



# The *OBSE*RVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

## General Meeting

There will be no general meeting for the month of December. Our next meeting will be held January 20 and will feature Dave Feliz. He'll be speaking about the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area and their long term management techniques which will provide for more shorebird habitat in the summer.

Sally Riggs, Program Chair



## Bobelaine Happenings

On October 31st we enjoyed participating in a scheduled walk at the sanctuary led by Carla Barbaro. Eighteen people had an enjoyable walk through part of the sanctuary. The weather was beautiful and sunny with a light breeze. The rains have caused a low growth of new grasses to sprout giving the trails a lush green look. The leaves are falling fast and by the time you read this most of them should be off the trees. This will make bird watching a bit easier and give you a better chance to see our resident Great Horned Owls as well as the other winged inhabitants.

A point of information for those who take children through the sanctuary during the winter. Poison Oak is very prevalent at the edge of the trails. It is very hard to define without it's leaves. If you think you have gotten into it wash your hands in cold water when you return to the parking lot. Then wash with soap and cold water as soon as possible. Poison Oak is one of our prettier plants during the fall when it's leaves turn a bright red before dropping off. Enjoy it at a distance.

Bill Clark, Co-Manager

### Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

As a Chapter of the National Audubon Society, we will focus on conservation and environmental education to ensure that the Sacramento region's natural ecosystems and diverse bird populations are preserved, restored, and made available for study and enjoyment.



Kirsten Munson

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

## Field Trip Findings

### Old Fair Oaks Bridge (11/16)

Jack Hiehle said he has led 28-30 field trips annually in the last 15 years and had never seen a Bald Eagle on the American River Parkway – until this one. His group discovered the adult bird perched in a cottonwood in the Lower Sunrise area. Then it flew off, probably hunting for a spawned-out salmon. Jack reported 45 other species, including Pine Siskin and Lark Sparrow.

### Latrobe, Scott Road, Bass Lake (11/14)

Leader Bruce Swinehart's group of 16 turned up 52 species on a day graced by perfect weather – not too cold, not too sunny and not windy. Standout sightings included a Rough-legged Hawk, Prairie Falcon, about 10 Rock Wrens at one time, and numerous Say's and Black Phoebe.

### Cal Expo Floodplain-Bushy Lake (11/13)

Leader Joe Ceriano's group recorded 55 species, including close looks at Western Bluebirds, Nuttall's Woodpeckers, and a Red-tailed Hawk that circled low.

### Sacramento National Wildlife Area (11-7)

Leader Andi Salmi reported: Our group of around 20 enjoyed viewing flocks of Greater White-fronted, Snow and Ross's Geese, many species of duck including Pintail, American and Eurasian Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Mallard, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal and Bufflehead. Also, a very close fly-by of a Barn Owl and an exciting view of a young Peregrine Falcon flying repeatedly through a flock of ducks. We had a lovely, sunny day.

**Bodega Bay (11/6)** – Highlights were two Hooded Mergansers, two Red-necked Grebes, two Red Knots, eight gull species,

*Findings* continued on page 2

*Findings* continued from page 1

an Elegant Tern and a flock of 85 Surfbirds on the mudflats. Leader Dan Brown said he had never seen so many Surfbirds, especially on the mudflats, and wondered if they were a migrating flock.

**William Pond Area, American River Parkway (11/1)** – Leader Jack Hiehle's trip offered plenty of variety: 47 birds, including a pair of Buffleheads, Fox Sparrow, Western Bluebirds and Wood Ducks; a River Otter, a Pond Turtle, salmon swimming upriver, suckers and Sacramento Pikeminnows (formerly squawfish).

**Bobelaine Sanctuary (10/31)** – Hairy, Downy and Nuttall's Woodpeckers showed off, along with a female Western Tanager, Wrentit, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Western Bluebirds, among others. Leader Carla Barbaro said colors of the sycamores, maples and wild grapes were gorgeous.

**Discovery Park (10/30)** – A pair of Orange-crowned Warblers playing tag above vivid fall colors led a list of 32 species, leader Joe Ceriano, subbing for Maureen Geiger, reported. Ruby-crowned Kinglets were active.

**Golden Gate Park, San Francisco (10/24)** Maureen Geiger, reporting for leader Marilyn Hemmeter: It was a great trip! Seven of us birded the Stowe Lake area of Golden Gate Park and Cliff House and saw about 55 species. Best mammal was a Humpback Whale we watched off and on for about 45 minutes at the Cliff House. Best bird was a Hermit Warbler seen well. Other highlights included a Great Horned Owl, a Mew Gull and lots of Fox Sparrows, Pygmy Nuthatches and Townsend's Warblers.

