



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, January 16, 2014
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

There is no general meeting in December but we look forward to January's meeting on the 16th. Happy holidays and see you next year.

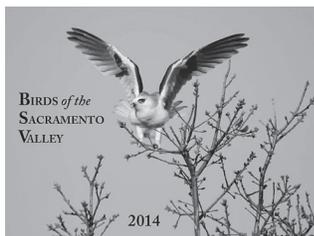
Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Carmichael. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions. To keep up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

Sally Walters, Program Chair

GET YOUR 2014 SAS CALENDAR TODAY!

Great stocking stuffer for friends and family. Support SAS! Only \$10 at events or online for \$12.50 at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/calendarorder.html. Some local Wild Bird stores and booksellers such as Avid Reader are also carrying it.

Look for the calendar now and please don't limit yourself to just one. Help support our programs!



White-tailed Kite
Cover Photo by Dan Brown

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2013-2014

Saturday, December 7, Daybreak, ARNHA Wildlife Count

Compiler: Bill Avery, 369-0750, 769-3357, e-mail: averyw@csus.edu
Annual census of birds and other wildlife on the American River Parkway.
See further details in write up on page 6.

Saturday, December 14, Woodfords Christmas Count

Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net
Compiler: Andi Salmi, 691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Sunday, December 22, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422, e-mail: mcudney@aol.com

Sunday, December 29, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610, e-mail: conardc@gmail.com

Saturday, January 11, 2014, 3rd Annual Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

CORRECTED DATE: Saturday, 9am-noon, January 11, 2014

Compiler: Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277
Contact: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Other Christmas Bird Counts:

Saturday, December 14, Auburn Christmas Count

Compiler: Deren Ross, (530) 885-9740, derenross@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, December 15, Stockton Christmas Count

Compiler: Jim Rowoth, (209) 956-2648, rowoth@sbcglobal.net

Monday, December 16, Benicia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island) 870 5207, spskua2@comcast.net

Compiler: Robin Leong, (707) 643-1287, robin_leong@netzero.net

Monday, December 30, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, ERPfromCA@aol.com

Wednesday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

Compiler: Murray Berner, (707) 224-5897, vireocity@hotmail.com

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit <http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm>.

Field Trip Findings

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge (11/10) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Fourteen birders saw 63 species of birds on a perfect 75 degree day with no wind. Highlights included 1000’s of Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese, a few Ross’s Geese, two Great Horned Owls, three Eurasian Wigeon, Cackling Geese, Eared Grebe, Long-billed Curlew and 45 Black-crowned Night-Herons.”

Bushy Lake (11/9) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: “A beautiful morning for birding. Ten of us started off seeing a Sharp-Shinned Hawk sitting on the fence opposite the parking area and it didn’t fly until we were within 20 feet. Everyone was able to observe the bird up close. As we progressed towards Bushy Lake we encountered flocks of White-crowned and Golden-crowned sparrows. There were a few Wood Ducks on the water. On our return along the road a Great Horned Owl was spotted in a tree near the edge of the lake.”

Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk and Woodbridge Road (11/6) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Seventeen people joined me for this trip to the Cosumnes River Preserve and Woodbridge Road. Many were beginning birders, and fortunately many were seasoned birders who generously shared their spotting scopes and knowledge. Ann Burris spotted a Wilson’s Snipe at the beginning of the trip and a Loggerhead Shrike at the end of the trip. In between we focused on the many duck species, comparing size, bill and head shape, and feeding methods. Sandhill Cranes were abundant, and we had good scope views of young cranes, without the red head and white cheeks of the adults. A striped skunk near the boardwalk was a surprise, and we gave it a wide berth. We totaled 45 bird species for the morning.”

BKS Preserve, Sacramento County (11/3) — Leader Frank Gray reported: “Eight participants had a great morning at this preserve, owned and operated by the Natomas Basin Conservancy. This was not strictly a birding trip. It included discussions of on-site mitigation activities for the Giant Garter Snake, Swainson’s Hawk, and other species affected by development in the Natomas Basin. We were fortunate to have had Conservancy employee Jeremy Lor with us, as well as the other participants. Bird highlights included Wilson’s Snipe, large numbers

of Black-crowned Night Herons, and great looks at a Great Horned Owl. We later watched an assortment of shorebird species at off-site flooded fields. Although the day grew increasingly windy, all participants had a great time.”

