



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, April 18, 2013
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room
7pm

Sacramento Audubon Society at Sea Pelagic Birds

Linda Pittman

Pelagic birding, offshore on a boat, is very different from land birding and affords an opportunity to see species that are unlikely to be seen from shore. Sacramento Audubon Society offers two trips annually: the Farallon Islands in the Gulf of the



Tufted Puffin
Linda Pittman

Farallones National Marine Sanctuary in July and Monterey Bay in late September/early October. Linda Pittman will give a presentation on the pelagic birds seen on the two sponsored pelagic field trips and some found elsewhere off the west coast.

The primary target bird for the Farallon Islands trip in July is the Tufted Puffin but you never know what will show up. In 2008, a juvenile Brown Booby was observed on one of the islands! In 2012, a Northern Gannett was seen regularly on Southeast

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FAMILY FRIENDLY TRIPS A BIG SUCCESS!

Two recent trips for families with children who are interested in birds and birding were very successful. In January, Ed Pandolfino, a well known local birder and co-author of the soon-to-be-available book entitled *Birds of the Sierra Nevada: Their Natural History, Status, and Distribution*, led a well attended field trip to the Yolo Wildlife Area. About 50 species were seen by the 15 attendees on a cold but clear day, including ducks, geese, shorebirds and raptors, with several huge clouds of snow geese rising and falling against the blue sky. Long, close looks at a snoozing Great Horned Owl were particularly intriguing for the kids.

A second great trip was led by John York, Sandra Beseler and Wendy Money in a late afternoon search for owls in the rural area north of downtown Sacramento. On this February trip, the 16 adults and kids who joined them were treated to looks at Short-eared Owls, Great Horned Owls and Barn Owls, more than meeting everyone's expectations. Other birds were seen as well including Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks and many Snow Geese overhead.

Trips such as these have much value by supporting children who are interested in birds and whose interest may continue into adulthood. Other birders interested in leading trips for families are encouraged to contact Maureen Geiger at mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net or 916-444-0804.

Farallon Islands Boat Trip

SAVE THIS DATE! SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2013

Sacramento Audubon Society is sponsoring our annual pelagic trip off the coast of San Francisco to the Farallon Islands. This will be the 23rd year SAS has sponsored this trip, and every year is different! We'll travel out the Golden Gate and cruise around Southeast Farallon Island, one of San Francisco's "desert islands" and part of the Gulf of the Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

This a great trip to see new birds to add to your life list. We'll have several experts on board to help spot and identify birds. We should see many species that are usually only seen offshore or as a tiny speck in your scope from the shore! Highlights from previous trips include Tufted Puffin, Cassin's and Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemot, Black-Footed Albatross, Brown Booby, Sooty Shearwater, three species of cormorants, and Northern Fulmar. What will we see this year? Join us and discover for yourself!

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

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

Field Trip Findings

Cosumnes River Preserve (3/10) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Thirteen birders saw or heard 72 species of birds on a very clear and calm day. Highlights included Merlin, American Bittern, Sora, Virginia Rail, Ring-necked Duck, Wilson’s Snipe and White-faced Ibis.”

Lake Solano/Putah Creek (3/9) — Leader Tim Fitzer reported: “It was a nice day until the north wind began to blow. Highlights were Hooded Mergansers, Ring-necked Ducks, Osprey, Golden Eagle, Purple Finches, Brown Creepers, Phainopeplas, Red-naped Sapsucker and all the fun that 30 participants enjoyed. Too bad about the north wind, which can make the birds lie low.”

Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach, American River Parkway (3/5) — Leader Sally Walters reported: Six people and I took a meandering walk out to the river and along the riparian areas nearby. Rosalind Becker and I got a look at a Yellow-shafted ‘type’ flicker but did not note head color or markings to determine if it was an intergrade. We got a great look at a male Northern Harrier and a Herring Gull eating a dead Sacramento Sucker (fish I.D.’d by a fisherman). It was a perfect morning with a slight chill. There were abundant Tree Swallows, with at least one paired at a nest cavity. A total of 38 species were observed. Complete list on eBird.”

