



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

There will be no general meeting in the month of December. Our next meeting will be held January 17, 2013 with a presentation by David Wyatt on Ringtail Cats. Two other programs have been confirmed for 2013. They are February's presentation by Brian Sullivan on eBird, and March's presentation by Ed Harper, titled *Birding in Montana*. 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.

Sally Walters, Program Chair



Whimbrel
Stephen D'Amato

2ND ANNUAL KIDS AND YOUNG ADULTS CBC!!

January 12, 2013 is the date for the Second Annual Sacramento Area Kids/Young Adults' Christmas Bird Count. Instead of Cosumnes River Preserve—where the winds can howl a zillion miles an hour—this year, the count will be held at Effie Yeaw Nature Center. There will be a little more room and so the possibility of having more teams than last year's six. For more information and to volunteer to assist or to register the children in your life, contact Maureen Geiger at 444-0804 or mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net. This was a truly memorable event last year, so everyone is encouraged to join us in 2013!

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2012-2013

Saturday, December 1, Daybreak, ARNHA Wildlife Count

Compiler: Lea Landry, 638-1141, lrandry46@earthlink.net
Annual census of birds and other wildlife on the American River Parkway.
See further details in write up on page 8.

Saturday, December 15, 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 23, Sacramento Christmas Count

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

Sunday, December 30, Folsom Christmas Count

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

Saturday, January 12, 2013, 2nd Annual Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count

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

Other Christmas Bird Counts:

Saturday, December 15, Auburn Christmas Count

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

Sunday, December 16, Putah Creek Christmas Count

Compiler: Steve Hampton, stevehampton@gmail.com

Sunday, December 16, Stockton Christmas Count

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

Monday, December 17, Benicia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island) 870 5207, spskua2@comcast.net
Compiler: Robin Leong, (707) 643-1287, robin_leong@netzero.net

Thursday, December 27, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, ERPfromCA@aol.com

Friday, December 28, Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

Compilers: Tom Rusert and Darren Peterie, (707) 939-8007
www.SonomaBirding.org

Tuesday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

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

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

Field Trip Findings

Buck's Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills (11/11) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: "Today was a beautiful day for a long, slow walk along Buck's Creek in El Dorado Hills. About 18 of us spent 3 hours seeing what was there. We had about 40 species and especially enjoyed the American Wigeons and Common Gallinules on the duck weed-covered pond. It was noted that since we began offering trips there, the habitat has changed substantially with many riparian species filling in along the ponds and much less open water than in the past."

Bushy Lake (11/10) — Leader Darrell Mohr reported: "On a cold and clear morning the three of us started out with only a few birds in sight. As the temperature warmed, more birds became active. Along the road between Bushy Lake and Cal Expo, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Western Bluebirds and Cedar Waxwings were very active. Bushy Lake as usual had many Wood Ducks. We had a total of 40 different species of birds."

Bodega Bay (11/4) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: "Fourteen birders enjoyed beautiful weather in and around Bodega Bay. The bird of the day was a Long-tailed Duck, reported to us by a couple of other birders while we were out on Bodega Head. We quickly made our way a short distance north to the location and, after much searching, finally found the bird a ways off shore with a raft of Surf Scoters. Other highlights included Horned, Eared, Pied-billed, Western, and Clark's grebes in a single raft in the harbor; and a good sized flock of Surf-birds at Bodega Head, with Red-throated Loons, Common Murres, Pigeon Guillemot and a Rhinoceros Auklet off shore. And perhaps the best part of the trip was a stop at the sand spit just north of the West Side Marina. There were no rarities here but there was a good-sized flock of mixed shorebirds close to the road. None of them flushed when we all stopped and got out of our cars, affording great views and opportunities to help identify them all for everyone. We tallied 66 species in all for the day."

Bobelaine Sanctuary (11/3) — Leader Linda Pittman reported: "Four participants joined me on a walk through Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary. It was a perfect fall day for a walk, a little crisp and cool when we started but it

warmed up nicely on a sunny clear day. We strolled along leaf-covered trails in the lush riparian area and sampled the abundant wild grapes. We saw many species expected for the area and season. Highlights included a Spotted Sandpiper found by eagle-eye Mike Cruikshank near the island in Lake Crandall, scores of Cedar Waxwings and extended scope views of a very accommodating Merlin. A total of 47 species were seen on the two-mile walk."