Mather Lake (11/2) — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: “It was a perfect morning for seven dedicated birders to enjoy sighting 41 species. Highlights were a Sora, Western Grebe, Green Heron, Savannah Sparrows and an Acorn Woodpecker. There was a total of 8 Mute Swans, likely two families that occupied the lake this summer.”

Colusa National Wildlife Area (10/28) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Ten of us enjoyed the sights and sounds of this beautiful National Wildlife Refuge on a gorgeous fall day. While not all of the migratory waterfowl species have arrived, those present were represented in large numbers, including many Greater White-fronted Geese and Northern Pintail. The highlight experience for our group was very good scope views of three Great Horned Owls and a fly-by of a fourth. Overall, we found 55 species of birds and three mule deer.”

Spenceville Wildlife Area (10/27) — Leader Mark Martucci, subbing for Richard Barbieri, reported: “Seven birders saw 40 species of birds on a very warm, late October day. Highlights included Say’s Phoebe, Western Bluebird, Western Grebe, Lark Sparrow, Cooper’s Hawk and at least a dozen Lewis’s Woodpeckers.”

Beginning Birder Trip (10/27) — Cathie Lazier reported: “Six beginning birders joined Mary Beth Metcalf, Darrell Mohr and me for a walk in the cool autumn morning. We worked on separating out the crowned sparrows and sorting out the various egrets, herons and cormorants at the pond. A cooperative Red-shouldered Hawk gave good scope views and an active Osprey was flying overhead and calling. We totaled 35 species for the morning and hope to see several of the new birders on future field trips.”

Northern Saw-whet Owl Mist Netting and Banding near Chico (10/26) — Leader Linda Pittman reported: “A small group of nine joined Dawn Garcia and her volunteer crew (Jo, Sheila, Reina and Tyler) at Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve near Chico for a Northern Saw-whet Owl (NSWO) survey and banding. It was a perfect pre-Halloween evening

outing: a little chill in the air, bats flying out at dusk, a visit to the old cemetery, owls calling and mountain lion stories in the dark. We birded a bit in the area while the mist nets were set up, seeing Western Bluebirds, California Quail, Spotted Towhees, Banded Pigeons, Acorn Woodpeckers and many Golden-crowned Sparrows. As the sun set, a Northern Pygmy-Owl called nearby.

At dark, we split into two alternating groups for the runs to check the nets with one group going to the nets via a path downhill past tombstones, partially buried bones and things making random scary noises in the dark. The rest of the group stayed at the banding station dining on snacks prepared by the banding team (cupcakes with little knives sticking out of the frosting and trickles of “blood” plus other Halloween themed goodies) and making sure bears did not show up for dinner. No owls were found in the first two net runs, but the next two runs yielded one NSWOW each.

This was the first time at a banding and seeing a NSWOW for most of the guests. Dawn discussed the project and information gathered about NSWOWs between net runs. While captured owls were being “processed”, she explained the step by step handling, data collection and banding as we took photos and marveled at the cuteness of these owls. Throughout the evening, the team worked quietly and carefully, always mindful of the welfare of the owls. The time passed quickly and in addition to the NSWOWs, we heard Great Horned Owl and Western Screech-Owl. We all left with a lot more knowledge and great appreciation for the NSWOWs and the work that Dawn and her team are doing. Many thanks to Dawn for making this field trip possible and so special. For more information, see Dawn’s blog at <http://birdbling.blogspot.com/>.”

Mather Lake (10/23)—Leader Sheila Green reported: “It was a gorgeous autumn day at Mather Lake, and we tallied 39 species in two hours. The highlight was seeing a snipe, quite close up, which was a lifer for most of us.”

Bodega Bay (10/20) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “The weather and the tides were not with us on this trip. It was foggy and cold, and the tide seemed to stay high all day (thus limiting shore-

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Field Trips



Northern Flicker
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 Maureen Geiger, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net, 444-0804 for trips through December 20. From December 21st on contact the scheduler Tim Fitzer, spskua2@comcast.net, 870-5207.

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.