**Coloma Area (10/23)** – Birders ignored rain sprinkles and recorded White-tailed Kite, Red-shouldered Hawk, and California Quail, among others, at this new area near the South Fork of the American River, leader Valerie Phillips reported.

**Calaveras Big Trees State Park (10-17)** "A small but hardy group walked the north grove in the rain. Birds were few," leader Cathie LaZier reported, "but a Fox Sparrow was picking Yew berries and a very wet accipiter perched high in a conifer. The Dogwood color was splendid. Gary Fregien remarked that the diffuse light brought out more of the color shadings than direct sun. As the rain increased, lunch at a local restaurant replaced the picnic in the meadow, and an early start home allowed a detour on Michigan Bar Road to add a Say's Phoebe and a Lewis's Woodpecker to the day's list."

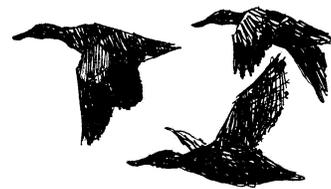
**Pete Hayes**

# Field Trips

## 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/she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, or e-mail [mkgeiger@comcast.net](mailto:mkgeiger@comcast.net), for trips through December 12. For trips after December 12 call the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 961-5871.

Plan to pool cars and share gas expenses with the driver. Walkie-talkies can be helpful on non-local trips. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.



**Kirsten Munson**

### **Wednesday, December 1, 8am-noon Nimbus Fish Hatchery Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Walk with Jack down the American River to look for diving ducks, kingfisher, wintering gulls and other wildlife along the River. Meet in the parking lot of the Fish Hatchery off Hazel Boulevard.

### **Saturday, December 4, Daybreak A.R.N.H.A. (American River) Bird Count Compiler: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack and other volunteers to assist with this annual count of birds and other creatures along the American River Parkway. Results of this count are important to future planning for the Parkway, and the goal is to have 11 teams of two or more persons each. Contact Jack for details, team assignments and meeting and compilation locations.

### **Saturday, December 4, 9am Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River Leader: Frank Gray, 966-3708 e-mail: [Fgray4birds@aol.com](mailto:Fgray4birds@aol.com)**

Join Frank for a short walk near the fish hatchery. Gull identification will be the main emphasis. We will be exploring fine ID points and seasonal abundance of several species of gulls of this area. Other birds will be noted, as well as natural history elements of interest. Frank will bring a scope but additional scopes are welcome, as are beginning and experienced birders. Wear boots or other footwear suitable for walking on dirt trails. "Pouring" rain cancels. Meet at the entrance to the Nimbus Hatchery parking lot near Highway 50 and



**Daniel Kilby**

Hazel (about 15 miles east of Sacramento). The trip will last until late morning.

### **Sunday, December 5 Sonoma/Marin Counties 7am @ West Capitol Park and Ride or 9am at Shollenberger Park Leader: Ron Storey, 707/762-5276 e-mail: [ronstorey@ronstorey.com](mailto:ronstorey@ronstorey.com) Co-Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804 e-mail [mkgeiger@comcast.net](mailto:mkgeiger@comcast.net)**

Meet Maureen at the Park and Ride at West Capitol exit off Hwy. 80, at 7am for optional car pooling and maps, or meet Ron at Shollenberger Park in Petaluma at 9am.

Ron knows these North Bay areas well and will stop first at Shollenberger Park in search of Blue-Wing Teal, Sora, Virginia Rails and American Bitterns. Peregrine Falcons and Golden Eagles have also been seen. Later Ron will visit Las Gallinas sewer ponds in San Rafael. Tufted Duck, Eurasian Widgeon, Palm Warbler and other rarities have been found. Bring lunch and liquids. Directions to Schollenberger Park can be found at [www.petalumawetlandspark.org](http://www.petalumawetlandspark.org) To see pictures of Northern California birds, visit Ron's website at [www.ronstorey.com](http://www.ronstorey.com).

### **Tuesday, December 7 8am-noon Sailor Bar Area American River Parkway Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack in exploring the plants, birds and animals of this riparian corridor along the River. Jack will share his broad expertise of the usual wintering residents of this area. From Winding Way turn south on Kenneth, then east on Emperor Street to the end.

**Saturday, December 11, 8am-noon**  
**Sun City, Lincoln**  
**Leader: Dave Pearson, 408-4273**  
**e-mail: captaindavid@2xtreme.net**

Dave knows this area well and will explore the ponds and other nearby sites for ducks, shorebirds, sparrows and raptors. Take Hwy 65 north, turn right on Twelve Bridges Drive, then left on East Lincoln. Turn right on Del Webb Blvd., and follow to the Meridians Restaurant parking lot. Meet Dave there at 8:00 or call him if you want to have breakfast at the restaurant first. This trip will end late morning.

