing up to continue this year's research and conservation efforts. Team leader Dan Airola explains, "Our efforts have become ever more urgent. The city's nesting population has declined by 52% over the last 4 years to a mere 83 pairs. Stabilizing and increasing this remnant population is a high conservation priority, since it is the seed stock for any future recovery in the Valley."

In February, the SAS Board of Directors allocated a \$2,000 grant to assist the Purple Martin

team's efforts. But substantial volunteer and financial support is still needed.

In 2009, Dan and his team will census all nesting colonies in the city and continue their studies of reproduction and survival to better understand causes for their decline. They will also continue operating a nest box program in the Yolo Bypass that was initiated last year with SAS' assistance; making nest site modifications to reduce nestling fallout; and commenting on proposed redevelopment and maintenance projects that fail to adequately protect the city's remnant colonies. USFWS has provided partial funding to develop a statewide survey methodology, but other promised funding to actually conduct the survey has fallen through. Nevertheless, the Purple Martin team will initiate a pilot project in 2009 to test its methods and acquire initial results that may encourage agency support for more complete, statewide surveys in 2010.

SAS member donations for the Purple Martins will be used to help ensure that all key aspects of the program continue in 2009. There are many volunteer opportunities available, as well, to help the Purple Martin team conduct monitoring, build nest boxes, develop a web site, etc. Please consider making a donation or volunteering to support SAS' and the Purple Martin team's important efforts to protect Sacramento's very own species of special concern.

For volunteer information, please contact Dan Airola, 916-454-3073, d.airola@sbcglobal.net.

Donations can be sent to:
Sacramento Audubon Society, P.O. Box 160694,
Sacramento, CA 95816-0694.

Please write "Purple Martin Project" on your check.



WHAT AN OPPORTUNITY!

Our April speaker, Jack Laws, is a renowned artist, scientist, and inspirational teacher. This drawing class will be a once in a lifetime experience!

The class is being held at Effie Yeaw and they are handling registration details. The cost is \$125 for ARNHA and Sacramento Audubon members and \$135 for non-members. Pre-registration is required and a materials list will be provided. Effie Yeaw is in Ancil Hoffman Park, Tarshes Drive and California Ave in Carmichael. The number for more information and registration is 489-4918.

April 16
9am - 4pm

This hands-on
workshop
teaches you
how to
capture the
shape and

proportion of land birds in a quick sketch and then fill in details with an improved understanding of bird anatomy. Wildlife artist John Muir "Jack" Laws will include proportion basics, drawing wings, and feather tricks.

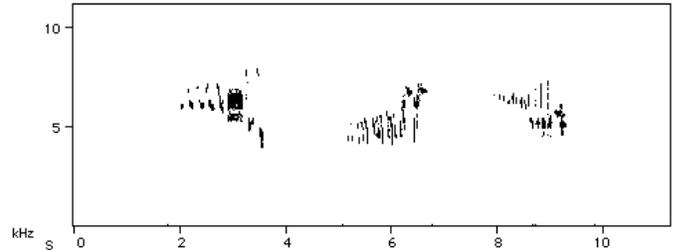


CORNELL LAB OF ORNITHOLOGY SOUND RECORDING WORKSHOP

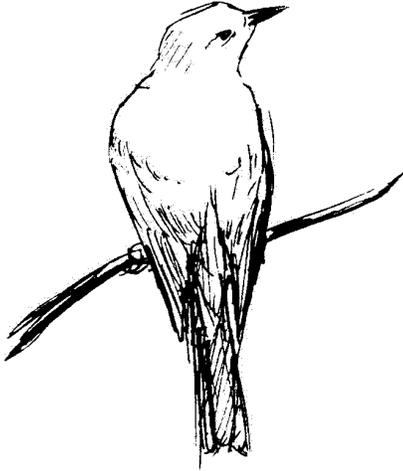
Have you ever wished you could bottle the incredible wave of bird song that arrives with spring? You can! Learn how and benefit science in the process at the annual Sound Recording Workshop offered by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The next session takes place June 6-13 at San Francisco State University's Sierra Nevada Field Campus in spectacular natural surroundings. Students often return multiple times to get attuned to the rhythms of nature. The Sound Recording Workshop is taught by skilled recordists on the Lab's Macaulay Library staff. "This workshop is appropriate for all who have an interest in recording wildlife sounds," says instructor and audio curator Greg Budney. "Whether you are a seasoned researcher or someone who's never recorded a bird before, we'll guide you through the process."