Sunday, December 1, 8am
Lincoln Grasslands Trip #2
Leaders: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471 and
Mark Martucci, 833-6722
Shopper01@suerewest.net
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

The grasslands and farmlands surrounding Lincoln provide some of the best areas for winter birding in the Sacramento Valley. Because of the diversity and large area to be covered, this year, trips are being offered both Saturday and Sunday by experienced field trip leaders. They will search the back roads of Placer County for a large variety of raptors, shorebirds, ducks and swans and sparrows plus specialty species such as Tri-colored Blackbirds and Lewis' Woodpeckers. This trip will last into the afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids as well as scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Meet in the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Saturday, December 7
American River Natural History
Association Wildlife Count

To participate contact Bill Avery, averyw@csus.edu. See article on page 6 for more information.

Sunday, December 8
Beginning Birding Field Trip
William Pond Park

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 people per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key intro-

duction to finding and identifying birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

Sunday, December 8, 9:30am-12:30pm
Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River
Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311
calidris@suerewest.net

Join Ed for an informative walk along the American River and a chance to sharpen your identification skills. Ed is a great birder who will be looking for any interesting or unusual birds, with emphasis on tricky identification of the many gulls that winter on the River near Nimbus Dam. Herring, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, California, Ring-billed and Mew Gulls are all possibilities. Spotting scopes will be very useful, and be sure to bring your field guides for this intensive study. This trip will last until late morning. Meet at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery parking lot. From Hwy 50 go north on Hazel Avenue; turn left on Gold Country Blvd and the Hatchery is on your right.

Saturday, December 14
Woodfords CBC

To participate contact Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net

Sunday, December 15, 8am
Yolo Wildlife Area
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Join Maureen for a morning drive around this diverse area just a few minutes from downtown Sacramento. A good variety of species is possible this time of year including ducks, shorebirds and raptors. This trip will end late morning. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (32A, E Chiles Rd) 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.

Saturday, December 21, 1:30pm
Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

This family friendly nature walk will be at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Reservations are not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. For more information see page 7 under Family Friendly Trip Date Changes.

Saturday, Dec 21, 8am
Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR
Leaders: Pam and Dan Thompson
359-3777
keiran@suerewest.net

Join Pam and Dan for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, they'll take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes, looking for Sandhill Cranes, raptors and grassland birds, and then stop at the Colusa NWR viewing platform. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothing. FRS radios and scopes are helpful if you have them. Meet in 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 area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. There is a \$4.00 per person charge at Gray Lodge.

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

Sunday, December 22
Sacramento Christmas Count
Compiler: Mark Cudney,
mcudney@aol.com

Saturday, December 28, 8am
Road 113, Robinson Road and
Bird's Landing
Leader: Jane Taylor, 444-0429
tg.taylor@att.net

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes, and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet Jane at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento, take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip.

Saturday, December 28, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and
Sacramento Audubon trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

This is the prime time to see our Sandhill Cranes. They, as well as a variety of ducks, swans, geese, and shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center deck at 3:30pm to hear a brief presentation of Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather and bring binoculars. Scopes are helpful. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners and for families

Sunday, December 29
Folsom Christmas Count
Compiler: Chris Conard,
conardc@gmail.com

Sunday, December 29, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and
Sacramento Audubon trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392
See the write up for December 28th.

Monday, December 30
Lincoln Christmas Count
Compiler: Ed Pandolfino,
ERPfromCA@aol.com

Thursday, January 2, 8am
Bushy Lake
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident and wintering species. With most leaves fallen from the trees, there will be better views of the lake, and Wood Ducks are a good possibility. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. You may want to bring water. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders.

Saturday, January 4, 8am
Western Amador Co.
Leader: Gary Fregien 708-0636
calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Join Gary on a road trip to the Sierra foothills in Amador County. The focus of the trip will be the rivers, ponds, reservoirs and back-country roads in western Amador County. Travel along these routes will include some stops and walking short distances. There are an interesting and surprising variety and number of passerines and raptors in this area. There is a possibility of Lewis's Woodpecker and Red-breasted Sapsucker, Western Bluebird, Hermit and Varied Thrush, American, Lesser and Lawrence's Goldfinch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hutton's Vireo and a variety of flycatchers, sparrows and raptors. This trip also includes stops for waterfowl and shorebirds at ponds near Sutter Creek and Ione. We may also stop at Lake Comanche (W Calaveras Co), where a day-use fee is charged. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along hand held radios, food and water. Meet Gary at the Chevron station in

Rancho Murieta, at the junction of Hwy 16 (Jackson Rd) and Murieta Parkway.