Highway 37 and Ellis Creek, Petaluma (3/3) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Thirteen birders saw 84 species of birds on a very windy day in the Petaluma area. Highlights included Townsend’s Warbler, Pine Siskin, Brown Creeper, Allen’s Hummingbird, Black-bellied Plover, Peregrine Falcon, Bonaparte’s Gull and Tricolored Blackbird.”

Laguna Creek Wetlands, Elk Grove (3/2) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “The Laguna walk included 15 observers who saw about 40 species on a warm, sunny morning. One particularly nice sighting was, Common Gallinules and Cinnamon Teal just a few feet away, which we spied shielded by trees and bushes. There were many birds already in or moving into breeding plumage, including Great

and Snowy Egrets and Double-crested Cormorants; other great species were the Red-shouldered Hawks, a Cooper’s Hawk swooping close by; Common Mergansers, Western Bluebirds, and a truly unbelievable number of Mockingbirds.”

William Pond Park (2/28) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Six people joined me for this spring walk. We began with a pair of nesting Red-shouldered Hawks, then saw a Cooper’s Hawk investigating a nest, and near the end of the trip we had a pair of nesting White-tailed Kites. We also saw a Red-tailed Hawk, and Sally Walters spotted a Swainson’s Hawk. Crows and Tree Swallows exhibited nesting behavior and a Great Egret had joined the Great Blue Herons in the rookery. Winter birds still with us were Common Goldeneye, Yellow-rumped Warblers, crowned sparrows and juncos. We totaled 46 species for the morning.”

Sandhill Cranes and other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley; Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored Trips (2/23-24) — Coordinator Mike Savino reported: “Our last tours of the crane season ended in spectacular fashion with beautiful sunsets and lots of cranes. The flocks of cranes seemed larger than usual for this late in the season, perhaps because they were starting to stage in preparation for their departure. On Saturday, Feb 23, Mary Reilly and Sean Wirth took about 30 people to the Woodbridge area, but there were almost no cranes visible, except at a long distance and the flooded field where they had been roosting had dried up. While we almost never do this, they decided to leave and drive to Staten Island. Running from area to area to try to find cranes flying in at sunset is usually a good way to tempt fate. This time, however, that decision was rewarded with some of the best fly-in numbers of the season. Tina Suarez-Murias and I joined Sean the next day when they went directly to Staten after the usual intro talk

at the Visitor Center of the Cosumnes River Preserve. Again we had about 30 guests. Large numbers of cranes flew in at sunset to roost for the night. On both evenings the total numbers were about 1,500. The roost site was a bit unusual. The cranes chose to roost in the north-east area, rather than the usual southwest corner. Both days, the group ranged from avid bird-watchers to novice learners, including children. Many remarked how fascinating it was to join the tour and how thankful they were.”

Northern San Joaquin County (2/24) — Leader Linda Pittman reported: “A group of six birders started off on a frosty morning at Mokelumne Day Use Area and Fish Hatchery after viewing a Lewis’s Woodpecker and Phainopepla on the way in on McIntire Road. Despite the chill, we enjoyed 51 species at the day use area including Common Mergansers, Great Blue Herons in the rookery tree, courting Red-shouldered Hawks, Hutton’s Vireos, and a very cooperative Brown Creeper. On nearby Cord Road, we saw several species of ducks, a Burrowing Owl and a Prairie Falcon. The raptor show continued on Waverly Road with four Ferruginous Hawks, a Golden Eagle, an immature Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harrier and American Kestrels. A Rock Wren kept us entertained as it bounced up and down on a bridge railing. We had a great time and tallied 73 species for the day.”



Common Loon
Kirsten Munson

Gray Lodge/Sutter Buttes (2/23) — Leaders Don Schmoldt and Sally Walters reported: “Seven people joined us for a very windy and chilly day of birding. Most were beginning-to-

intermediate birders, so many had exciting new experiences with some of the birds we found. The wind did keep some of the birds down, even the raptors, but all in all it was a great trip. 63 species were observed. Highlights included great

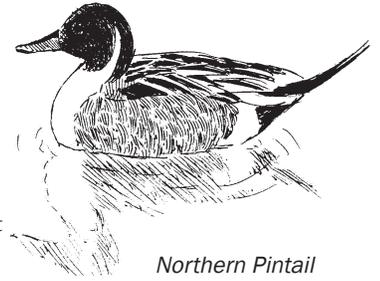
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facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



Field Trips



Northern Pintail
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, contact the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com for trips through April 6. From April 7th on contact the scheduler Carla Barbaro, cbarbaro@comcast.net, 916-707-8808.