Through daily field recording sessions, lectures, and demonstrations, participants learn how to get the most out of their field recording equipment and take advantage of every recording opportunity. They also receive an introduction to sound analysis software that converts sound waves into visual images so they can "see" a bird's song, note by note.

To register by April 10, contact: Nancy Schrempf at (607) 254-2153 or ns29@cornell.edu



Townsend's Warbler Sonogram



Kirsten Munson

NOMINATIONS FOR SAS BOARD FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2008/2009

Nomination Committee Chair Tim Fitzer announced the following slate of officers for the 2009-10 fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2009. The slate will be presented for a vote at the April general meeting. There will be an opportunity for nominations from the floor prior to voting. All nominations must have the concurrence of the nominee

President: Keith Wagner
Vice President: Ken Hashagen
Treasurer: Cathie LaZier
Corresponding Secretary: Joanne Vinton
Recording Secretary: Jan Tankersley
Directors:
Tim Fitzer
Roy Greenaway
Lea Landry
Darryl Moore
Julie Serences

AUDUBON CALIFORNIA CALL FOR SURVEY VOLUNTEERS

As part of Audubon California's Migratory Bird Partnership we are compiling baseline bird data for Roosevelt Ranch (a large restored wetland in Yolo County your members may be familiar with). Last year we began these surveys with considerable help from the Yolo chapter, and we need to continue so that changes in the bird community can be documented as the habitats mature. This site is also going to serve as an important comparison to surveys of other wetlands and agricultural fields in the region that we are working on. All of these data are then going to help us plan and document the benefits of our larger conservation efforts in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys.

I thought I would see if anyone from your chapter would be interested in participating. The surveys will consist of weekly or twice monthly surveys from April 1 through June 30. Frequency and timing are subject to change, and will depend on the total number and availability of volunteers. If anyone would like more detail we are happy to provide it at the phone and email listed below. Rodd Kelsey is working on the schedule and protocols.

Thank you,

Jordan Wellwood, Central Valley/Sierra Nevada Conservation Coordinator
Audubon California
916.649.7600 ext. 106 - office
jwellwood@audubon.org

CHRIS CONARD'S ALASKAN TRIP PHOTOS

As speaker Chris Conard mentioned at the end of his presentation at the March meeting, photos from his trip to Alaska can be found on his Flickr site. The address is www.flickr.com/photos/conardc/ You'll find other photos too. Chris and his wife Kimya know how to travel and find a few birds along the way! Chris's email is conardc@gmail.com if you'd like further information.

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.

Birding and Nature Festivals

GODWIT DAYS IN ARCATA COMING SOON!

The 14th annual Godwit Days spring migration bird festival is being held April 16–22. Godwit Days is a spring migration bird festival celebrating the Marbled Godwit and all the birds of the coastal redwoods, bays, marshes, and mudflats of California's Redwood Coast. Choose from nearly 100 field trips, lectures, workshops, and boat excursions. Pre- and post-festival trips are available for an extended stay and opportunity to explore all the birds of the North Coast and Klamath Bioregion. For further information and registration visit www.godwitdays.com or call 1-800-908-WING. The event schedule is available online.