Sunday, January 5, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: John York, 409-9276
sunofyork@att.net

John will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley. Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles are sometimes seen, as well as herons, egrets and bitterns. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. Please note there is a fee for each vehicle at the refuge: either \$6 for a day pass or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass. 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 area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1.

Tuesday, January 7, 8:30am
Beal's Point, Folsom Lake
Leader: Margaret Martin, 599-0181
margaret.martin6@me.com

Join Margaret for a 1 to 2 mile morning walk at Beal's Point. A variety of oak woodland birds and wintering sparrows should be seen, and grebes, goldeneyes and mergansers will be on the lake. Phainopeplas, Rock Wrens, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows are possibilities. The trip will end by noon. Meet Margaret in the parking lot of the Beal's Point unit of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (turn left as you enter the parking lot, to park near the first row). The entrance to Beal's Point is on Oak Hill Drive off Auburn-Folsom Rd, about 2 miles south of Douglas Blvd and about 3 miles north of Greenback Lane. This is a great trip for beginning birders. The entrance fee is \$12 per car, or you may use a state (not county) park pass.

Saturday, January 11
Kids' Christmas Bird Count
Contact: Maureen Geiger,
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Saturday, January 11, 8am
American River Parkway,
Spanos Ct. Access
Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
rey_ality@hotmail.com

Join Dan for a leisurely walk on the north side of the river across from the Paradise

Beach area. The area is fairly typical of most Parkway locations but does have an overabundance of grapes with slightly less blackberry and elderberry which helps in attracting possible overwintering fruit lovers such as Western Tanager. We may encounter common winter birds such as Fox and Lincoln sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Common Goldeneye, crowned sparrows and hopefully a Merlin as well as residents such as Bewick's Wren, Spotted Towhee and California Quail. There are elevated views of the river and well-worn trails. Trip will probably end around 11am. Meet Dan in the parking area at the end of the Spanos Court cul-de-sac along the levee. Spanos Court runs west off Howe Ave between Northrup and Sierra Blvd.

Sunday, January 12, 8am until about noon

Nimbus Fish Hatchery

Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Sharpen your gull identification skills as this is a gathering place for a variety of gulls. Herring, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, California, Ring-billed and Mew Gulls are all possibilities. Then we'll walk downstream looking for Hooded and Common Mergansers, Osprey and other raptors, Barrow's and Common Goldeneye, Spotted Sandpipers, White-throated Swifts, and a variety of the smaller woodland birds. Meet Dan in the Fish Hatchery parking lot off Hazel Avenue north of Hwy 50. Scopes are helpful on this trip.

Monday, January 13, 8am Colusa NWR

Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1290
dtankers@winfirst.com

The Colusa NWR is another great location in the Central Valley to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be many duck species and plenty of Snow, Ross's, Greater White-fronted and possibly a few Cackling Geese as well as other wetland birds. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well, and we can expect many raptors with the possibility of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We will spend a good amount of time on the main viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through riparian habitat next to the main viewing pond. We will then take the short auto tour and finish our outing with a return visit to the platform. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Weather permitting; there should be ample photo ops. Scopes and FRS radios will be helpful

on this trip. Meet Dan at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 8am. From Sacramento, take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Rain, strong wind, or thick fog cancels. Bring snacks and liquids as the trip will end in the very late morning to very early afternoon.

Saturday, January 18, 8am Salt Springs Valley

Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

This area is located in western Calaveras County about an hour and a half drive from Sacramento. The open valley and its lake are home to many wintering ducks, hawks, eagles, owls and grassland birds. The trip will last into the late afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. Meet in the parking lot immediately west of the Union 76 gas station in the Wal-Mart shopping center located on the west side of Hwy 99 at the Elk Grove Blvd exit.

Saturday, January 18, 10:30am Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

This family friendly nature walk will be at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Reservations are not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net.

Sunday, January 19, 8am Road 113, Robinson Road and Bird's Landing

Leaders: Paul Cordero and Mark Martucci
Paul, pkcordero@gmail.com
Mark, 833-6722, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes, and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet Paul and Mark 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

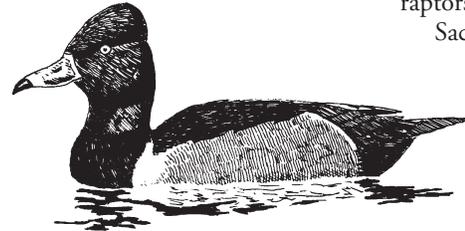
left again into the Park and Ride lot. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip.