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 6, 2013 7am Caswell Memorial State Park Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636 calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Caswell Memorial State Park is on the Stanislaus River, about an hour south of Sacramento. The mature cottonwood riparian and valley oak woodland provides lush cover, nesting and foraging habitat, and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant bird species. For more information about the park, go to www.parks.ca.gov, click on "Find A Park" and use the drop-down menu to find Caswell. Passerines, including several species of swallows, sparrows, woodpeckers and warblers are park specialties in spring and summer, and Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and Great Horned Owls nest here. Swainson's Hawks are also seen regularly here as are California Thrasher and Wrentit.

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

Sunday, April 7, 8am Lincoln in Spring Leader: John York, 409-9276 sunofyork@att.net

Meet in Raley's parking lot in Lincoln, off 65 and Sterling Parkway. I will be in the Sterling Cafe getting breakfast and we will

head off for various areas around Lincoln at 8am. We will hit some of the usual hot-spots, but will also be looking for the influx of spring birds and local nesters that will be arriving around that time. We will explore some grassland areas for local raptors, waders and little guys as well. Bring lunch and scopes if you have them.

Sunday, April 7 Beginning Birding Field Trip for adults William Pond Park Limited to 10 people; registration required

This field trip is for people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. A brief parking lot talk will focus on choice and use of binoculars and a brief overview of birding etiquette and ethics. The field trip will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats and will be led by two or more experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Each trip is limited to 10 participants. Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), giving your name, phone number and email address, or by calling Cathie at (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

Saturday, April 13, 7:30am Buck's Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804 Cell # that morning only: 281-6652 mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Join Maureen for a leisurely walk through this riparian habitat and look for resident

and migrating species such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds, warblers and marsh birds. In this varied habitat, there is always the possibility of unusual finds, and river otters are usually seen. Meet at the southeast corner of the intersection of Silva Valley Parkway and Serrano Parkway. To reach this spot, exit Hwy. 50 at El Dorado Hills Boulevard and turn right. Pass the large Raley's shopping complex and turn right onto Serrano Parkway, then turn right and park on Silva Valley Parkway.

Sunday, April 14, 8am Bushy Lake, Cal Expo Floodplain Leader: Darrell Mohr, 973-9841 mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident species and Wood Ducks are a good possibility on the lake. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. Bring water and sunscreen. This is a great trip for beginners.

Thursday, April 18, 7:30am-noon Beek's Bight, Folsom Lake Leader: Margaret Martin, 599-0181 margaret.martin6@me.com

Meet Margaret at 7:30 at the Raley's shopping center parking lot at the northwest corner of Douglas Blvd. and Auburn-Folsom Road, at the east end of the parking lot near the animal hospital and Goodwill. Auburn-Folsom Road can be very congested on weekday mornings, so it's best to either allow extra time, or connect with Douglas Blvd further west. We will carpool from there to the Granite Bay section of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area, as the

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

entrance fee is \$12 per car. We will probably make a couple of birding stops inside the park on our way to Beek's Bight. A variety of warblers, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Lazuli Bunting, California Thrasher, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Rock Wren, Wrentit, and Phainopepla are all possibilities. Please be prepared for 1-2 miles of walking, and bring snacks and water. This is a great trip for beginners.

Saturday, April 20, 7am - noon

Pine Hill Preserve Birding

Leader: Chris Conard

Pre-registration is required through Pine Hill Preserve

**Contact Julie Wynia jwynia@blm.gov
www.pinehillpreserve.org**

The preserve was established to protect rare native plants in El Dorado County that occur only on gabbro soils. It stretches from Folsom Lake in the north to Hwy 50 in the south and contains more than 4,000 acres. We plan to visit newly acquired land in Kanaka Valley, with a mix of oak woodland and chaparral. 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.

Saturday, April 20

Family Friendly trip (registration required)

West Sacramento

Leader: Ann Burris

These trips are designed for children accompanied by an adult, to explore natural habitats. To ensure the best experience for participants, space is limited. Contact Maureen Geiger at mkggeiger@sbcglobal.net or 444-0804 for reservations.