HERON FESTIVAL AND WILDFLOWER BRUNCH

Held in Kelseyville, CA on April 25 and 26, the Heron Festival is a celebration of the Great Blue Herons return to their nesting sites around Clear Lake. The festival, created by the local Redbud Audubon Society, includes activities such as pontoon boat rides to view the heronry and guided kayak trips to view birds on Kelsey Creek. Informative and interesting nature presentations are held at Clear Lake State Park along with informative booths, children's activities, and a Wildflower Brunch. Guided bird walks are available. More information, including event information, schedule and registration, can be found at www.heronfestival.org or call 800.525.3743

KERN RIVER VALLEY SPRING NATURE FESTIVAL

The 15th Annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival exhibits and activities will take place the weekend of May 2-3, 2009. Bob Barnes' Kern River Valley Birding will again handle the field trips from April 29th through May 5th. The Kern River Valley is one of nature's most diverse homes: 350 bird species (over 200 nesting species!). Spring bird migration creates an exciting time for birders visiting the Kern Valley Spring Nature Festival. The last five festivals have averaged 233 bird species!

Saturday and Sunday, Audubon-California's Kern River Preserve in Weldon, hosts numerous free events including bird walks led by Kerncrest Audubon Society volunteers, bird banding with the Southern Sierra Research Station, and information booths and exhibits located in the large, shaded front yard of Preserve Headquarters. For further information including activities, trip descriptions, accommodations, and a list of the birds seen last year visit <http://kern.audubon.org/bioregion.htm>.

SPRING WINGS BIRD FESTIVAL

The twelfth Annual Spring Wings Bird Festival takes place in Fallon, NV and coincides with International Migratory Bird Day and the height of spring migration in the Lahontan Valley wetlands. This year's festival is May 8-10. These internationally recognized wetlands are temporary home to over 260 species of birds, including thousands of White-faced ibis, Long-billed dowitcher, American white pelicans, Black-necked stilts, American avocets, and many other waterfowl and shorebirds. During the 2008 festival, 147 different species were logged- not quite the festival record of 2007 but still a good number of species! More information can be found at www.springwings.org, so save this date.

RETURN OF THE SWAINSON'S HAWK EVENT

April 11, 2009 at 9am

Sutter's Landing Park, 20 28th Street, Sacramento

Co-Sponsors: Friends of the Swainson's Hawk, Friends of the River Bank, and Save the American River Association

Presentation: California Raptor Center presentation on Swainson's Hawk with live Swainson's Hawk.

Refreshments and information booths. Guided walk on the American River Parkway. Event suitable for the whole family. RSVP to 447-4956.

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.

Friends of the Swainson's Hawk
swainsonshawk@sbcglobal.net

Volunteers Needed

Graphic arts skills? Occasionally, we need help designing fliers for SAS events/workshops. It makes such a difference in the success of events, if we have an attractive flier to distribute! Don't be shy—anything you come up with will be a vast improvement to our current design process.

Meet and greet: Our Audubon at Home workshop events are always looking for SAS folks to help with set up and greeting folks. No great skills are needed, just a friendly attitude and a desire to support our Educational efforts. See the article about Smart Plant Choices Workshops for times and places. This is a great way to show your support for these programs and help SAS reach new folks in the community.

Presenters: Right now we are limited in our outreach to school because we don't have presenters! We are always looking for folks that might like to present in school or classroom settings. We have a Birds of Sacramento power point presentation ready to go and will provide training for interested people. It is so rewarding to see kids light up when learning about birds they see everyday.

If you are interested in helping out or have some ideas about our education program that you would like to discuss please contact Julie Serences at education@sacramentoaudubon.org.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Judith Cohen	Keri Miner
Richard DeVol	Jean Neill
Gina Dupell	Bob and Becky
Marlene M Egeland	Norris
Patrick K Fitzgerald	S Woody Wray
Warren L Hageman	

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 held on April 28, at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Jon Beck and Judith Tracy to the **General Fund**.

Karen Burke, Robert Burns, Bob & Becky Norris, Judith Tracy and Kirstie Wilson to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Sara Gillespie to **Bobelaine**.

Julie Serences made a donation to the **Program Fund**.

A generous donation to the **General Fund** was made by the River Valley Garden Club of Rancho Murieta, as thanks for a specially scheduled field trip to the Yolo Bypass led by Marlene Ishihara.