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area (10/30) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: "Our group of six participants had a great morning of birding. We started with a search for the Franklin's Gull along the eastern portion of the Bypass. The bird was located almost immediately. Its size difference in comparison with the many other Gulls made it easy to identify, and we had good scope views of it as it preened and slept. This was a life bird for several of the participants."

As we progressed along the tour route, we saw numerous White-tailed Kites, several Red-tailed Hawks, one Red-shouldered Hawk, several Northern Harriers, and one Great Horned Owl. After turning north on the return route, we had a surprise. We saw an immature Bald Eagle perched in a tree overlooking the flooded fields.

Most of the expected duck species had returned and were easily seen. The usual shorebirds were also seen. A good morning of birding."

Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek (10/27) — Leader Lea Landry reported: "Despite literally 100s of skulls and other watercraft on Lake Natoma for the Head of the American Regatta, six enthusiastic birders/photographers enjoyed a nearly perfect day on the trails of Shadow Glen, also known as Snowberry Creek Staging Area. Few water birds were seen due to the frantic activity of the many competitors on the water: A bewildered Canada Goose honked to a landing in one of the racing lanes, refusing to give way to oncoming skulls and a Mallard contented itself with floating in the small pond next to the Parkway Trail. We did manage excellent sightings of 39 bird species, including several Phainopeplas, a very cooperative and beautiful Sharp-shinned Hawk, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, as well as enough towhees, sparrows, and woodpeckers and other oak

woodland birds to keep us busy and satisfied."

River Bend Park, American River (10/25) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "Three people joined me for a loop walk through the oak woodland and along the river. Highlights were a well-camouflaged Great Horned Owl spotted by Karen Parr and a nice look at a coyote spotted by Grant Boice. We totaled 40 species for the morning."

American River Between Watt and Howe (10/21) — Leader Dan Kopp reported "I was joined by eight folks on this overcast and cool morning. Our definite avian highlight was a male Taiga Merlin; we also enjoyed a Cooper's Hawk and Red-shouldered Hawk. There were a few hundred flyover Northern Pintails throughout the morning heading north, and we also encountered several Wood Ducks. A few passerine highlights included Hermit Thrush, Lincoln's Sparrow, Orange-crowned Warbler, Western Bluebird, Yellow-billed Magpie and many Cedar Waxwings. We also enjoyed watching an otter in the river and noted several Gray Squirrels. It was a nice small group and we managed to find 53 species."

Hope Valley, Alpine County, Fall Foliage Birding (10/20) — Leader Dan Brown reported: "Ten participants observed 23 species (a typical low fall total). Highlight species: Golden-crowned Kinglet, Clark's Nutcracker, and Cassin's Finch; and American Dipper (seen post trip by several participants and me). The fall foliage was spectacular!"

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge (10/16) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: "Twelve birders joined me on this very warm autumn morning to bird the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge. Among the 58 species seen by our group, we enjoyed the thousands of newly arrived Greater White-fronted Geese and other waterfowl. The highlight bird was a Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk seen during our walk along the "Discovery Trail" located just east of the pond with the viewing platform. We also took the short, but very enjoyable auto tour route where we found several shorebird species, raptors and Sandhill Cranes in addition to a nice variety of waterfowl."

Pete Hayes

Field Trips



Eared Grebe
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, 444-0604, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net for trips through December 21. For trips from December 22 through January 27, 2013, 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.

Saturday, December 1

American River Natural History Association Annual Animal and Bird Count

Compiler: Lea Landry, 638-1411

Join Lea and other volunteers to assist with this annual count of birds and other creatures along the American River Parkway sponsored by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA). Results of this count are important to future planning for the Parkway, and the goal is to have 11 teams of two or more persons each. The count differs from other Christmas Counts in that teams count species rather than total numbers of each species. This is a great warm-up for the CBCs to follow. Contact Lea for details, team assignments, and meeting and compilation locations.

