

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 67 • NO. 10

DECEMBER 2015

General Meeting

Thursday, January 21, 2016
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Our Changing Oceans
Ron LeValley

There is no general meeting in December but we look forward to January's meeting on the 15th. Our program will be presented by Ron LeValley, with a talk entitled *Our Changing Oceans*. 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).

Sally Walters Schmoldt, Program Chair

32ND ANNUAL ARNHA WILDLIFE COUNT

Folks who are interested in participating in the 2016 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 5th. Different leaders have different start times and specific meeting places.

Bill Avery
ARNHA Count Coordinator

Young Birder Opportunities

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS—NOT JUST FOR ADULTS! 5TH ANNUAL KIDS' CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Kids CBC is a great event with an exciting opportunity to get kids and young adults outside looking at birds and nature! Join the Sacramento Audubon Society's Fifth 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 19, 2016** at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Interested families and young adults can register on-line at the EYNC website, www.sacnaturecenter.net. We owe our thanks to Maureen Geiger for establishing the Kids CBC for SAS. This year she's handing over the reins to Mara Weston, another of our enthusiastic volunteers. You can reach Mara with any questions or to register at 208-3222 or email at mara_weston@yahoo.com.

AMERICAN BIRDING ASSOCIATION YOUTH CAMP REGISTRATION IS OPEN AND SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE

Registration for 2016 ABA Young Birder Camps, held in Colorado and Delaware, is now open. They expect all programs to fill quickly, so if you are thinking of attending, reserve your spot now at events.aba.org/aba-young-birder-camps/.

Some scholarships are available as mentioned in last month's Observer. Applications and more information can be found at youngbirders.aba.org/scholarships. Applications for scholarships are open as of December 10, 2015. The American Birding Association provides scholarships to help young people, who are interested in birds, attend summer camps, workshops, training programs, conventions and other bird-related activities. The funds for their scholarships come primarily from donations from ABA members and donations from sponsors. More information and registration can be found at events.aba.org/aba-young-birder-camps/. Their website also contains events and young birder connections.

THE CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD CLUB'S YOUTH BIRDING CAMP AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

The David Yee Scholarship Fund will provide annual scholarships to birding camps for young club members. Camps include the ABA camps but also camps closer to home in the Sierras, Seattle and Arizona. Both the selection criteria and award process will include elements directly related to birding. For all camps, the scholarship will pay for the cost of the registration for the youth participant while transportation will be the responsibility of the participant. Application deadline is February 15, 2016 but remember camp registration may be much sooner. Information can be found at cvbirds.org/youth-scholarship-fund.html.

Field Trip Findings

Flood and Waverly Roads (11/15) — Leader Linda Pittman reported: “After a morning of rain, two people joined me for a drive through the eastern San Joaquin County grasslands. Waverly road was muddy (Flood Rd is paved) and the wind a little chilly, but we found most of the expected species for November including three Ferruginous Hawks, Northern Harriers, Red-tailed Hawks, Prairie Falcon, American Kestrels, many Loggerhead Shrikes and a Burrowing Owl. Western Meadowlarks and Savannah Sparrows were especially abundant. We missed eagles, Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owls.”

Putah Creek Riparian Reserve (11/11) — Maureen Geiger reported: “Bill Bianco was scheduled to lead the trip today but was sick, so I filled in for him. Five of us saw almost 40 species on a cold, clear morning. Best of trip were two Great Horned Owls that flushed right in front of us, so we all had very nice looks. Other than that, there were the usual suspects, with huge numbers of Yellow-rumped Warblers and American Robins dominating. An Orange-crowned Warbler was nice to see.”

Mather Regional Park (10/31) — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: “Gorgeous weather greeted 13 birders for a morning of birding. Winter ducks had not arrived but

32 species were spotted. The usual cast of birds was sighted so the highlight was observing territorial behavior between two Mute Swan families.”

Cosumnes River Preserve (10/30) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Eight people joined me at the CRP for a walk along the flooded wetland ponds. We had a wide variety of duck species, and Larry Hickey pointed out 3 Blue-winged Teal males. We saw a few Sandhill Cranes, and had great scope looks at a Wilson’s Snipe. The new viewing area at the end of the boardwalk provided excellent looks at Least Sandpipers, dowitchers, dunlin and pipits.”

