

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



General Meeting

Thursday, January 15, 2015
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

The Ventriloquist Owls of Lake Davis
David Arsenault

There is no general meeting in December but we look forward to January's meeting on the 15th. Our program will be presented by David Arsenault, who has studied the ventriloquist Flammulated Owls around Lake Davis for the past three years. 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://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

30TH ANNUAL ARNHA WILDLIFE COUNT

Folks who are interested in participating in the 2014 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 6th. Different leaders have different start times and specific meeting places.

Bill Avery
ARNHA Count Coordinator

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS—NOT JUST FOR ADULTS! 4TH ANNUAL KIDS' CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Kids CBC is great event with an exciting opportunity to get kids and young adults outside looking at birds and nature! Join the Sacramento Audubon Society's Fourth 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 Saturday, January 10, 2015** at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Interested families and young adults can register on-line on the EYNC website, www.sacnaturecenter.net.

NEW GIFT BOOK CELEBRATES AMERICAN RIVER

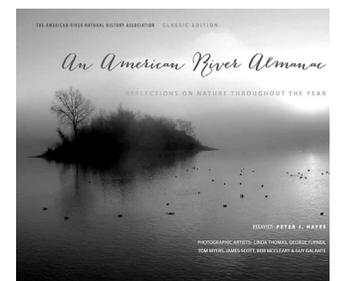
The new Classic Edition of *An American River Almanac: Reflections on Nature Throughout the Year*, awaits your examination at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 2850 San Lorenzo Way off Tarshes Drive in Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael, and at local book stores. The 160-page collection of full-color photographs and nature essays celebrating the American River and its parkway, plants, and animals was just released by the nonprofit American River Natural History Association (ARNHA).

The Classic Edition in 8" x 10.5" format features a hard cover, 82 photographs, and 72 essays, eight more than in the first edition. The essays, reprinted from the Sacramento Union newspaper, recorded the observations of former *Union* editor Peter J. Hayes on outdoor life along the River from January to December. The photographs are the work of Linda Thomas, George Turner, Tom Myers, James Scott, Guy Galante, Bob McCleary, Kari Bauer, Jack Wilburn, Betty Cooper, Molly Keller, Donald Owen, and Terry Spivey. The book was edited by Molly Keller and designed by Gail Segerstrom.

"This wonderful collection of photos and essays reminds us of what a community treasure we have and of the need to safeguard it," said Charlton H Bonham, Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

ARNHA, parent of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC), dedicates profits from sales of the \$39.95 book to supporting nature interpretation along the Parkway and in the greater Sacramento area. The book is available at several local bookstores, EYNC Discovery Shop, and www.ARNHA.org.

Other books published by ARNHA include *The Outdoor World of the Sacramento Region, Biking and Hiking on the American River Parkway, An American River Journal, The Lower American River: Prehistory to Parkway, Ooti, A Child of the Nisenan, and Wild Neighbors*.



An American River Almanac

Field Trip Findings

Flood and Waverly Roads, San Joaquin County (11/15) — Linda Pittman, co-leader with Dan Tankersley, reported: “A small group of six escaped the valley fog for the eastern San Joaquin County grasslands. On the way, we found a Lawrence’s Goldfinch on a fence with a mixed flock of finches and sparrows in Calaveras County. Varied Thrushes and a Phainopepla were seen at a brief stop by the Calaveras River. Although a little slow, Waverly and Flood Roads produced three Ferruginous Hawks, two Prairie Falcons, one Northern Harrier, one Cooper’s Hawk, numerous Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrels, and Loggerhead Shrikes. Both the Ferruginous Hawk and Prairie Falcon were life birds for Mike. Horned Larks and Savannah Sparrows were abundant. We missed eagles, Rough-legged Hawk and Burrowing Owls, but enjoyed a good day of birding with about 50 species observed.”