Robert and Anne Meagher, Ken Mateik and Karla Meadows to the **Purple Martin Project**.

PLEASE, WHEN YOU MOVE!

Sacramento Audubon spends over \$50 annually to resend *The Observer* to members who have not shared their address changes with us. We'd rather spend that money on activities which enhance our enjoyment of wildlife. In my 3 year tenure, only 2 members have sent me their changes of address. Thanks so much.

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

Your membership supports the SAS mission of conservation, environmental education and protection of the region's natural ecosystems and diverse wildlife populations. Please include your email address if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List for letter/email writing on conservation issues.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

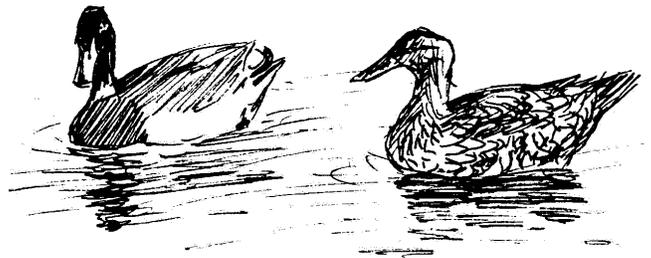
Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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



Kirsten Munson

Observations continued from page 10

though **240 Common Ravens** reported along a two-mile stretch of County Line Rd (Yolo/Colusa) is amazing. The report of a **Western Kingbird** at Stone Lakes NWR on the 1/3 Rio Cosumnes CBC was omitted from last month's column. This species is perhaps less expected than a **Tropical Kingbird** in winter (that is certainly the case along the coast), but this year there were local reports in November (Lodi) and December (south of Davis).

Beginning with January 2009, we are now featuring photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recentsightings.html).

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit www.cvbirds.org and click "Listserv" for details. With nearly 100 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want to thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Steve Abbott, Roger Adamson, Dan Brown, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Steve Hampton, Jim Holmes, Jeri Langham, Ed Pandolfino, Vance Russell, John Sterling, John Trochet, and Dan Williams.

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

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

February 1 to February 28
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

During an otherwise slow month, the gull spectacle at the Davis Landfill and the Davis Wastewater Treatment Plant far exceeded any past reports. Thousands of gulls feed at the landfill and loaf on the treatment plant levees, and reports of three state review species brought out even reluctant gull watchers. Photos and documentation of **Slaty-backed, Lesser Black-backed, and Iceland Gulls** should be submitted to the California Bird Records Committee (californiabirds.org).

Topping the list was an adult **Slaty-backed Gull** found on 2/27, which continued through at least 3/7. Only since 2005 has this Asian species been on the official state list, and most records have been from Half Moon Bay. 1998 reports from Davis and Folsom Lake may be revisited now that this species is known to occur here. A very pale first-winter bird thought by many to be an **Iceland Gull** (possibly of the nominate race *glaucoides*) was found on 2/12 through at least 2/15. There were several apparent **Kumlien's Iceland Gulls** also reported during the month (this subspecies is less distinctive, and there is controversy surrounding Kumlien's/Thayer's Gull taxonomy). An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found on 2/12 through 2/17, with a second-winter bird reported on 2/27, continuing into March, and another adult was found on 2/28. There had been no previous records for this species in Yolo County. It must be

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mentioned that these highlight gulls were all found by Todd Easterla. Locally impressive were up to four **Glaucous Gulls** and three **Western Gulls** among the multitudes at this site.

Aside from the gulls, this month produced much needed rain, but fewer bird reports than usual. Interesting finds include a **Long-eared Owl** at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 2/7, perhaps the same bird that was found on 1/1, and a **Chipping Sparrow** at Discovery Park on 2/24. A **Common Poorwill** was reported in a barn near Winters on 2/26. This species is rarely reported in winter, and can go into a hibernation-like state for weeks at a time. **White-throated Sparrows** were reported regularly at CRP and near the Gristmill access of the American River Parkway. It is widely understood that raven numbers are increasing,



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Observations continued on page 9

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

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