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge (10/27) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Ten of us enjoyed a full morning in the field at the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge. An overcast sky provided a few welcome drops of rain, and the temperature was a cool 61 degrees. Though the waterfowl species count was limited at this early date, there were thousands of Greater White-fronted Geese including a few Tule Geese. The predominant duck species was Northern Pintail with Mallard and Gadwall vying for a distant second place. In all there were four goose and eleven duck species seen. Our group recorded a very respectful total of 72 species observed from the observation deck, the

riparian trail and the auto tour loop.”

Bodega Bay (10/25) — Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Mark Martucci, reported: “It was a beautiful day for 20 birders at this world class birding destination. We tallied 89 species (thanks go to Ed Harper for keeping track). While we missed a couple of rare birds that had been sighted during the previous several days, we were lucky enough to get great views of a White-throated Sparrow, and a Tropical Kingbird. Out on Bodega Head, while scoping the off-shore waters, first a few and then hundreds of Black-vented Shearwaters appeared. We also had Surfbirds and Black Turnstones below us on the rocks. One of the biggest highlights was having 9-year-old Logan along. He decided he wanted to come on this birding trip for his birthday.”

Effie Yeaw Nature Center (10/19) — Leader Bob McCleary reported: “Twelve enthusiastic birders joined the trip today. Highlights included a really great look at a Merlin, Cedar Waxwings, male Phainopepla, Red-tailed and Red-Shouldered Hawks, Green Herons, Osprey, resident Acorn Woodpeckers, and Nuttall’s Woodpecker. Overall, a very good day.”

Pete Hayes

BIRDS OF WINTER IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

Again in 2016, **Ed Harper**, long time educator, tour guide, and noted birder of the Sacramento area, will help you learn the finer points of identification, natural history, and calls of the many species of birds resident in winter throughout the Sacramento region. By way of a series of lectures with beautiful photography and field trips, both beginning and experienced birders can improve their knowledge and skills.

Whereas some species of birds such as swallows, flycatchers, and warblers do migrate south for the winter, many more birds flock to the Sacramento region to spend the winter. Cranes, ducks, geese, gulls, raptors, kinglets, and sparrows are just a few of the many representative groups found during this exciting season. Whether you simply want to distinguish one sparrow species from another or seek help in learning the distinctive “chuck” note of a Hermit

Thrush, this course has broad appeal. Anyone who has a serious interest in birds and enjoys their presence in our world can profit from this class.

Suggested materials include **binoculars** and a recent field guide to the birds such as *The Sibley Guide to Birds* (2nd printing) or the National Geographic Society’s *Field Guide to Birds of North America* (6th edition).

NOTE: A moderate amount of walking will be required for most trips requiring appropriate footwear and clothing. Liquids, insect repellent, sunscreen, and snack food can make your outings much more pleasant.

Contact Ed at: home 971-3311, cell 704-7954 or email caldris@surewest.net for more information.

Lectures

Time: Wednesdays, 7–8:30pm

Dates: January 6, January 27, and February 4

Place: Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park, American River Parkway

Field Trips

Saturday January 9, 8am–noon, Ancil Hoffman Park, Carmichael

Saturday January 30, 8am–1:30pm, Linden Raptor Route in San Joaquin County

Saturday February 27, 8am–noon, Yolo Basin Wetlands offI-80, Yolo Bypass

Cost: \$100 per person (includes 3 lectures and 3 field studies)

\$90 per person for ARNHA members

Lectures only: \$50/person, \$40 for ARNHA members

Reservations: www.sacnaturecenter.net or 489-4918t

Field Trips



Merlin
Stephen D'Amato

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, for trips through December 13, contact the scheduler Maureen Geiger, mkaygeiger@gmail.com, 444-0804 or 281-6652. (Note change of Maureen's email address.) From December 16–January 24, 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.