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (11/13) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “The morning started with light rains. Most of the expected species were seen although not in great numbers, particularly the ducks. Highlights included Cooper’s Hawk, Great Horned Owl, Long-billed Curlew, Wilson’s Snipe, Ravens, and Common Gallinule. In the mammal department, a muskrat was seen.”

King Ranch/Lynch Canyon/American Canyon Wetlands (11/9) — Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Ken Poerner, reported: “Solano County birding hot-spots did not disappoint. Nine birders on a too-warm, too-dry, gorgeous day saw 17 species at King Ranch, 43 species at Lynch Canyon and hundreds of shorebirds of many species at American Canyon wetlands. Best birds were a Sora, a sitting Prairie Falcon and 3 Golden Eagles!”

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (11/8) — Leader Frank Gray reported: “Highlights included Eurasian Wigeon and many other species and great weather. We saw huge flocks of Snow Geese with a few Ross’s mixed in, as well as very large numbers of Pintails, Mallards, and other waterbirds. Fortunately, in light of the drought, there seemed to be sufficient water. Participants enjoyed a great day.”

Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk (11/5) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “A dozen birders, ranging from beginner to expert, joined me for this trip to the

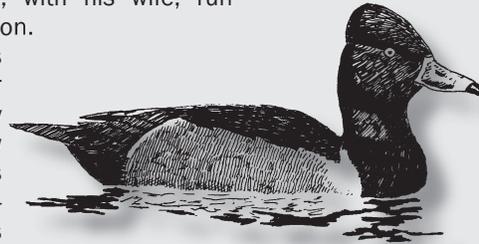
Cosumnes River Preserve. We first found the cryptic snipe, then checked out all the different ducks, and spotted a lone Ibis on Bruceville Road. Kestrels did a nice aerial show for us, and at the Isenberg Preserve on Woodbridge Road Muriel Parker found us some Canvasback Ducks. Sandhill Cranes abounded, including good looks at an immature. We totaled 50 species.”

Spenceville Wildlife Area (11/2) — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “The Spenceville trip started with a surprise visit to the California Foundation for Birds of Prey east of Lincoln. We met Andy McBride who, with his wife, run the foundation.

He gave us a short tour of the facility where we saw several birds that are in different stages of rehabilitation. He is also a long time falconer and introduced us to his personal birds: two fabulous Goshawks. The remainder of the trip’s highlights included White-throated Sparrow, Rock Wren, Western Grebes, many Lewis’s Woodpeckers, and a pair of Phainopeplas.”

Calaveras Big Trees State Park (11/1) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Arrived at Calaveras Big Trees at 9am to find a Winter Wonderland. Was joined by Wendy Money, Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris. 3 inches of snow on the ground and all the trees and shrubs were covered with soft snow with spots of yellow, pink and dark green showing through. Soon enough the snow started slowly melting off the trees and plopping down on us, so it was good we had rain gear. Ann Burris couldn’t stop taking photos. (She’ll post some on SAS Facebook page.) We walked the north grove trail, oohing and aahing at the huge trees, and had great looks at Golden-crowned Kinglets. By noon most snow had fallen from the trees and shrubs, and bright colors of dogwood and big leaf maple were on view as we hiked the loop trail up to the Dardanelles overlook. Best bird on that walk was a large flock of Varied Thrushes. We started home at 2pm, and had only about a dozen birds, but the scenery was fantastic and well worth the trip.”

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge (10/28) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “On a beautiful fall morning, 14 birders ventured to the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge to enjoy a few of the Central Valley’s newly returned winter visitors. These included thousands of Greater White-fronted Geese and Northern Pintail. There were many Northern Shovelers, Gadwalls, American Wigeons, and Mallards. A few representatives of several shorebird species were seen as well. The highlight bird was a juvenile Bald Eagle soaring high within a kettle of Turkey Vultures. In all, the group sighted 55 species.”