Tuesday, January 21, 8:30am

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
IshiM2000@comcast.net

Join Marlene in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl as well as



Ring-necked Duck
 Stephen D'Amato

raptors. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway.

Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A) on your left, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS radios and scopes are helpful on this trip, which is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Trip will end before noon. If the bypass is closed due to flooding, the trip is canceled.

Saturday, January 25, 7:30am sharp! Flood and Waverly Roads

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

The Flood/Waverly rolling grasslands in eastern San Joaquin County are excellent for wintering raptors. We'll be looking for eagles, Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, falcons and other open country birds. Meet at the Galt Park and Ride. From Sacramento, take Hwy 99 south to the Twin Cities Rd/Hwy 104 exit (#277); turn left (east) on Twin Cities Rd, cross the freeway and turn right (south) on Stockton Blvd. The Park and Ride is just south of Twin Cities Rd. Bring snacks and liquids. FRS Radios and scopes are helpful if you have them.

Sunday, January 26, 8am

Western Placer County

Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net

Western Placer County can often rival the great Wildlife Refuges in numbers and diversity of waterfowl, and it is also

Field Trips continued: on page 7

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS—NOT JUST FOR ADULTS! 3RD ANNUAL KIDS' CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

A great event for an exciting opportunity to get kids and young adults outside looking at birds and nature! Join the Sacramento Audubon Society's Third Annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count. Families can join citizen scientists all over the world and practice finding, identifying and counting all the birds they see followed by a companionable lunch with other birder families. **Mark your calendars for the morning of January 11, 2014** at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Reservations are required, so contact Maureen Geiger at mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net or 444-0804 to register and for more information.

TO MARK THOSE SPECIAL FIELD TRIPS AND CBC DATES HERE'S THE PERFECT CALENDAR!

Available at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/calendarorder.html



White-tailed Kite
Cover Photo by Dan Brown

COMING UP SOON!

29TH ANNUAL ARNHA WILDLIFE COUNT DECEMBER 7, 2013

The ARNHA Wildlife Count was originally organized as a fund-raising Bird-a-thon in 1985. Jack Hiehle provided the impetus and organization to get it going. He then maintained the momentum and records through its transformation into an annual Wildlife Count in 1993. The count is utilized by the Staff of Effie Yeaw and ARNHA to follow the population trends of various species of wildlife in the American River Parkway as well as their affect on other aspects of the Parkway.

Twelve teams (including 1 team with 5 counters in canoes) participated in the 2012 Wildlife Count on December 1, tallying 115 bird species. The count was 7 species greater than 2011. This may be explained, in part, by varying weather conditions from year to year. Unusual bird species observed in 2012 included Red Crossbill and Great-tailed Grackle (first

time on the list), Greater White-fronted and Cackling Geese, Lesser Scaup, Common Loon, Cattle Egret, Peregrine Falcon, Sora, Chipping and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, and Tricolored Blackbird. The California sea lions sent a single representative this year. 5 coyotes were seen, compared with none found last year. The deer population appears to be moderate, with 67 seen.

This 2013 wildlife count will be the first in which all birds of each species will actually be counted. Team leaders will work with team members to tally the totals for each species seen. Team leaders will report their team's observations in eBird. It will be important also to enter number in party, miles travelled and duration for each eBird entry. Mammals and other species will be included in the Comments section under Data and Effort. More details will be provided to Team Leaders. This change in data

management will retain all the information used in previous years, add more information on abundance within species and will make the information more accessible to everyone.

Folks who are interested in participating in the 2013 Wildlife Count can email their name, email address and phone number to Count Coordinator, Bill Avery (369-0750; 769-3357; averyw@csus.edu). Unless you have a specific area of the Parkway you're interested in, your name will be provided to the Team Leaders who need more participants on their teams. The Count starts about 7am, finishing by 3pm. Saturday, December 7th. Different leaders have different start times and specific meeting places.