Sunday, April 21, 7am

North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve

**Leader: Linda Pittman, 715-1876
pittmani@frontiernet.net**

North Table Mountain is an elevated basalt mesa north of Oroville that was formed by ancient lava flows. Now a 3,300 acre reserve, this area is best known for spectacular spring wildflowers, waterfalls, and vernal pools. We will bird the edges of the oak and gray pine habitats as well as the wildflower areas while enjoying great views. Be prepared for 4 to 5 miles of moderate walking over volcanic rocky terrain (mostly without

trails) and with a number of creek crossings. Wear layers as the weather can change quickly on the mesa. Bring lunch, snacks, plenty of water, hat and sunscreen. This trip will be cancelled if raining and/or strong winds. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking lot. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. This trip will last into the afternoon.

Tuesday, April 23, 8-11am

Estates Drive, American River Parkway

**Leader: John Huls, 485-2789
johnhuls@sbcglobal.net**

Join John for a leisurely birding/botanizing walk along the north shore of the American River, exploring this lush riparian habitat. This is Arbor Day week and some of the cottonwoods and oaks here are magnificent. This is a good trip for beginning birders and botanists. From Watt Avenue take American River Drive east to Estates Drive. Go south on Estates until it dead ends at the levee.

Saturday, April 27, 8am till noon

**Shadow Glen/
Snowberry Creek**

**Leader: Lea Landry,
638-1141**

llandry46@earthlink.net

This morning walk will include riparian habitat, ridge trails and a good view of Lake Natoma. Lea will be looking for both woodland birds and waterfowl. There may be some short steep climbs on the trail, and if the rains come it may be muddy, so wear appropriate footwear. Bring liquids and snacks if you wish. Lea usually finds a nice variety of birds on this trip, which is suitable for both beginning and experienced birders. Meet Lea in the parking lot of the Snowberry Creek Equestrian Staging area, (Shadow Glen Stables), about ¼ mile east on Main, from where Main and Sunset Avenues meet in Orangevale.

Saturday April 27th, 8am

Reichmuth Park

Leaders: Don Schmoldt and Sally Walters

739-6465, dschmoldt25@gmail.com

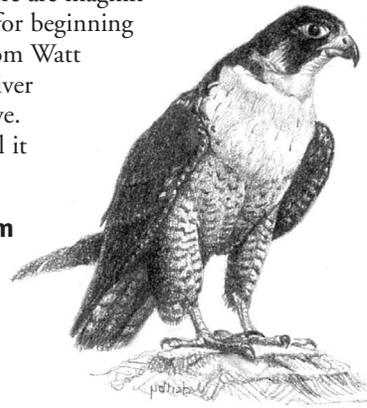
Join Don and Sally on a half day trip birding this hot spot for migratory land birds in the Sacramento area. Meet at 8am at the Reichmuth Park parking lot on Gloria Drive. Directions: On southbound I-5, drive 3.6 miles south of I-50 and exit at 43rd Ave. Turn left and continue to Gloria Drive. Turn right onto Gloria and shortly the parking lot will be on the left. If coming up I-5 from the south, there is no 43rd Ave exit, so exit onto Florin Road, head west and turn right on Greenhaven Dr. and turn right onto Gloria Drive. Bring water and spotting scope if you have one. This could be an exciting day if the migrants are hopping.

Sunday, April 28, 7:30am

Sweetwater Creek

**Leader: Richard Barbieri, 761-1124
offleash56@yahoo.com**

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



Peregrine Falcon
Daniel Kilby

Saturday, May 4,

7am-11:30am

**Spring Migration
at the Bufferlands**

**Leader: Chris Conard, 203-1610
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 Reg. 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 Freepoint Blvd (the third light). After one mile, just before the town of Freepoint, turn left on

Stonecrest and follow it over the freeway and south to a locked gate (there is scheduled road construction at Stonecrest, but we have been assured that the road will be open: if a sign says "Authorized Vehicles Only," you may proceed). Be prepared for three miles of walking.

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

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

Tuesday, May 7, 8am – 11am
Manfred Kusch's Putah Creek Property
Yolo Co. west of Davis
Leader: Sally Walters, 739-6465

You've read his reports on CVBirds; here's a chance to explore this bird oasis and popular research site. Join Manfred in his 21 acre bird garden along Putah Creek.