Sunday, December 2, 9am-Noon

Gulls at Nimbus Dam

Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311
calidris@surewest.net

Join Ed for an informative walk along the American River. 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. This trip will last until late morning. A scope is useful in addition to binoculars. Meet at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery parking lot near Hwy 50 and Hazel Avenue (about 15 miles east of Sacramento).

Saturday, December 8, 7am

American River-Gristmill to Mayhew Drain

Leader: Cliff Hawley, 300-2495
yellowhammerCA@gmail.com

Join Cliff at his favorite area along the Parkway in search of our wintering birds. He'll find our resident and wintering birds,

and will be looking for uncommon species; a wintering Northern Parula was found here a few years ago, and Red-breasted Nuthatches have been around this Fall. There are well worn trails and some that require a little more work, so depending on everyone's ability, he will decide how strenuous the walk will be in the morning. The trip will last until lunch time and is a great trip for beginners and more experienced birders. Meet Cliff at the Gristmill entrance to the Parkway. Park access is off Mira Del Rio Drive. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles, or you can park on Mira Del Rio Drive and walk in. Cliff will be at the Gristmill entrance road into the Parkway.

Sunday, December 9, 7:30am

King Ranch/Lynch Canyon/American Canyon Wetlands

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

Solano County has wonderful birding in a variety of habitats. Join Ken and Maureen on a drive through the King Ranch looking for eagles, falcons and other raptors, and burrowing owls; Lynch Canyon for a short hike into the valley looking for species similar to those at King but also including riparian species along the creek and ducks and grebes at the reservoir pond; then west to the American Canyon Wetlands where there will be myriad shorebirds, ducks and a few raptors as well which, depending on the tide, may be close enough for very good looks. This trip will last to mid-afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids. FRS radios will be useful. Meet Maureen at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave exit. Turn left; the Park and Ride will be on your

immediate left. Secondary meeting place in front of the Safeway just west of the Waterman exit in Fairfield BY 8am.

Sunday, December 16, 9am

East Lawn Cemetery

Leader: Mary Beth Metcalf, 456-7382

Join Mary Beth for a 2-3 hour slow-paced walk through East Lawn cemetery where many common wintering species can be found. Often, there will be less common finds such as red-breasted sapsuckers or golden-crowned kinglets, and red-breasted nuthatches. Meet Mary Beth at the entrance gate at 43rd Street and Folsom Boulevard. There is street parking on 42nd and 43rd streets.

Saturday, December 22, 8-11am

Miners Ravine/Roseville

Leader: Scott Dietrich, 208-4976
dietrichscott71@yahoo.com

Come out and enjoy an easy walk in Miners Ravine nature area, a great place to see winter birds. The area is one of the better places in Roseville for wintering sparrows and as many as 7 different species have been seen here including Fox, Savannah, and Lark Sparrows. Some interesting local waterfowl such as Wood Ducks, Common and Hooded Mergansers have been found in the creek wetland area. This walk is also good for raptors such as Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Cooper's Hawk, American Kestrel and possibly Sharp-shinned Hawk or Merlin. This is a great trip for beginners or families who want to enjoy an easy winter walk. Directions: Eureka exit from I-80, right onto E Roseville Parkway, left onto Orvietto Dr, then quick left into gravel parking lot.

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

Saturday, December 22, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored
trip

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Our Sandhill Cranes are back! 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 23
SACRAMENTO CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422
mcudney@aol.com

Be There!

Sunday, December 23, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the
Sacramento
Valley

Coordinator:
Mike Savino,
446-1392

See information for Saturday, December 22.

Saturday, December 29, 8am
Road 113, Robinson Road
and Bird's Landing
Leader: Jane Taylor, 444-0429
jg.taylor@att.net

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes, and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm

clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet Jane at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento, take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip.

Saturday, December 29, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley

A great way to spend an afternoon. See complete write-up for December 22nd.

Sunday, December 30
FOLSOM CHRISTMAS COUNT
Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

Another fun count.

Sunday, December 30, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Another chance to view wintering cranes, geese, ducks and shorebirds. See write-up for December 22.

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

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo.

Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident and wintering species. With most leaves fallen from the trees, there will be better views of the lake, and Wood Ducks are a good possibility. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours.

You may want to bring water. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders.