Tuesday, December 1, 7:30am
Bobcat Ranch, Yolo County
Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 281-6652
mkaygeiger@gmail.com (Note new email address)
Valerie Calegari, 416-7011

This beautiful 7,000-acre property owned by Audubon California is currently open to the public only for docent-led trips. Join Maureen and Valerie, Conservation Project Director (or the new Ranch Manager) for a rare opportunity to experience this unique property. On the hike through the blue oak woodlands, they will be looking for local and migrant bird species (which may include Golden Eagles, Lark Sparrows and Lewis's Woodpeckers). We will also learn about the restoration efforts taking place and effects of the recent, nearby fire. Clear weather will give us fabulous views of the valley. This outing involves moderate hiking on fairly level ground and should last until lunch time. Bring liquids; a picnic lunch at the Ranch is possible or a return to Winters where there are several good restaurants. There are restrooms at the meeting site. Meet at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento for a 7:30 departure. Alternate meeting place is the parking lot next to Steady Eddy's at 5 E. Main Street (intersection of Main and Railroad) in Winters by 8am. To reach the Park and Ride, from I-80, take the West Capitol Avenue exit, turn left at the light and left into the lot.

Saturday, December 5
American River Natural History Association Wildlife Count
Compiler: Bill Avery, 369-0750
or 769-3357
averyw@csus.edu (email preferred)

Join fellow birders for this annual census of

birds and other wildlife on the American River Parkway. Contact compiler Bill Avery for details.

Sunday, December 6
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. NOTE: This trip is limited to 15 participants, and registration is required. To register and for details, please contact Maureen Geiger at 444-0804 or mkaygeiger@gmail.com. (Note new email address.)

Sunday, December 6, 7am
Bay Area Birding
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net

We will be exploring some popular birding spots around San Francisco Bay. Possible destinations include Arrowhead Marsh, Hayward Shoreline and, time permitting, Palo Alto Baylands. The Bay has a lot to offer in terms of diversity of shorebirds and waterfowl, and Scott will be watching posts and checking conditions to choose the best locations. Bring lunch, liquids and dress for possible cooler Bay Area weather. Meet at the Park and Ride 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. Rain cancels the trip.

Saturday, December 12, 8am
Robinson Road Area
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 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 13, 9am–Noon
Davis Wastewater Treatment Plant and Yolo County Landfill Area, Yolo County
Leader: Steve Hampton, 956-0949
stevehampton@gmail.com

Many birders find identification of gulls to be fairly daunting. Steve will help unravel the mysteries of sorting through some of the gulls which can often be found in a Yolo County locale famous for good numbers of wintering gulls. Curlews, other shorebirds, and ducks are also possible. Meet at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 9am. From Sacramento, take I-80 to west to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then

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Field Trips continued from page 3

right again to the Park and Ride behind Ikeda's Market. From there we will proceed to the best place from which to view the gulls.

Sunday, December 13
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. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882

Wednesday, Dec. 16, 8am
Humbug Creek, Folsom
Leader: Deb Weston 337-2818
notsewbed@mac.com

Meet Deb at the Cummings Family Park on the corner of Creekside Drive and Oak Avenue Parkway in Folsom. You'll follow Humbug Creek around an easy 2+ mile paved loop. Downy Woodpecker, Common Gallinule, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and other resident and wintering species love this habitat. We may see river otters if we're lucky. This is a very pretty area and a great place for a morning bird outing. Trip will end by 11am. Bring water and dress for cold weather. We can handle a sprinkle, but heavy rain cancels trip.

Saturday, December 19
WOODFORDS CHRISTMAS COUNT
Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net

Sunday, December 20, 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. 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

Wednesday, December 23, 8am
Sacramento Wildlife Refuge
Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris

Tim: 870-5207, Spskua2@comcast.net
Ann: 947-7573,
burris.nellieann@gmail.com

Tim and Ann will be 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 and Tim and Ann are planning a stop at the Willows deli for lunch. 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 \$6 day use fee for each vehicle at the refuge, or buy a Duck Stamp and support all our national refuges. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike.