TRIP LIMITED TO 10 PEOPLE. To register and get meeting time and place, email dschmoldt25@gmail.com SUBJECT: Kusch

RETURN OF THE SWAINSON'S HAWK EVENT

On **April 13th**, beginning at 9am at Sutter's Landing Park there will be a presentation on Swainson's Hawk with live Swainson's Hawks present. The presentation is given by the California Raptor Center and starts at 9am sharp. The event is free and there are information booths. This is an event for the whole family and there will be guided nature walks on the American River Parkway to see Swainson's in the wild and a Swainson's Hawk pair at a nesting site.

Sutter's Landing is at 20 28th Street, Sacramento (28th and C Streets, next to skate board park) The event is hosted by Friends of the Swainson's Hawk and co-sponsored by Sacramento Audubon Society, Friends of the River Bank, and Save the American River Association.

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

Property. Be sure to put your name and phone number in the message.

Saturday, May 11, 7am
Point Reyes National Seashore
Leader: John York, 409-9276
sunofyork@att.net

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, May 12, 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 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.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2013

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sunday, April 7

Each Trip: Limited to 10 **adult** participants

Registration required.

This is the last of these trips for the season; they will resume in October. Meanwhile, check out our other field trips; many are also excellent for beginners.

These outings are geared toward people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders.

The 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. An optional brief session at a picnic table afterwards will cover field guides, smart phone applications and optical equipment.

Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number, email address and the field trip date of your choice, or by calling Cathie at (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

NEW FAMILY FRIENDLY TRIP SCHEDULED FOR APRIL!

Ann Burris knows West Sacramento well and will be leading a trip for families with children to several of her favorite spots on Saturday, April 20. Space is limited; contact Maureen Geiger at mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net or 444-0804 for reservations.



American Goldfinch
Kirsten Munson

WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS CONFERENCE

Start planning now. The thirty-eighth Annual Meeting of Western Field Ornithologists will take place at **Olympia, Washington, August 22-25, 2013**. More details will be posted as they become available. Registration will open in early May. For details and the conference flyer go to www.westernfieldornithologists.org and click on the 'Annual Conference' banner in the middle of the page.

General Meeting

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Farallon Island although not on the field trip. Despite being very susceptible to motion sickness, Linda has enjoyed pelagic trips from several different ports along the coast of California. In addition to sharing photos of species likely to be found on the Sacramento Audubon Society sponsored pelagic trips, Linda will also discuss what to wear, tips to avoid sea sickness, and preparation to get the most enjoyment out of a pelagic trip.

A second generation native of Pasadena and California, Linda grew up in southern California, camping, hiking and fishing and exploring the outdoors on foot and later on the back of a horse or mule. She has traveled extensively throughout the state and continues to explore new places, including the coastal waters. Linda retired from Sacramento County in January 2010 and essentially became a full-time birder. She is also an amateur photographer and competed with several others on the Yahoo group listserv, Calbirds, to see who could photograph the most species of birds in California in 2010. Linda is a Sacramento Audubon Society board member and the pelagic trip coordinator for the annual Farallon Islands field trip.

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, Program Chair

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY NOMINATIONS FOR 2013-2014

The Sacramento Audubon Board recommends the following slate of officers for the 2013/14 fiscal year. The slate will be announced at the April general meeting; other nominations may be made from the floor. A vote will be held at the May general meeting.

President	Linda Pittman
Vice President	Subhash Chand
Treasurer	Cathie LaZier
Recording Secretary	Keith Wagner
Corresponding Secretary	Karen Zumwalt
Directors	Tim Fitzer
	Gary Fregein
	Darrell Mohr
	Margaret Martin
	Jonilynn Okano

Don Schmoltdt will be Past-President, a board non-elective position.