Ring-necked Duck
Stephen D’Amato

Bodega Bay (10/26) — Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Mark Martucci, reported: “With a large group of 31 participants, we started off with calm winds and mild temperatures. But, as the day progressed the wind picked up, hamper-

ing some of our birding activities. It still turned out to be a great day of birding with a total of 80 species. For me, the best part of the day was early at Doran County Park, beginning on the harbor side where we observed large flocks of shorebirds, including Red Knot. We then moved over to the beach side where we observed many Snowy and Semipalmated Plovers side-by-side. It was an excellent opportunity for the newer birders among us to compare the two. We also spotted our first Whimbrel here, a lifer and target bird for several. Later at Porto Bodega, everyone was impressed by a huge flock of mostly Marbled Godwits with some Willets sprinkled in, that came in to roost while waiting for the tide to recede. Estimates put the Marbled Godwits at 1,000 to 1,200. The bird of the day came unfortunately late after much of the group had departed. About 9 of us remaining trouperers found a Tropical Kingbird, which turned out to be the last bird of the day. It was a great day with a wonderful group of people.”

Hope Valley—Alpine County—Fall Foliage Birding (10/25) — Leader Dan Brown reported: “Trip canceled due to snow forecast.”

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Field Trips



Hooded Merganser
Daniel Kilby

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, 444-0804, mkgeiger@comcast.net for trips through December 14. From December 15 through January 25 contact the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net.

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ridesharing/car-pools. 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, December 6. ARNHA WILDLIFE COUNT

Join fellow birders for this annual census of birds and other wildlife on the American River Parkway. Contact compiler Bill Avery, averyw@csus.edu, (email preferred) or at 369-0750 or 769-3357.

Saturday, December 6, 9am Nature and Birding Walk Cosumnes River Preserve

Not an Audubon trip, but a great walk for beginning birders, this monthly First Saturday morning walk at the CRP is led by docents who will share information about the preserve, and help you identify the various birds and plant life. This time of year waterfowl are abundant, cranes are frequently overhead, and there's a chance to see snipe, yellowlegs, and stilts. Meet at the Visitor Center. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org.

Sunday, December 7, 9:30am-12:30pm Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311 calidris@surewest.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.

Wednesday, December 10, 8am William Pond Park Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882 empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie along the first parking area just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk down to some different spots on the river, where mergansers and goldeneye can be found in the backwaters and wrens and towhees call from the bushes. Then we'll check the pond area for Red-winged Blackbirds and Green Heron. California Quail, Western Bluebirds and Lark Sparrows may be found in the park area. Trip will end before noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east and it runs into the park. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Saturday, December 13, 8am Robinson Road Area Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris Tim: 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net Ann: 947-7573, burris.nellieann@gmail.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 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.

Sunday, December 14, 8am Discovery Park Leader: Maureen Geiger 444-0804 or 281-6652 mkgeiger@comcast.net

This park at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers is a great place for a walk in any season. Join Maureen to look for winter arrivals and resident species generally found in the park such as Yellow-billed Magpies, Nuttall's Woodpeckers, Red-shouldered Hawks and White-tailed Kites. This is a good area for winter sparrows; other possibilities include wrens, woodpeckers and bluebirds. Generally, there is an unlocked restroom near the beginning of the walk. This walking trip will last until late morning. To reach Discovery from I-5, exit onto the Garden Highway and head east to the first traffic light. Turn right into the park. In the park, you need a Sacramento County Parks Annual Pass, or you must stop at the kiosk and register, paying the \$5 entrance fee. From the kiosk, turn left at your first opportunity and then left again, driving a short distance to the farthest parking lot at the south end of the archery range where we will meet.

Wednesday, December 17, 8am Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris Tim: 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net Ann: 947-7573, burris.nellieann@gmail.com

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Field Trips continued from page 3

Ann and Tim will stop first at Colusa Wildlife Refuge, checking out the viewing platform, (restrooms available), and then on to SNWR, looking for the enormous flocks of ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way south. This is also a good place for raptors, and Bald Eagles can be found here regularly. 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. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. 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. Please note there is a fee for each vehicle at the Sac refuge: \$6 for a day pass, or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass. Or for \$3 more purchase a Duck Stamp and support all national wildlife refuges. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike.