**Sunday, December 12, 8am**  
**Lincoln Grasslands**  
**Leader: Tim Fitzer, 961-5871**  
**e-mail: spskua@aol.com**

Meet Tim across from 535 Fulton Ave., for optional carpooling to this Placer County location. The group is sure to see wintering hawks near the north end of Watt Ave. and then look for winter rarities that flock with Horned Larks and sparrows in the Brewer Road area. Birding and lunch at the Chamberlain Cemetery will be followed by more birding along the rural roads on the way to Camp Far West Reservoir. This trip will last until mid-afternoon.

## CHRISTMAS COUNT DATES

Please call Tim Fitzer, 961-5871, or refer to the November Observer for information on dates and contact numbers for additional Christmas counts, including:

**Saturday, Dec. 18**  
Woodfords and Auburn

**Sunday, Dec. 19**  
Stockton, and Putah Creek

**Sunday, Dec. 26,** Sacramento

**Monday, Dec. 27,** Napa/Solano

**Wednesday, Dec. 29,** Lincoln

**Saturday, January 1, 7:30 am**  
**Bobelaine Sanctuary Walk**  
**Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146**  
**E-mail: razorbill35@comcast.net**

Join Brian for a New Year's Day stroll through the riparian woods. There are many birds and mammals and Brian knows just where to find them. Take I-5 north to Hwy 99 towards Yuba City. Two miles after it crosses the Feather River, turn right on Laurel Ave., follow it to the end, and meet in the parking lot. Bring some holiday leftovers for a lunch after the walk.

**Sunday, January 2**  
**Folsom Christmas Count**  
**Compiler : Chris Conard, 362-5942**  
**E-mail : chris.conard@comcast.net**

This is a local count, lots of fun , and we always need your help, at any level of experience; it's a good way to learn. Call Chris and join the count.

**Monday, January 3, 8am to 12pm**  
**Goethe Park**  
**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack for a morning walk through this beautiful park along the American River. Meet Jack at the end of Arden Way on the north side of the river and we will walk across the bridge into Goethe Park.

**Tuesday, January 4,**  
**Rio Cosumnes Count**  
**Complier: Andy Engilis,**  
**530/752-0364**  
**E-mail aenglisjr@ucdavis.ed**

**Saturday, January 8, 7am**  
**Post Christmas Count**  
**Coastal Birding Trip**  
**Leaders: Chris Conard & Kimya Lambert, 362-5942**  
**chris.conard@comcast.net**

This trip could be to Pt. Reyes, Bodega Bay or both. Chris and Kimya will be looking for the rare and vagrant birds seen on various coastal Christmas Counts. Be ready for a faster paced trip for the more experienced birder. We will meet at the park and ride on the left hand side of the West Capitol Blvd. exit just before the causeway on I-80 west. Bring lunch, liquids and warm clothes and be prepared for a full day. If you have personal band radios they are great for keeping in contact with the group.

**Sunday, January 9, 7:30am**  
**Salt Springs Valley**  
**Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 961-5871**  
**spskua@aol.com**  
**Vicki Boffin, 505-1156**

This area is located in western Calaveras County about an 1 1/2 hour drive from Sacramento. The open valley and its lake is home to many wintering ducks, hawks, eagles, owls and grassland birds. This is a unique area you will not want to miss. The trip will last into the afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. We will meet at the park and ride on the east side of Hwy 99 at the Sheldon Rd. exit. Call for an alternate meeting place. Bring scopes and personal band radios.

**Friday, January 14, 7am**  
**Pt. Reyes Mammal Trip**  
**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Gray Whales, Elephant Seals, Tule Elk and Axis Deer will be the focus of Jack's trip. He will of course not ignore birds, but they will be a sidelight of the trip. Bring lunch, liquids and warm clothes as the trip will last into the afternoon. Meet Jack across the street from the where the 535 Bistro once stood on Fulton Ave, between Munroe Ave. and Fair Oaks Blvd.

**Saturday, January 15, 7:30am**  
**Gray Lodge State Wildlife Area**  
**Leader: Cliff Hawley, 300-2495**  
**yellowhammer74@yahoo.com**

Cliff is the Sacramento Christmas Count Complier and an enthusiastic and excellent birder who knows the area like the back of his hand. He will take you to Gray Lodge, one of the state's prime wintering areas for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge he will take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes. This area is great for raptors and grassland birds. Bring a lunch, liquids and warm clothing. Meet in the park and ride just west of Hwy 99 on Elkhorn Blvd. Bring scopes and personal band radios.