Saturday, January 5, 8am
Tonzi Road (Amador Co)
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri@sbcglobal.net

Join Gary on a road trip to the Sierra foothills in Amador County, along Highway's 16, 124, 88 and 12. The focus of the trip

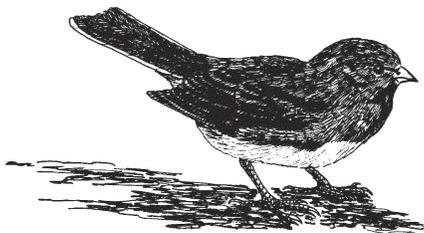
will be the Tonzi Road and Ione areas. Tonzi Rd is a back-country road north of Ione. Travel along this route will include some stops and walking short distances. There are an interesting and surprising variety and number of passerines and raptors in this area. There have been a Red-naped Sapsucker, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Lewis's Woodpeckers, Phainopeplas, Western Bluebirds, Hermit Thrushes, American, Lesser and Lawrence's Goldfinches, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and a variety of flycatchers, sparrows and raptors observed here. This trip will also include stops for waterfowl and shorebirds at ponds near Sutter Creek and Ione. Time permitting, we will also visit the Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery for local birds, like Belted Kingfisher, Osprey and Hutton's Vireo. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along hand held radios, food and water. Meet Gary at the College Greens/Raley's Shopping Center lot at 8391 Folsom Blvd. Park near the Starbucks. This Folsom Blvd Raley's is between Howe Ave and Watt Ave.

Sunday, January 6, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: John York, 409-9276
sunofyork@att.net

John will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley. Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles are sometimes seen, as well as herons, egrets and bitterns. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. Please note there is a fee for each vehicle at the refuge: either \$6 for a day pass or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

Wednesday, January 9, 8am
Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk
and Woodbridge Road
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Our Sandhill Cranes will be leaving in a month or so; don't miss an opportunity to see them, as well as the Greater White-



Oregon Junco
Stephen D'Amato

fronted Geese, Tundra Swans, and many species of duck wintering in the Delta wetlands. We'll walk the CRP boardwalk loop first; then drive along Desmond Road for more views of waterfowl. Then we'll drive to Woodbridge Road, making a couple of birding stops. Meet Cathie at the Nugget Market at 8am. Going south on I-5, take the Florin Road West exit; go west to the first signal light, (Greenhaven Drive), and make a U-turn. The parking area for the market will be on the right. Secondary meeting place is the CRP Visitor Center parking lot about 8:30am. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. FRS radios and spotting scopes are helpful if you have them. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, January 12, 8am

Beal's Point, Folsom Lake

**Leader: Margaret Martin, 599-0181
margaret.martin6@me.com**

Join Margaret for a 1 to 2 mile morning walk at Beal's Point. A variety of oak woodland birds and wintering sparrows should be seen, and grebes, goldeneyes and mergansers will be on the lake. Rock Wrens and Rufous-crowned Sparrows are possibilities. Meet Margaret at the Raley's shopping center parking lot on the northwest corner of Douglas and Auburn-Folsom roads, in the area near the Animal Hospital and Goodwill, for voluntary carpooling into the park. Or you can meet the group at the Beal's Point parking lot (fee required) about 8:30am. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, January 12

**2nd Annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count
Effie Yeaw Nature Center**

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

Registration is limited, so contact Maureen for more information.

Sunday, January 13, 8am

Salt Springs Valley

Leaders: Paul Cordero and Mark Martucci

**Paul, pkcordero@gmail.com
Mark, 833-6722,
matuchbirdman@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, warm clothing and FRS radios. 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.

Monday, January 14, 8am

Colusa NWR

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

The Colusa NWR is another great location in the Central Valley to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be many duck species and plenty of Snow, Ross's, Greater White-fronted and possibly a few Cackling Geese as well as other wetland birds. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well, and we can expect many raptors with the possibility of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We will spend a good amount of time on the main viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through riparian habitat next to the main viewing pond. We will then take the short auto tour and finish our outing with a return visit to the platform. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Weather permitting; there should be ample photo ops. Scopes and FRS radios will be helpful on this trip. Meet Dan at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 7:45am. 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 19, 8am

Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR

**Leaders: Pam and Dan Thompson
359-3777, keiran@surewest.net**

Join Pam and Dan for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, they'll take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes, looking for Sandhill Cranes, raptors and grassland birds, and then stop at the Colusa NWR viewing platform. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothing. FRS radios and scopes are helpful if you have them. Meet in the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the

freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. There is a \$4.00 per person charge at Gray Lodge.