Bill Avery
ARNHA Count Coordinator

Findings continued from page 2

bird activity). But 10 participants still enjoyed the day, and we managed to find two rarities. The bird of the day was a Black-throated Blue Warbler. This bird had been reported during the preceding week at Owl Canyon, and was also seen by other birders that same morning. We spent about 15 to 20 minutes looking for it, before Terry Atkinson called out that she found it. The bird soon flew in very close, affording everyone great views. Also at Owl Canyon was a White-throated Sparrow, fairly rare for the area. We tallied about 63 species over all."

Hope Valley, Alpine County, Fall Foliage Birding (10-19) — Leader Dan Brown reported: "Fourteen of us had a great day enjoying the beautiful foliage and

weather in Alpine County. We had a hard time finding birds but we did see 5 Townsend's Solitaires and a very cooperative American Dipper!"

William Pond Park (10/16) — Leader Craig DeMartini reported: "Our birding and nature walk produced 49 species even though we missed some expected ones. The seven of us started off chilly but ended up pleasantly warm before long. The parking lot area was so productive we stayed there for nearly an hour. That's where we saw Lark Sparrow, Cedar Waxwing, Western Bluebird, Yellow-billed Magpie, and Dark-eyed Junco. Later, from the bank of the American River we were pleasantly surprised to see an Osprey —perched, and a minute later flying by with it's catch. The Belted Kingfisher

with it's rattling call is always a joy. We enjoyed watching the antics of a Snowy Egret using it's feet to stir up a meal from the river bottom. Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, Killdeer, and Common Mergansers eventually ignored us and went about their business. However, the Common Goldeneye, California Quail, and even the Oak Titmouse evaded us, maybe because we spent so much time looking down at the flora. We took time to smell the Mexican Tea, Mugwort, Fennel, Vinegar Weed, and Coyote Bush. We were fortunate to have participants who identified medicinal and edible plants. It was a very rewarding day spent with a fun and eclectic group."

Pete Hayes

FAMILY-FRIENDLY TRIP DATE CHANGES

Sacramento Audubon is merging education activities with Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael as a way of maximizing efforts to serve families with children who would like to be out of doors and enjoy nature walks.

Beginning in December, all family friendly trips will be offered on the third Saturday of the month at 10:30am. The next date is **Saturday, December 21**. Next year's dates will be January 18, February 15, and March 15. April's date will be the 12th because of Easter.

Reservations are not needed. Simply show up at Effie Yeaw Nature Center at the appropriate day and time and walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

During the waterfowl season the Cosumnes River Preserve hosts a wide variety of birds, including some of the most colorful ducks such as Cinnamon Teal, Green-winged Teal, and Bufflehead, as well as geese, swans, herons and egrets, and Sandhill Cranes. On various dates docents from the preserve will have a row of scopes set up near the boardwalk, some set lower to accommodate children, and they'll focus on giving you good views of these birds. In addition there are often hawks overhead, and some of the more interesting shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts and Common Snipe are often seen. On one recent day there was a Bald Eagle, on another a Sora. A table display features "Duck Soup", dishes of water dipped from the pond full of sand fleas, dragonfly nymphs, and other squiggly things that provide the protein the birds are feeding on. A microscope and hand lens provide close-up looks.

The Preserve is a quick drive from Sacramento – south on I-5 to Twin Cities Road; left (east) on Twin Cities for 1 mile; then right (south) on Franklin Blvd; the viewing area is in the first parking lot on your right as you drive into the preserve.

The time is 11am to 2pm, and it's a great day trip for families. Scheduled dates are:

Saturday, November 30	Sunday, January 19
Saturday, December 7	Saturday, January 25
Saturday, December 14	Saturday, February 1
Saturday, December 21	Sunday, February 9
Saturday, December 28	Saturday, February 15
Wednesday, January 1	Sunday, February 23
Sunday, January 5	Saturday, March 1
Saturday, January 11	

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2014

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sundays, January 12, February 2, February 23, March 30

Time: 8am

Each Trip: Limited to 10 participants

Registration required.

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.

Field Trips continued from page 5

known for large concentrations of raptors. Besides the expected species, Eurasian Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Lewis's Woodpecker and Lapland Longspur are all possible. Join Scott for a full day of exploring this diverse area and bring liquids, lunch and FRS radios. Meet at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

SALES PERSON NEEDED WINGS NOT NECESSARY

Sacramento Audubon is looking for a volunteer to oversee sales of our Birding Book, Checklists and Calendars (seasonal) to a few local nature themed stores. These stores already carry our merchandise, and would re-order materials through you, either by email via our website or by phone. The volunteer would contact the store representatives monthly to check on their needs and coordinate with others to ensure the materials are delivered and invoiced in a timely manner. This volunteer position does not require too much time and can be scheduled at your convenience. If interested, contact Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net, or 457-6882.