Sacramento Events

SACRAMENTO EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Learn, Commit, Act, Sunday, April 21, 11am to 4pm, at Southside Park

The 7th Annual Earth Day Celebration will be filled with diverse business, non-profit, cultural and government vendors with practical information, goods and services for saving money, living healthier, and protecting the environment. There will also be great entertainment, activities and cuisine! A crowd of more than 4,000 is expected. Learn how to be a better steward of the planet, commit to living sustainably, and act to reduce our impact on the environment. Don't miss the chance to make YOUR sustainable connections at the ECOS Sacramento Earth Day Celebration. More information can be found at www.sacramentoearthday.net

WALK ON THE WILDSIDE!, MAY 18, 10AM-4PM

Join the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) Bufferlands and the Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge for a Walk on the Wildside, 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 tours, presentations, live animals, music, 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 restoration projects. Enjoy a unique opportunity to see one of approximately four heron rookeries in Sacramento County on a Bufferlands guided tour. This rookery contains 67 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. For more info contact Kevin Cassady at 875-9196 or cassadyk@sacsewer.com

Farallon Islands Boat Trip Reservation Form

Sunday, July 14, 2013 Registration deadline: June 15, 2013

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

Name _____

Telephone _____ Cell Phone _____

Address (with zip) _____

Email (for confirmation) _____

Number of people _____ Total Payment \$ _____

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Linda Pittman, 9849 Alta Mesa Rd, Wilton, CA 95693

2013 GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT SMASHES RECORDS!

Once again, the GBBC smashed all previous records for participation in this year's 16th Great Backyard Bird Count, which took place February 15-18. This year's GBBC was expanded to include our whole planet earth so there were some extraordinary numbers. Bird watchers world-wide submitted more than 134,935 checklists, reported 3,610 species, and observed more than 34 million birds. 107 countries participated. New checklist records were set in 41 states this year. The United States submitted 119,544 checklists with California submitting the most with 8,809.

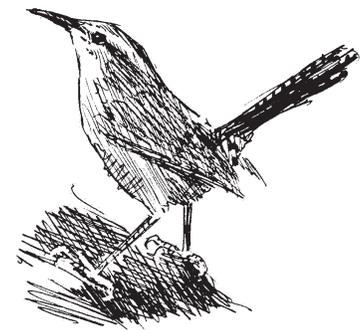
GBBC Summary Report

A detailed summary of some trends noted in this year's GBBC will soon be available on the website at birdsource.org/gbbc/science-stories. Feel free to explore the reports from across the continent or here in Sacramento and California.

Keep Counting Birds

Can't get enough of counting birds? It doesn't have to stop with the GBBC. Consider getting involved in the NestWatch project from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology at birds.cornell.edu/citsci/projects (then click NestWatch on the list of projects.) Participants monitor nests and nest boxes to let scientists know when eggs are laid, when they hatch, and how many chicks fledge. On that same page of Projects there's also eBird for recording birds you've seen and Project FeederWatch for recording your own feeder birds. Some new projects have been added, including Bird Sleuth for middle school kids and Celebrate Urban Birds to promote conservation in cities. Participation is free and it's a great way to connect with nature and contribute to science.

The next GBBC takes place February 14-17, 2014. Save the date now!



Wren species
Kirsten Munson

Findings continued from page 2

views of a Ferruginous Hawk along Pass Road; an immature Golden Eagle along West Butte Road; a distant Bald Eagle at Gray Lodge carrying off a large bird, probably a duck; one "Blue" Snow Goose along the auto tour loop; over 100 Ring-necked Ducks; and really great views of a pair of Wood Ducks at the observation platform at Gray Lodge that allow us to scope them at close range. The only shorebirds observed were one Killdeer and 10 Long-billed Curlews. Our finale was finding a Great Horned Owl in a nest near the entrance to Gray Lodge at sunset, which was really exciting for all."

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (2/19) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: "The threat of heavy rains did not thwart our trip through the auto loop. Highlights included a large flock of American White Pelicans, many American Wigeons, Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, a few Common Goldeneyes, and Tree Swallows. A lone Great Horned Owl was seen perched on one of the leafless trees situated along the southward section of the auto loop. A mammal highlight was a lone River Otter swimming lazily in a pond. It was another satisfying morning of birding through the Bypass."

Presidents Day Weekend, Eureka/Arcata (3/16-18) — The trip was canceled.

Upper Lake Natoma (2/17) — Leader Chris Conard reported: "We had a very

large group of participants (25), but still saw a lot of birds. We started at the Folsom City park near the zoo and walked to the Negro Bar picnic area. Notable bird sightings included Great Blue Herons in a rookery tree below Folsom Prison, an Anna's Hummingbird on a nest, a Red-breasted Sapsucker, three Hutton's Vireos, and good views of a singing Rufous-crowned Sparrow. It was sunny and warm (for the season) and we also saw several Pipevine Swallowtails and three Slender Salamanders."