Special Family Friendly Trip!!

Saturday, January 19, 9am - Noon

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area

**Leaders: Ed Pandolfino and
Maureen Geiger, 444-0804**

e-mail: mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

This is a great opportunity to bird with Ed who is not only a very good birder but is also a published author, president of the Western Field Ornithologists, and has many other credits to his name. In winter, California's Central Valley supports an amazing number and variety of waterfowl (ducks and geese) and the highest concentration of raptors (hawks and falcons) found anywhere in North America. This area is an ideal place to witness this winter spectacle. Join Ed and Maureen for a morning drive around this diverse area just minutes from downtown Sacramento where a dozen or more different species of waterfowl, herons, hawks, and more might be seen. This trip will end by noon. Spaces are limited and reservations are required; contact Maureen by phone or email.

Sunday, January 20, 8am

Road 113, Robinson Road and Bird's Landing

Leaders:

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

Mark and Paul will be looking for wintering raptors such as Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks and Prairie Falcons, as well as grassland birds including Mountain Plovers. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Tuesday, January 22, 8:30am

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

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

Field Trips continued: on page 6

Field Trips continued from page 5

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 26, 8am till about noon

Nimbus Fish Hatchery
Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
rey_ality@hotmail.com

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

Hazel Avenue north of Hwy 50. Scopes are helpful on this trip.

Sunday, January 27, 8am
Western Placer County
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net

Western Placer County can often rival the great Wildlife Refuges in numbers and diversity of waterfowl, and it is also known for large concentrations of raptors. Besides the expected species, Eurasian Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Lewis's Woodpecker and Lapland Longspur are all possible. Join Scott for a full day of exploring this diverse area and bring liquids, lunch and FRS radios. Meet at Brookfield's Restaurant parking lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road off-ramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfield's is behind Shell.

Sunday, January 27, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392
Another chance to view wintering cranes, geese, ducks and shorebirds. See write-up for December 22.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2013

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: (all Sundays), January 13, February 10, March 17

Each Trip: 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, email address and the field trip date of your choice, or by calling Cathie at (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

SAS OUTREACH

NatureFest at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center was a magnet for children and families. Catching frogs, watching hawks swoop over your head, seeing live bats close up, and taking nature walks along the trails to see deer and woodpeckers, there was something for everyone. John Huls, Jonilynn Okano and Cathie LaZier led nature walks, while Kathy Moore and Julie Serences helped at the Audubon Outreach table. Julie also had her pollinator information available, and promoted Cornell's Lady Bug research program, a great science project for home or school.

The Lodi Crane Festival saw the debut of our new Audio/Visual screen, featuring a slide show of a pair of White-tailed Kites (our SAS logo) followed and photographed throughout their nesting season by Dan Brown, and a Sandhill Crane video by Lon Yarborough. Stop by our table at the Galt Winter Bird Festival and take a look at this newest addition to our table. Many Sacramento Audubon members volunteered at the Crane Festival, both at the Outreach table and as field trip leaders and program presenters.

As always, we are in need of additional people to help at the Outreach table at various events. If you're interested, contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, or 457-6882. You do not need to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding, and you would work with an experienced volunteer.



Jan Tankersley (L) and Terry Atkinson at the SAS Outreach Table at the Lodi Crane Festival

THE CALIFORNIA HEARTLAND PROJECT

Habitat 2020, the habitat committee of the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), is a coalition of all local organizations that value nature including Sacramento Audubon Society. Several years ago it constantly fought threats to habitats around Sacramento without a unifying positive vision. To address this it created The California Heartland Project, an initiative to proactively raise awareness of our region's natural values and encourage their protection. The California Heartland Project has since become official policy of ECOS and the city of Sacramento and may soon be similarly accepted by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG).

The Sacramento Region has good reason to value and protect its natural environment since it is the center of California's Central Valley, a North American ecoregion the World Wildlife Fund identifies as among the most critically endangered. Natural areas like those protected around Silicon Valley don't just protect nature. They also increase regional economic vitality since they're so attractive to new and future residents.