SAS OUTREACH AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

November was a busy month with many Sacramento Auduboners leading field trips and working at the Outreach table at the **Lodi Crane Festival**, the **Marysville Swan Festival** and the **Central Valley Birding Club Symposium** in Stockton. Next year give one or more of these events a try; the field trips are outstanding and the kids' activities and informational booths are interesting. Upcoming is the **Kids' Christmas Bird Count**, Saturday, January 11, and the **Galt Winter Bird Festival**, Saturday, February 1. We need helpers at both events; for the Kids' Count contact Maureen Geiger, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net, and for the Galt Festival contact Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net.

Birding and Nature Events

18TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 18th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 17-20, 2014**. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an area recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds, and at last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified!

Special Events 2014: Kimball Garrett will be our Keynote speaker on Saturday, January 18! His lighthearted but educational presentation we'll explore the reasons why birds are so variable, why bird guides can range from indispensable to useless, and why the real world throws us curves all the time when we're in the field. Jon Young will follow him on Sunday evening. Field trips cover a multitude of habitats found in the Morro Bay area. Included are the Carrizo Plains, area ranches and state parks, valleys, creeks and canyons and the great Morro Bay, coast and wetlands. Bay cruises for birding and photography are offered as is owling, pelagic trips and wildlife care. Registration is already open so hurry to the Festival site at morrobaybirdfestival.org.

7TH ANNUAL WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The City of **Galt** in Collaboration with the Cosumnes River Preserve and Galt Joint Union Elementary School District are pleased to bring you the 7th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, February 1, 2014**. Many migratory and resident birds call Galt their winter home. Guided tours offer an exciting opportunity to see the birds that spend their winters in the Central Valley! Wetlands, songbird and sandhill crane tours, led by Cosumnes River Preserve managers and biologists are included so sign up and have your binoculars ready! There will be two tours for photographers and one tour especially for children. There is also a birding tour at Heritage Oak Winery led by David Yee. Wine tasting and lunch are available—that one might be popular!

Google Galt Birding Festival for more detailed information. Registration for the 7th annual festival is already open so check online or call so you don't miss any of your favorite tours. If you have any questions please call (209) 366-7115.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL OF THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

The 15th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 22-26, 2014**. Special Guest and Keynote Speaker at Saturday night's Gathering of Wings Banquet and Silent Auction will be Debi Shearwater. From field guides to national marine sanctuaries to seabirds saved and seabirds on the brink, Debi Shearwater will take you on a journey covering her experiences and insights gained from nearly 40 years and thousands of days at sea off the central coast of California to ends of the Earth—the High Arctic and Antarctica.

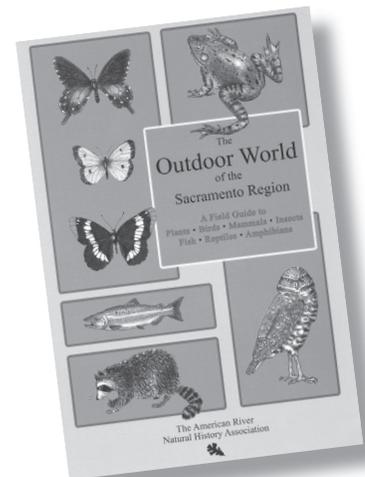
There are currently over 60 different field trips, workshops and presentations planned. There are also lots of free activities and exciting events planned for youth and families. Something for everyone!

Registration will begin in December. Further information can be found at snowgoosefestival.org or by email at info@snowgoosefestival.org and phone (530) 345-1865. Since many of the trips fill up fast, it is best to get on their mailing or email list, available on their website or stay in touch on their facebook page at facebook.com/SnowGooseFestival.

THE OUTDOOR WORLD THE BEST IN GIFTING!

The American River Natural History Association has published a new edition of *The Outdoor World of the Sacramento Region* in which for the first time the more than 250 illustrations of birds, plants, mammals, insects, fish, reptiles and amphibians are in full color! It also portrays regional landforms, weather and climate, and native peoples.