River Bend Park (2/16) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "Ten people joined me for this walk on an exceedingly spring-like day. We began the morning with good looks at a female Cooper's Hawk. Singing Western Bluebirds, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Nuttall's Woodpeckers and a Lincoln's Sparrow all offered good views as we walked through the oak woodlands. Returning along the river trail we saw Common Goldeneye and Mergansers, Snowy Egrets and the ubiquitous Canada Geese. An interesting call from thick shrubbery made us realize how similar some Oak Titmouse and Bewick's Wren calls are; this one resolved itself as the Bewick's Wren popped up on top. Our total species count of 41 was reported on the Great Backyard Bird Count website."

Pete Hayes

Birding and Nature Events

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 18th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 18-24** 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 271 species of birds have been sighted. This year's keynote speaker will be Dr. Gary Langham, who was named Audubon's Chief Scientist in June, 2011. The selection of over 100 small group field trips, lectures, workshops, boating excursions, and community activities are led by experienced local guides. For further information and registration visit www.godwitdays.com or call 1-800-908-WING.

DON'T MISS THE 4TH ANNUAL POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL!

Save the dates of **April 26-28th** for the Bay Area's best birding and nature extravaganza! Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. The Festival will once again be headquartered in Point Reyes Station and will include field trips in and around the Point Reyes National Seashore. Jeff Gordon, president of the American Birding Association, will deliver the keynote address at the Saturday evening banquet.

For more information, and registration visit www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. All proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

HERON FESTIVAL

Held in Kelseyville, CA on **May 4-5**, the Heron Festival is a celebration of the Great Blue Herons return to their nesting sites around Clear Lake. This year's festival event will be pontoon boat tours visiting the heron rookeries. Each boat will have an experienced Audubon guide to point out the birds being seen on the tours and explain their behaviors. Besides several species of nesting herons and egrets, tour guests are likely to see nesting osprey and cormorants, yellow-headed blackbirds, and Western and Clark's grebes in courtship displays where they "dance" in pairs across the lake surface. More information and registration, can be found at www.heronfestival.org.

TWELFTH ANNUAL MONO BASIN BIRD CHAUTAUQUA

The 12th Annual Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua will take place this year from **June 14-16** so make your plans now to attend. Held every year in the unique Mono Basin, festival headquarters are in Lee Vining, but field trips extend as far south as the White Mountains where bristlecone pines are found. Several surrounding lakes are visited, the ghost town of Bodie and neighboring wetlands, and an owling trip is planned. Besides field trips the festival offers music, art and science exhibits. Registration begins April 15th and more information can be found at birdchautauqua.org. Many field trips fill up quickly, so register as soon as possible.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Chris Conard, Michael Corlew, Bud Getty, Kathryn Griffin, Loraine Holden, Carey Johnson, Carol Livingston, Judy Manhart, Margaret Martin, James Moose and Robert Norris, to the **General Fund**.

Martin Bailey, Carla Barbaro, Chris Conard, Tim Fitzer, Catherine Globus, Carey Johnson, Margaret Martin, James Moose, Gary Sackett, Peter Watkins and Jane Woehl, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

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

THE NEW SPEAKER'S BUREAU ALREADY AT WORK!

The speaker's bureau has been busy and we need more folks to make presentations. **Volunteers needed:** If you would like to help in getting more people enthused about birding by either making presentations or helping schedule presentations to kids or adult groups, please call Subhash Chand at subhashc@aol.com. SAS has presentations available and can provide training in making presentations.