Saturday, December 20
Stockton Christmas Count
Contact: Jim Rowoth,
rowoth@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, December 21
Woodfords Christmas Count
Contact: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net

Tuesday, December 23, 8am
Mather Lake
Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661
Marksawyer3383@yahoo.com

Mather Lake is fast becoming one of the area's most popular birding locations, with quite a list of bird species. Join Mark to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, American Bittern, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe and Common Yellowthroat. If you bring your camera Mark may give you some photography tips as well. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, December 27
Sacramento Christmas Count
Contact: Mark Cudney, 987-2422
mcudney@aol.com

Saturday, December 27, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
Sponsored by Save Our Sandhill Cranes
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 28, 8am
Beals Point
Leaders: Deb and Mara Weston
Deb: 337-2818, notsewbed@mac.com
Mara: 208-3222

Join Deb and Mara for a 1 to 2 mile morning walk at Beals Point. A variety of oak woodland birds and wintering sparrows should be seen, and grebes, goldeneyes and mergansers will be on the lake. Bringing your spotting scopes will be helpful for seeing the birds on the lake. Phainopeplas, Rock Wrens, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows are possibilities. The trip will end by noon. Meet in the parking lot of the Beals 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 Beals 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.

Sunday, December 28, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley

Please see the information for the December 27th trip.

Thursday, January 1, 9am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net

Start the New Year off right; go birding! Wintering Sandhill Cranes, Greater White-fronted Geese and a wide variety of duck species frequent the preserve. Yellowlegs and Wilson's Snipe will be in the shallower water, and other shorebirds are possible. Tim will walk the CRP boardwalk loop first; then drive along Desmond Road for more views of waterfowl. Meet at the CRP Visitor Center parking lot. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. This is an enjoyable trip for everyone. 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.

Saturday, January 3, 8am
Tonzi Road and Western Amador County
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 waters and back-country roads in western Amador County. There is a surprising variety and number of passerines and raptors in this area, with a possibility of Lewis's Woodpecker, Hermit and Varied Thrush, sparrows and perhaps Ferruginous Hawks. This trip also includes stops for waterfowl and shorebirds at ponds near Sutter Creek and Ione. We may also stop at Lake Comanche, 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 Local Bean Cafe in the Rancho Murieta shopping center. Turn right at the 1st traffic light; junction of Hwy 16 (Jackson Rd) and Murieta Drive, and right again just past the fire station.

Saturday, January 3, 9am
Nature and Birding Walk
Cosumnes River Preserve

Not an Audubon trip, but a great walk for beginning birders, this monthly First

Saturday morning walk at the CRP is led by docents who will share information about the preserve, and help you identify the various birds and plant life. This time of year waterfowl are abundant, cranes are frequently overhead, and there's a chance to see snipe, yellowlegs, and stilts. Meet at the Visitor Center. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org.

Sunday, January 4
Folsom Christmas Count
Contact: Chris Conard, 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

Monday, January 5, 8am
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
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 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 to finish our outing to this wonderful NWR. 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. 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.

Wednesday, January 7, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Craig DeMartini, 599-3300
Cloudwalk7@aol.com

A weekday trip to this popular refuge should be less crowded. Craig will stop first at Colusa Wildlife Refuge, checking out the viewing platform, (restrooms available), and then on to SNWR where he'll be looking for the blue phase of the Snow Goose, Ross's Geese, Eurasian Wigeon among the

Americans, and the frequently seen eagles or Peregrine Falcon, as well as the huge numbers of waterfowl in the flooded areas. Bring lunch, liquids, and layered clothes for changeable weather. There is a fee for each vehicle at the refuge: either \$6 for a day pass or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass. Or for \$3 more purchase a Duck Stamp and support all national wildlife refuges. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. 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.

Saturday, January 10, 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.