The new edition is a successor to a volume inspired half a century ago by teacher-environmentalist Effie Yeaw. Proceeds from its



sale benefit the Ancil Hoffman Park nature center named for her and which is funded and managed by ARNHA.

A dozen university and other experts updated scientific names in the descriptions of more than 600 species. Longtime ARNHA artist Molly Keller hand-colored the drawings that she, Jo Glasson Smith and Erin O'Toole had previously created.

The thirteenth edition was co-edited by Peter J. Hayes, Molly Keller and Peggy Kennedy. The 240 page volume is available for \$16.95 and in hardback covers for \$24.95 at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, arnha.org and selected stores.

Effie Yeaw carries other ARNHA titles so check there for interesting GIFTS FOR THE SEASON for your favorite nature lovers.

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

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SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

John Byrn Kirsten Salomon
Patricia Clark Connie Sharp
Rose Hoskinson Robert Stuart

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. There is no meeting in December. The next meeting will be on January 28, 2014 at 7pm, at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Jean Alford, Michael Eaton, Grant Green, Julie Hamlin, Lura Harding, Jim and Nancy Joye, Kathleen Knight and Laurie Lamers to the **General Fund**.

Marilyn Arbruster, Joellen Arnold, Jean Bonar, Julie Hamlin, Richard Howard, Marlene Ishihara, Jim and Nancy Joye, Laurie Lamers, Ken Mateik, Muriel Parker, Joyce Reitz, Dan and Jan Tankersley, Richard Turner and Sue Vroman to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Louise McCullough made a donation to Sacramento Audubon in honor of Ed Greaves.

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.

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

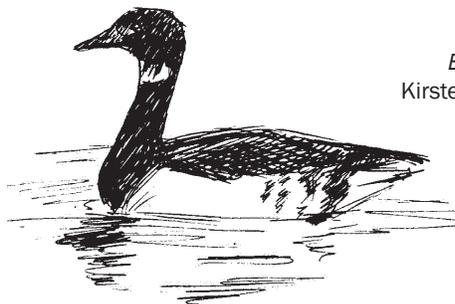
Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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



Brandt
Kirsten Munson

Observations continued from page 10

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:

Steve Abbott, Brent Campos, Chris Dunford, Leo Edson, Gil Ewing, Claire Gallagher, Steve Hampton, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Linda Pittman, Don Schmoldt, John Sterling, John Trochet, and Sally Walters.

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

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

October 1 to October 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

October 2013 was quite a contrast from the previous year. The influx of montane birds that characterized last fall and winter did not occur, and **Red-breasted Nuthatches**, which last year seemed to be everywhere, were absent. On the other hand, **Lewis's Woodpeckers**, very hard to see last fall and winter, are back in their regular haunts on the Valley's margins this fall; one was even found along the River Walk of the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 10/12. They are quite rare on the Valley floor itself, away from blue oak woodlands in the low foothills.

Woodland Wastewater Treatment Plant held many of the most interesting reports.

Greater Scaup are rare in the area away from the Delta, so one there on 10/21 and two on 10/23 were notable. Two **American Golden-Plovers**, less regular in the Valley than **Pacific Golden-Plovers**, were also found at Woodland WTP from 10/17-24, as was a **Marbled Godwit** on 10/1, one to two **Pectoral Sandpipers** from 10/16-18, and a **Franklin's Gull** on 10/21. The latter was refound at the Yolo Central Landfill Pond from 10/22-24, and a juvenile **Western Gull** was there on 10/11.

Other interesting reports included a **Common Poorwill** on private property in SE Sacramento County on 10/23, a male **Calliope Hummingbird** in a Folsom backyard on 10/6, and single **Hammond's**

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Flycatchers in N Davis on 10/12 and the Yolo Co. Grasslands Reg. Park on 10/14.

A **Warbling Vireo** on 10/27 at the Orr Forest of CRP was later than expected, as was a **Grasshopper Sparrow** along Meiss Rd at a traditional breeding location on 10/14. The only **Brown Creeper** reported in Sacramento County was in Fair Oaks on 10/4. On 10/20, the **Harris's Sparrow** returned to the same N Davis neighborhood for the third consecutive fall/winter. The only other vagrant songbird of the month was a male **Indigo Bunting** that visited a Sacramento backyard on the late date of 10/22.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recentsightings.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

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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