NATURE/BIRDING MAGAZINE EXCHANGE

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

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

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Nathan Carr

Bob Ellis

John Mangels

Susan Marx

Jeff and Colleen Pedroza

YOUR DUES AND DONATIONS AT WORK

The Sacramento Audubon Society Board has voted to make the following donations:

- \$200 to Friends of the Swainson's Hawk, to further their educational work
- \$1000 to the Sierra Club/ECOS litigation fund for the Cordova Hills lawsuit
- \$450 towards travel expenses for a Central Valley Birding Club student scholarship recipient to the Audubon Hog Island Camp in Maine.
- The previous \$500 donation to the Feather River Land Trust was doubled by a matching donor.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON 2013 PROGRAMS

- May 16** Debbie Miller, *Arctic Summer*
September 19 Ed Pandolfino
October 17 Ron LeValley

OBSERVER OUTREACH

Upcoming Outreach events are the **Return of the Swainson's Hawk**, April 13 at Sutter's Landing on the American River, **ECOS Earth Day** April 21 at Southside Park, **Walk On The Wild Side** May 18 at Beach Lake and the **California GreenFair** May 29 on the Capitol Steps. As always, we need more volunteers; in fact, this season we have had to decline invitations for a Sacramento START event at Laguna Creek, an Earth Day celebration at Cosumnes River College, and the Creek Week Clean-up Celebration at Carmichael Park. We do need more volunteers; if you're interested, contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, or 916-457-6882. You do not need to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding, and you would work with an experienced volunteer.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry46@comcast.net

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

Observations continued from page 10

Warbler south of Rio Vista at Sandy Beach Park from 2/22 into March, the continuing **Harris's Sparrow** in N Davis into March, and four **Red Crossbills** at Ancil Hoffman Park on 2/28.

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

Jan Allen, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Gil Ewing, Nancy Gronert, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, Karen Kienitz, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, John Luther, Don Marsh, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Linda Pittman, Jim Rowoth, Dan Sandri, John Sterling, Tim Steurer, John Trochet, Dan Williams, and David Yee.

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.

Seasonal Observations

February 1 to February 28

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

A winter season that began with a very wet December transitioned into the driest January and February on record. Impressive waterfowl reports included at least 30,000 geese at Cosumnes River Preserve. Large numbers of **Greater White-fronted Geese** and, more recently, **Snow Geese** were not regular at this site less than ten years ago. Five **Eurasian Wigeons** were unusual for the lone WTP on 2/17, and one was not too far away along Hwy 104 in Sacramento County, just west of the Amador County line on 2/5. A male **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** was reported at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) on 2/27. More than 200 **Greater Scaup** on the San Joaquin River near Sherman Island on 2/2 are notable because these Delta waters are the only place this species regularly occurs in the Sacramento area. Up to three **Red-breasted Mergansers** were found on Lake Camanche, with the first detected on 2/8; a **Pacific Loon** and at least four **Common Loons** were also found there on 2/8. The continuing **Red-throated Loon** was on Folsom Lake near the Dam through at least 2/3, and the **Pacific Loon** on Lake Natoma continued through at least 2/5.

The first **Swainson's Hawk** reported in the area was near Dixon on 2/13, but sightings did not become regular in the Sacramento area until a month later. Perhaps owing to the dry conditions, there

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11054 Autumnwind Lane
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was a surprising absence of large flocks of **Black-bellied Plovers** this month and last. An adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found at the Woodbridge Rd Crane Reserve on 2/22-24. An adult **Western Gull** was found at Ancil Hoffman Park

along the American River Parkway (ARP) on 2/3-6. This species is regular at Sherman Island, where there were several reports, and somewhat regular at the Yolo Landfill and Davis WTP, where both an adult and a 1st cycle were found sporadically throughout the month. A 1st cycle **Glaucous Gull** was at the YBWA on 2/16, and there were several reports at and around the Davis WTP. A **Common Poorwill** was an interesting winter find along Fremont Mine Rd near Amador City on 2/26. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** found along Hwy 128 from 2/13-20, just east of the Hwy 128 bridge below Monticello Dam, was an exceptionally long-overdue first county record for Yolo.

Among the notable songbird reports was a **Mountain Chickadee** in Sacramento near W and 22nd Streets on 2/12. Other birds of interest include the **Winter Wren** near Lake Solano continuing through at least 2/18, a **Townsend's Solitaire** near the Gristmill Access to the ARP from 2/2-13, the continuing **Sage Thrasher** NE of lone on Tonzi Rd through at least 2/8, a **Palm**

Observations continued on page 9

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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

Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Membership/Subscriptions: Lea Landry, 11054 Autumnwind Lane
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
llandry46@comcast.net

Seasonal Observations: Chris Conard, 2405 Rio Bravo Circle,
Sacramento, CA 95826
203-1610, e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

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

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

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