Sunday, January 11
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 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. We explore the varied habitat at William Pond, looking at wintering sparrows, some waterfowl and shorebirds at the river, and those small confusing bushtits, titmice and kinglets. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

Sunday, January 11, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: John York, 409-9276
Johnyork157@yahoo.com

First stop will be Colusa Wildlife Refuge, checking out the viewing platform, (restrooms available), and then on to SNWR. 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.

Thursday, January 15, 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. After the summer fires, and 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 17, 8am
Robinson Road, Road 113 and
Bird's Landing
Leader: Jenner Junghans, 425-9405
writeningbug@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 Jenner 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, January 17, 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,

Field Trips continued on page 6

Field Trips continued from page 5

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 18
Beginning Birders' Walk
Cosumnes River Preserve

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. This trip will focus on wintering waterfowl, sorting out the different duck species, and looking at some other wetland birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

Sunday, January 18, 7:30am sharp!
Flood and Waverly Roads
Leaders: Linda Pittman, 715-1876
pittmanl@frontiernet.net
Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

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 liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible.

Tuesday, January 20, 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 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 24, 8am
Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR
Leaders: Pam and Dan Thompson
359-3777, keiran@surrewest.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 \$4.32 per person charge at Gray Lodge, and it's wise to bring the exact amount for the Iron Ranger.

Saturday, January 24, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
Sponsored by Save Our Sandhill Cranes
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Meet at the Visitor Center at the Cosumnes River Preserve for this opportunity to view the Sandhill Cranes, as well as the many other waterfowl and wetland birds that abound here. After exploring the walking trail by the flooded ponds, the group will 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.

Sunday, January 25, 8am
Lincoln Grasslands/West Placer Co
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
Shope01@surrewest.net

Western Placer County can often rival the great wildlife refuges in numbers and diversity of waterfowl, and it is also known for large concentrations of raptors. Besides the expected species, Eurasian Wigeon,

Bald Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, and Lewis's Woodpecker are all possible. Join Scott for a full day of exploring this diverse area and bring liquids, lunch and FRS radios if you have them. 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.

Sunday, January 25, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley

Please see the information for the January 24th trip.

FIELD TRIPS
FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sunday, January 11

Location: Cosumnes River Preserve, (focusing on wintering waterfowl and wetland birds)

Date: Saturday, January 18

Trips limited to 10 adult 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 and email address, or phone Cathie at 457-6882, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

BIRDING IN THE SACRAMENTO REGION

PDFs of the site information are now available online for Sacramento Audubon's book *Birding in the Sacramento Region*. They can be found at sacramentoaudubon.org/book-contents.html. This 2008 book (which is currently being revised) contains lists over 110 sites in the Sacramento area. Areas covered include American River Parkway, City of Sacramento, County of Sacramento, Folsom Lake Area, and selected sites in Yolo County, North of Sacramento, San Joaquin County, Solano County, and Foothills and Sierra Nevada. Each site includes concise descriptions of where and when to find resident, wintering and migrating birds. Since the information is from 2008 some things (e.g. the entrance/ parking fees) may have changed. The PDF format makes it possible for you to print out only the information you need for a day trip to the location of your choice.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

This is a great trip for families, youth groups and beginning birders so don't forget to stop by the Cosumnes River Preserve and check out **Ducks In Scopes** where preserve docents have a row of scopes set up, some set lower to accommodate children. They'll focus on giving you good views of the many colorful ducks and geese, as well as some of the more interesting shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts and Common Snipe.

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. Come any time between 10am and 2pm, on the following dates.

November: Sunday, 11/30

December: Saturdays, 12/6,
12/13, 12/20, and Sunday,
12/28

2015

January: Thursday, January 1,
Saturdays, 1/3, 1/17, 1/24,
1/31 and Sunday, 1/24

February: Saturdays, 2/7, 2/21,
2/28 and Sunday 2/15

Birding and Nature Events

19TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 19th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 16-19, 2015**. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the Pacific Flyway. The area offers pristine beaches, beautiful state parks, an excellent natural history museum, panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and, best of all, thousands of birds. Over 200 species are usually sighted during the Festival weekend – 204 species in 2014.