Saturday, December 26, 9am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net

Join Tim for an easy walk of about a mile and a half, viewing the wintering waterfowl, egrets, herons and shorebirds in the flooded wetland ponds, and listening for the unique call of the Sandhill Cranes as they soar overhead. CRP scopes will be available for close looks at a variety of birds, as well as microscopes to see the little critters that live in these ponds. This is an excellent walk for beginning birders, both adults and young people. Meet at the CRP Visitor Center parking lot. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. 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 and Sunday,
December 26 and 27, 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 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. See directions for December 26 day trip.

Sunday, December 27
SACRAMENTO CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422
mcudney@aol.com

Friday, January 1, 9am
New Year's Day at the 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 along the wetland ponds, stopping at the "Ducks In Scopes" activity and then going out to the renovated boardwalk viewing area. Meet at the CRP Visitor Center parking lot. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. This is an enjoyable trip for everyone, and beginners and families are welcome. See directions for the December 26th trip.



Ruby-crowned Kinglet
Kirsten Munson

Saturday, January 2, 8am
Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR
Leaders: Daniel and Pam Thompson
359-3777, keiran@surewest.net

Join Pam and Daniel 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.

Sunday, January 3
FOLSOM CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

Monday, January 4, 8am
Mather Lake
Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661
Marksawyer3383@yahoo.com

Mather Lake is one of our 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.

Wednesday, January 6, 8am
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1290
dtankers@winfirst.com

The Colusa NWR is a great location 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.

Saturday, January 9, 8am
Tonzi Road and Western
Amador County
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Join Gary on a trip featuring the waters and back-country roads of the Sierra foothills in western Amador County. There is a surprising variety and number of passerines and raptors in this area, with a possibility of Lewis's Woodpeckers, Hermit and Varied Thrushes, sparrows, Prairie Falcons and 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 if you have them, food and water. Meet Gary at the Local Bean Cafe in the Rancho Murietta shopping center. Turn right at the 1st traffic light; junction of Hwy 16 (Jackson Rd) and Murietta Drive, and right again just past the fire station.

Saturday, January 9
Sacramento Kids' Christmas
Bird Count
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Compiler: Mara Weston, 208-3222
mara_weston@yahoo.com

See page 1 for full details.

Sunday, January 10, 8am
Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley
Leader: Craig Swolgaard,
530-334-3023, cswol@sbcglobal.net

This day will focus on wintering raptors. A published study found that California's Central Valley is one of the richest wintering areas for raptors in the country. The trip will begin at Meiss and Dillard Roads and end at Clay Station and Dillard Roads following a 33 mile loop used as a survey route in a past study. Many species of raptors have been found along this productive drive during the winter months, including Golden Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, White-tailed Kite, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and Burrowing Owl. This is

also a good area to find Mountain Bluebirds in winter and has potential for other vagrants. Meet Craig at the small public parking lot on Highway 16 and Sunrise Blvd. at 8am. We will car pool to try and keep the car numbers down, as some of the route uses pullouts on a busy highway. Bring a spotting scope if possible. Trip may go into early afternoon so water and food may be a good idea.

Wednesday, January 13, 8am
Sweetwater Creek
Leader: Craig DeMartini, 599-3300
Cloudwalk7@icloud.com

The variety of habitats in this area; lake, riparian forest, and chaparral, are good for wintering birds, and those that have moved down-slope. Some possibilities are Steller's Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Mountain Quail, Golden-crowned Kinglet, California Thrasher, Mountain Bluebird, Band-tailed Pigeon, eagles and Osprey. The wildcard will be the weather. A lot of rain will make the creek a raging torrent, and the walk down to the lake could be muddy, so dress accordingly. Meet Craig at the Bella Bru in the El Dorado Hills shopping center. From Hwy 50 east take Exit #30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the shopping center on your right. Rain on the trip day cancels.

Saturday, January 16, 8am
Sacramento National Wild Life 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. Note there is a fee for each vehicle at the SNWR refuge: either \$6 for a day pass or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass, or buy a Duck Stamp and support all our national refuges. 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.

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Field Trips continued from page 5

**Saturday, January 16, 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 17, 8am
Robinson Road, Road 113 and
Bird's Landing
Leaders: Mark Martucci: 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com
Paul Cordero: pkcordero@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.

**FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING
BIRDERS**

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sunday, December 13

These beginner 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. Trips are limited to 10 adult participants and registration is required. 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.