**Sunday, January 16, 8am**  
**Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 961-5871**  
**spskua@aol.com**  
**Vicki Boffin, 505-1156**

Sacramento Refuge is home to thousands of wintering ducks and geese which attract Peregrine Falcons! There is a 3.7 mile route with a high viewing platform that offers great looks at the many species of waterfowl. On our return we will take County Rd. 16 through open raptor country, which can be spectacular. We hope to see



Daniel Kilby

Hungarian  
Kuvar sheep  
guard dogs  
on our way  
to Zamora.  
This  
trip will  
last into

mid-afternoon, so bring lunch, liquids and a warm jacket. We will meet at the Jack in the Box parking lot just off I-5 North, exit Rd. 102 on your right, as you approach Woodland. Personal band radios are a great way to keep in communications with each other, so bring them along; scopes are helpful too.

# Seasonal Observations

October 1 to October 31  
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports  
783-2331

While last month was characterized by excellent fall migrants, this October featured an influx of semi-irruptive montane birds and scattered reports of unexpected migrants. For the first time since the fall of 2000, **Pine Siskins** were widely distributed in small numbers throughout the area. In the last two years they have been particularly difficult to find. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** continued in impressive numbers through the first half of the month, but then reports tapered off dramatically. A **Steller's Jay** was found near Winters in Yolo County on 10/27. Two **Steller's Jays** were reported at the Howard Ranch on 10/31, along with six **Band-tailed Pigeons**, two **Bald Eagles**, and four **Common Ravens**.

Vagrant songbirds included a **Blackpoll Warbler** found at the Pedrick Rd. Bridge on both the Yolo and Solano County sides of Putah Creek on 10/1 and 10/2. The **Chestnut-sided Warbler** found on 9/28 at the Gristmill Access to the American River Parkway (ARP) continued through 10/2. A first-year male **Vermilion Flycatcher** was a long-hoped-for first at the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 10/11. On 10/30, a **Palm Warbler** was reported at the north end of Vail Rd. in San Joaquin County. On the same day, just to the south at Staten Island, single **Chestnut-sided** and **Lapland Longspurs** were reported-the former, a first for the county.

What was certainly the same **Common Black-Hawk** that was present from 2/24 to 3/12 returned to Lake Lincoln in north Stockton on 10/1. After a month and a half without another solid report, it was seen by many on 11/17. This is the first record for Northern California. A **Common Tern** was

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seen and photographed at the Woodland Wastewater Treatment Plant on 10/6. Three **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were reported from the same location on 10/8. Two **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were also present at the Lodi Sewage Ponds throughout the month. On 10/24, a **Marbled Godwit** and three **Greater Scaup** were reported from the Davis Wetlands. A **Least Bittern** was reported from CRP on 10/9.

Other interesting birds include a **Common Grackle** at the Hwy 80 rest area near Vallejo on 10/10, a **Sage Thrasher** at Rancho Seco

Park from 10/9 to at least 10/13, and a male **Costa's Hummingbird** at a feeder in Citrus Heights on 10/11. At the Gristmill Access to ARP, a **Hammond's Flycatcher** was found on 10/13, a **Lawrence's Goldfinch** was found on 10/14, and a **Merlin** was found on 10/15. Over 100 **Violet-green Swallows** were seen at Upper Sunrise on 10/20, and a **White-throated Sparrow** was seen at Sailor Bar on 10/29. A dark **Merlin** was regularly reported from north Davis. The **Brown Pelican**, first found on 7/19 at Stone Lakes NWR, continued through at least 10/14. A **Dark-eyed Junco** that was either a **Pink-sided Junco**, or a hybrid with that race, was reported from CRP on 10/28. Finally, there were two **mountain lion** reports this month-one from North Davis Farms on 10/6, and another along Hwy 16 in Colusa County just north of the Yolo line.

Thanks to the following for their reports:

Roger Adamson, Jennifer Albright, Dan Brown, Daryl Coldren, Bruce Deuel, Todd Easterla, Mike Eaton, Andrew Englis, Mike Feighner, Jim Gain, Maureen Geiger, Brian Gilmore, Helen Green, Richard Hall, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Waldo Holt, Marcel Holyoak, Mary James, Dave Johnson, Alison Kent, Jeri Langham, Stephen Long, Ron Melcer, Martin Meyers, Kurt Mize, Scott Morrical, Michael Perrone, Terry Ronneberg, Jim Rowth, Kathryn Sanderson, John Sterling, Vi Strain, Craig Swolgaard, Matt Tarlach, John Trochet, Sally Walters, Liz West, Neil Whiting, and Margaret Williams.

Chris Conard

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