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 or call 805-234-1170.

8TH 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 8th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, February 7, 2015**. 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 three tours for photographers and one kayak tour of the waterways at Cosumnes River Preserve. The birding tour at Heritage Oak Winery includes wine tasting and lunch, and is again led by David Yee.

Google 'Galt Birding Festival' for more detailed information. Registration for the 8th 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 16th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 21-25, 2015**. Special Guest and Keynote Speaker at Saturday night's Gathering of Wings Banquet and Silent Auction will be Scott Weidensaul. Renowned naturalist and author, Scott Weidensaul, will explore the wonder and mechanics of bird migration and share his research, experiences, insights and the simple, effective ways we can preserve our feathered friends.

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](https://www.facebook.com/SnowGooseFestival).

WFO MEETING IN MONTANA FOR JUNE 2015

Save the date: A first Montana meeting for Western Field Ornithologists, this much heralded event is scheduled for June 10 – 14, 2015 in Billings. These dates highlight the dynamic period of peak bird activity in Montana. The Billings location has an abundance of habitat diversity and an active slate of fieldtrips is scheduled to explore the region. There will be more information in future editions of *The Observer*. The WFO website can be found at <http://westernfieldornithologists.org/>

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2014-2015

Saturday, December 6, Daybreak, ARNHA Wildlife Count

Compiler: Bill Avery, 369-0750, 769-3357

e-mail: averyw@csus.edu (email preferred)

Annual census of birds and other wildlife on the American River Parkway.

Sunday, December 21, Woodfords Christmas Count

Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net

Compiler: Andi Salmi, 691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Saturday, December 27 Sacramento Christmas Count

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

Sunday, January 4, 2015 Folsom Christmas Count

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

Saturday, January 10, 2015,

4th Annual Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

Compiler: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit

<http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm>

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

October 1 to October 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

The streak of rare and unusual species continued and if it wasn't for last month's unprecedented number of rarities, this October would stand out even more. A **Falcated Duck** photographed at Colusa NWR on 10/30 and seen for a few days was not as bright as the bird found in the winter 2011-12 (and briefly the following winter). It is relatively early in the season, so with continued molt it could present a more striking appearance. **Band-tailed Pigeons** became more widespread in Sacramento County toward the end of the month and into November than any time on record. A **Common Poorwill** was foraging along Latrobe Rd in the pre-dawn of 10/9. The male **Costa's Hummingbird** continued at a south Sacramento yard into November, while **Lewis's Woodpeckers** and **Acorn Woodpeckers** continued to show up in unusual locations and the latter, especially, persisted at these sites.

An **Ash-throated Flycatcher** on 10/4 at "the Point" along the River Walk of Cosumnes River Preserve was unusually late. Like the **Band-tailed Pigeons**, **Steller's Jays** staged an unprecedented invasion. Two were reported in Orangevale on 10/18 and then the floodgates opened, with reports from Fair Oaks,

Lake Natoma, the Gristmill access to the American River Parkway, Folsom, and the Putah Creek Canyon west of Winters. **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** continued around Davis and Putah Creek and **Varied Thrushes** were in good numbers at many locations throughout the region.

On 10/5, a **Blackburnian Warbler** was the highlight among over 130 warblers, including an exceptional 40 **Black-throated Gray** and 35 **Townsend's Warblers**, along Wood Duck Slough near the Tall Forest at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). A return visit on 10/6 failed to find the **Blackburnian**, but did produce a **Magnolia Warbler**. On 10/1, two **Palm Warblers** were found in Roseville, with one off PFE Road near the Haight Nursery and another along Country Club Ave near Acton Way. Interesting sparrows included a **Vesper Sparrow** along Meiss Rd on 10/3, two **Grasshopper Sparrows** at Meiss Rd on 10/4, with one continuing on 10/30, a **Swamp Sparrow** along Cache Creek on 10/29, accessed from Wild Wings County Park, and the **Harris's Sparrow** along Cortez Ave in North Davis, returning for its fourth winter on 10/26. Notable finches included a calling **Cassin's Finch** near the Tall Forest on 10/13, another at Slide Hill Park in Davis on 10/22, a flyover **Lawrence's Goldfinch** at CRP on 10/3, another west of Winters along Putah Creek on 10/8, an **Evening**

Grosbeak at the Gristmill access on 10/3-4, and another along Putah Creek west of Winters on 10/8.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html). The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000' contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties.

Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve (cvbirds.org) and in eBird. It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Dan Airola, Brent Campos, Chris Dunford, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Cory Gregory, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Doug Herr, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Mark Martucci, Michael Perrone, Craig Swolgaard, Jim Thomas, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, Matt Victoria, Liz West, Dan Williams and Sharon Wisecarver.

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

Chris Conard

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Lily Douglas

Mark Noel

Mara Weston



Thrush Species
Unknown Artist



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SAS ACTION ON
FACEBOOK**

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SacramentoAudubon

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, llandry46@comcast.net
11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

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.

Findings continued from page 2

Upper Sunrise Park (10/23) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: "We had a successful morning of birding with up close views of birds. The morning started with good views of the Peregrine Falcon sitting on the wire strung across the American River at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. White-throated Swifts were flying high overhead, temporarily avoiding the falcon. An Osprey was seen flying over the Fish Hatchery facility carrying a fish. As expected, we saw gulls including Herring, California, and Ring-billed. It was too early to see other possible gulls. Other birds of note were several Phainopeplas, many Cedar Waxwings, a single Hermit Thrush, White and Golden-crowned Sparrows, Belted Kingfisher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Downy Woodpecker, Spotted Sandpiper, Northern Flicker, and many Yellow-rumped Warblers. A recent graduate of the SAS's Beginning Birder class gained six lifers on this trip. Good job, Jane! A satisfying morning for all."

River Bend Park (10/19) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "Eleven birders

joined me for this morning walk through the oak woodland and down to the river. The usual resident and wintering birds were present; favorites were Hutton's Vireo and Osprey. Oak Tit-mouses/mice were abundant, as were fishermen on the river. We totaled 44 bird species for the day, and even found some late-blooming Vinegar Weed."

American River Parkway, Spanos Ct Access (10/18) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: "The day started with Cedar Waxwings everywhere. Along the river it was fishermen everywhere. Consequently, there were no shorebirds. However, all six of us had plenty of birds to see. There was a male and female Downy Woodpecker that we were able to observe working on making a hole in a snag. We also had a good look at a Fox Sparrow in a dark rust color while it was singing. It was a good morning for everyone."

Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary (10/11) — Leader Cliff Hawley reported: "An enthusiastic group of 20 birders explored the riparian habitat of Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary today. The area was very birdy

with numerous kinglets, both Golden and Ruby-crowned, warblers, including two beautiful Black-throated Grays as well as a nice look at an unexpected Lewis's woodpecker. Sixty-eight species were seen by the group during their visit. Visit our Facebook page to see pictures and link to the eBird list for the trip.

William Pond Park (10/8) — Leader Larry Hickey reported: "An early fall trip to William Pond yielded an abundance of birds for the four of us. Many White-crowned Sparrows were singing in the native plant garden near the park entrance and Yellow-rumped Warblers were everywhere. Cathie LaZier informed us that sparrows will often return to the same bushes every year. Lark Sparrows, Dark-eyed Juncos and a Red-breasted Sapsucker were first of season birds for most of us. Large flocks of Bushtits and Cedar Waxwings, a dozen Northern Flickers, Western Bluebirds and a cooperative American Kestrel contributed to an enjoyable morning of birding in this beautiful and diverse habitat."

Pete Hayes

Sacramento Audubon Society
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White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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

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

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

January 15, 2015 with David Arsenault:
The Ventriloquist Owls of Lake Davis
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm



Flammulated Owl