**SACRAMENTO CITY COLLEGE
INTRODUCTION TO
ORNITHOLOGY**

Sacramento City College will be offering its Introduction to Ornithology class during its spring 2016 semester. It is tentatively scheduled from 4-4:50 on Tuesdays and 6-9pm on Thursdays for labs. There will be weekend field trips. Keep an eye out for the official schedule at losrios.edu/scc/spring/Biology-BIOL.htm.

The class is listed as BIOL 332
Introduction to Ornithology, 3 Units

Description: This introductory course covers the biology and natural history of birds. Topics include the evolutionary origins of birds and flight, avian physiology and sensory systems, migration, social behavior, reproduction, and conservation. Laboratory work explores bird structure and function and teaches the taxonomic classification and identification of birds, particularly those found in California and the western United States. Field trips are required; students study bird identification, behavior, and ecology.

There is a TBA LAB which is the field trip component of the class. One weekend field trip, four Saturday or Sunday field trips and one weekday field trip to observe bird banding are also required.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

A great trip for families, youth groups and newer birders, this is an opportunity to work on duck identification as well as other wetland birds.

Stop by the Cosumnes River Preserve and check out Ducks In Scopes, where docents have a row of scopes set up, including lower ones for children, giving you good views of the many colorful ducks and other wetland birds. A microscope and hand lens provide close-up looks at '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. 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:

December: Sunday 12/6 and Saturdays
12/12, 12/19 and 12/26

Then, start the New Year off right and join us on Friday, January 1, 2016.

**OUTREACH VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

We have one upcoming winter event on the calendar where we will need volunteers to help staff our table. You do not need to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding and talking to people about our field trips. You would be working with an experienced volunteer.

On Saturday, January 23, 2016, SAS will have a table at the Galt Winter Bird Festival. If you can work morning or afternoon for a few hours, please contact Bill Bianco at biancowf@yahoo.com, or call 372-3318.

**SCHEDULE THE GBBC!
FOR FEBRUARY 12-15, 2016**

Greetings from the Great Backyard Bird Count team at Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada! We want to remind you to mark your calendars for the 19th GBBC, coming up February 12 through 15, 2016. Because the GBBC is integrated with the eBird program you can start practicing now at ebird.org. Count statistics from all over the world generate much needed information for scientists about bird populations and movements. Last year a total of 18,726,079 birds were counted worldwide. The birdcount.org site also contains a gallery of participants' bird photography including contest winners and category itemization by criteria such as behavior and habitat.

Now there are dedicated GBBC apps for android and iOS platforms. The BirdLog app from BirdsEye is the exclusive mobile data entry app for the Great Backyard Bird Count that allows you to:

- Plot the exact location of your sightings using your phone's GPS
- Easy 1 tap to increment species counts
- Create new personal locations or choose an existing hotspot or personal location for your checklist
- Create checklists even when there is no cell coverage for later submission
- Enter birds quickly and easily as you see them using bird codes or full names
- Scroll and review your checklist before submitting it

The apps can be found at gbbc.birdcount.org/birding-apps/

SO . . . let's get out there, have fun and count!

Birding and Nature Events

20TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 20th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 15-18, 2016**. 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. Plus, there are three new events this year: Expanded "Nature Track" events: climate change impacts, visit an oyster farm, learn about sustainable fishing, and more; "Youth Track:" recognition and special admission offers for youth aged 13-18 and a drawing for a gift certificate for some lucky participants 18 or younger; and "Travel by Trolley:" check your registration info for the trolley schedule to see if you can hitch a lift between the Community Center and your field trip. Registration will remain open until January 5th but some events fill up fast so hurry to the Festival site at morrobaybirdfestival.org or call 805-234-1170.

9TH 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 9th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, January 23, 2016**. 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! Tours also include a sunrise photo tour, Howard Ranch vernal pools, and sunset tours to Woodbridge Road and Staten Island.

Google 'Galt Birding Festival' for more detailed information. Registration for the 9th 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 17th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 27-31, 2016**. Special Guest and Keynote Speaker at Saturday night's Gathering of Wings Banquet and Silent Auction will be George Lepp. George is one of North America's best-known contemporary outdoor and nature photographers. His subject will be "True Confessions of a Wild Bird Photographer." A lighthearted look at what a professional wildlife photographer goes through to try and fool his quarry into letting him get closer.

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! There's also something new this year with specialty tours with details coming soon. They include: Eagle Creek Ranch Ecotour: Safari-style birding tours; Gage's Ecotour: Bird-viewing Drift Boat down the mighty Sac and Feather Rivers; and Forebay Aquatic Center of Lake Oroville,

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).

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

CV Birds, which conducts the annual Central Valley Bird Symposium, has a new website, cvbirds.org, full of photos, events and information. Their facebook page is [facebook.com/cvbirds](https://www.facebook.com/cvbirds). They have also maintained a yahoo newsgroup since 1999, full of central valley bird sightings.

You should also check out the California Audubon website at ca.audubon.org and even sign up for their newsletter. This month for instance, there are articles on the wind turbines at Altamont pass, the restoration of Sonoma Creek and the fight to keep Humboldt Bay as one of the most important places for shorebirds and waterbirds.

EVENTS AT EFFIE YEAW

Holiday SALE: Effie Yeaw Nature Center will be holding a holiday sale on Saturday, December 5th, from 9am-4pm. Besides the usual great finds in their discovery shop there will be guest vendors with an expanded selection of merchandise including art, pottery, toys, jewelry, and garden decor. An additional 20% off the price will be offered to new and continuing members. A great time to shop and join the Nature Center.

KIDS Winter camp dates for ages 5 (one class) and 6-11: December 21-23 and 28-30. Get ready for animal adventures, hikes, storytelling, survival skills, art and more! This season's camps are sure to thrill! View WINTER camp descriptions and dates at sacnaturecenter.net/winter-camps15.html.

SALVAGING RAPTOR CARCASSES FOR EVALUATION

The Wildlife Investigations Lab (WIL) and the Wildlife Branch of CDFW are requesting raptor carcasses be collected and submitted to WIL, including eagles. The carcasses will be used for mortality investigation to inform a disease and contaminate surveillance project for which WIL is lead. In addition, the carcasses can be used to improve avian influenza detection in non-waterfowl species and to better understand impacts to raptors; also to inform future conservation and management actions for raptors.

Ideally, carcasses should be dead less than 24-48 hours and have no signs of scavenging or insect infestation, and under most conditions carcasses can be frozen until submission. Please contact Krysta Rogers for further information.

Krysta Rogers, Sr Environmental Scientist
Avian Mortality Investigation
358-1662, Krysta.Rogers@Wildlife.ca.gov

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON FUTURE PROGRAMS

2016

- January 21** Ron LeValley, *Our Changing Oceans*
- February 18** Maya Khosla, *Black-backed Woodpeckers*
- March 17** Eric C Hansen, *Giant Gartersnake*
- April 21** Ed Harper, *Birding Alaska*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Adrienne Brown, Grant S Green, Arla McGuire, Rick Soehren and Tracy Wetzel made donations to the **General Fund**.

Karen Benson, Adrienne Brown, Patricia Clark, Natalie Fenner, Mary Howard, Rick Soehren, Elinor Wilcockson and Jane Woehl made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

The Board of Directors would like your help in raising \$15,000 for Education and Conservation projects in 2015-16. Please donate generously.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2015-2016

Saturday, December 5, 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.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CBC DATES

Saturday, December 19, 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 27, Sacramento Christmas Count

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

Sunday, January 3, 2016, Folsom Christmas Count

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

Saturday, January 9, 2016, 4th Annual Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

Compiler: Mara Weston, 208-3222, mara_weston@yahoo.com

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit natureali.org/cbcs.html.

ONLINE DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP NOW AVAILABLE

You can now charge donations to SAS on your credit card or via PayPal on the SAS website. You may make either one-time or recurring monthly donations in any amount at sacramentoaudubon.org/payments.html. Several smart people have already taken advantage of this for both donations and membership. Note please that the Board of Directors would like your help in raising \$15,000 for Education and Conservation projects in 2015-16. Please donate generously.

Seasonal Observations

October 1 to October 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

This month was modestly slow in the scheme of things and can't really be characterized, like some months can, as an invasion year of montane birds or one with a lot of rarities. Waterfowl numbers continued to build, **Ferruginous Hawks** and **Merlins** and other winter raptors increased in abundance, and some of the most interesting reports were of birds that lingered from September. The only **Pectoral Sandpiper** report of the month was from the Davis Wetlands on 10/5, while a single **Red-necked Phalarope** continued through the end of the month at the Woodland WTP.

Unlike the past fall/winter period, there were few reports of **Band-tailed Pigeons** away from typical sites on the west side of the Valley, where over 50 were reported in the Putah Creek canyon on 10/17. A **Common**

Poorwill found along Latrobe Rd in eastern Sacramento County on 10/24 was later than most. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was photographed at Lake Solano County Park on 10/3.

Among songbirds, a **Western Kingbird** was reported along Babel Slough on the surprisingly late date of 10/8. There doesn't appear to be a repeat of last winter's **Steller's Jay** invasion, though singles from Fair Oaks on 10/21-22 and another Fair Oaks site on 10/31 were notable. A **Sage Thrasher** along Michigan Bar Rd first reported on 10/8 continued to at least 10/15 and was seen and photographed by several observers. A **Tennessee Warbler** found at Ancil Hoffman Park on 10/7 was probably the same bird found there on 9/30. A **Black-and-white Warbler** first reported at the UC Davis Arboretum on 9/29 continued through at least 10/1, while a late **Wilson's Warbler** was found in Davis on 10/25. The **Black-chinned**

Sparrow first found along Babel Slough on 9/30 was reported through 10/19. An impressive 9 **Vesper Sparrows** were at "Vesper Sparrow Corner" on Hwy 128, the first bend west of Winters, on 10/17. A female **Cassin's Finch** was a nice surprise among **Purple Finches** at Fiske Lake in the mountains of northwest Yolo County. A flock of **Red Crossbills** were reported north of the American River near Hazel Ave on 10/30, and **Evening Grosbeak** reports included one from along Putah Creek near Pedrick Rd on 10/8, one at Effie Yeaw on 10/17, and four in Fair Oaks on 10/30. Missing from last month's report was a female **Painted Bunting** seen and photographed at the lone WTP on 9/12.

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

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Carol Clifton	George and Jane
David Hanke	Sullivan
Katherine Langan	Tracy and Steve
Mic and Myra	Wetzel
McPherson	Elinor Willcockson
Pam Pappone	Carol and Don
Gina Radieve	Zinter

THANKS LEA!

Our long standing membership chairwoman, Lea Landry, has decided to let someone else enjoy the rewards (and headaches) of the job. Mara Weston has kindly stepped up to assume the duties. We owe a grand thank you to Lea for her many years of service for SAS. Keeping membership current and coordinating with National Audubon as they have changed protocol has not been an easy task but we have Lea to thank for making it all run smoothly. Thanks Lea!

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

[facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon)



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:

Roger Adamson, Ralf Baker, Kathy Blankenship, Subhash Chand, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Ted Gilliland, Steve Hampton, Larry Hickey, Dan Kopp, Alan Krakauer, Eric LoPresti, Calvin Lou, Mark Martucci, Linda Melching, Dan Murphy, Michael Perrone, Jim Rowoth, Mark Sawyer, John Sterling, Michele Swarthout, Jim Thomas, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet and Mike Yoshihara.

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

Chris Conard

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

Mara Weston, Membership Chair, mara_weston@yahoo.com
7708 McClintock Way, Sacramento, CA 95828-4321

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.



Happy Holidays

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.

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on January 26, 2016 at 7pm. The new address for the Board meetings is Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room, 601 Munroe St, Sacramento, 95825. There is no meeting in December.

Minutes of Board Meetings through April 2015 can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to Board Minutes.

Sacramento Audubon Society
7708 McClintock Way
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Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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

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Sacramento, CA 95826
203-1610, e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

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

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

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

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

January 21, 2016

Ron LeValley: *Our Changing Oceans*
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm



Brown Booby
Ron LeValley

Brown Boobies are occurring farther north and in greater numbers annually now.