The California Heartland's natural values are many. They include the vast California Delta, North America's largest fen that has marsh birds like rails and bitterns, peat soils, and freshwater tides. Old growth forests along the Cosumnes River at its eastern edge, attract lost eastern warblers. Vast prairies farther east, where a succession of different wildflowers appear throughout the year, offer soaring raptors foraging over them, which similarly change with the seasons. Our prairies

are frequently dappled with vernal pools rich with unique plants and animals that developed in isolation from contact with fish. Farther east, surrounded by prairies, is Deer Creek Hills, an oak woodland island that coincides with an outcrop of greenstone rock and provides home to Western Bluebirds and White-breasted Nuthatches. Just east of Sacramento County in low foothills chaparral, granite and gabbro Sierran bedrock is habitat for Wrentits and California Thrashers. Riparian forests line the American River as it flows through the Heartland's heart connecting many of these places and providing a link to the sea along the Sacramento River through the Delta. In turn the river becomes a pathway inland for king salmon, mergansers, gulls, goldeneyes, and Delta breezes that cool our summers.

All these natural wonders are just beyond our doorsteps but many are threatened. It's time we appreciated the nature of our California Heartland and started protecting it. More information about ECOS can be found at ecosacramento.net. Habitat 2020 is found at ecosacramento.net/?e=37. The Heartland Project can be found at ecosacramento.net/?e=62, including a link to a map showing the land area considered essential for protection.

By Dr. Glen Holstein
California Native Plant Society
representative to Habitat 2020.

Editor's note: Dr. Holstein presented a program on the Central Valley's unique ecosystem, including the California Heartland Project, to the General Membership of SAS in September, 2012.



American River Parkway as seen from the Fair Oaks Bluffs

NEW PROGRAM FOR SAS THE SPEAKER'S BUREAU!

The Sacramento Audubon Society has set up a Speakers Bureau to help educate children and adults about birds. The speakers can make presentations to groups on topics such as *Common Birds of Sacramento*, *Cool things that birds do*, *Why do birds do that?*, *Bird Courtship Behavior*, and *Variety of Bird Habitats in Sacramento*. Each presentation is supported by a slide show. If you know of a group that would like such a presentation, please contact Subhash Chand at (916) 966-0747 or at subhashc@aol.com. We are also looking for volunteers who would like to share their love of birds with others by making such presentations. You will be provided training on how to make the presentations and can go along with an experienced presenter to see how it is done. If you can help, please contact Subhash as listed above.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES AT CRP

During the waterfowl season the Cosumnes River Preserve hosts a wide variety of birds, including some of the most colorful ducks such as Cinnamon Teal, Green-winged Teal, and Bufflehead, as well as geese, swans, herons and egrets, and Sandhill Cranes. On various dates docents from the preserve will have a row of scopes set up near the boardwalk, some set lower to accommodate children, and they'll focus on giving you good views of these birds. In addition there are often hawks overhead, and some of the more interesting shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts and Common Snipe are often seen.

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

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

- Sunday, December 2
- Saturday December 8
- Saturday, December 22
- Saturday, December 29
- Tuesday, January 1st (New Year's Day)

Birding and Nature Events

17TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 17th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held January 18-21, 2013. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an area recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds, and at last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified! This year's keynote speaker will be Alvaro Jaramillo giving a talk on *Birding Outside the Box: How Our Brain Identifies Birds* on Saturday evening, January 19, 2013. Jaramillo is well known for his *Identify Yourself* column in *Bird Watchers Digest* and for his many contributions to authoritative birding books around the world. His intriguing keynote address will show how expert birders' brains work to make fast, accurate bird identifications, and how the rest of us can train our own brains to do the same. 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. Sacramento's own Ed Harper is leading a field trip on shorebirds. To register and for more information about the Festival, check their website at morrobaybirdfestival.org.

6TH 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 6th Annual Winter Bird Festival, Saturday, January 26, 2013. Many migratory and resident birds call Galt their winter home. Guided tours offer an exciting opportunity to see the birds that spend their winters in the Central Valley! Wetlands, songbird and sandhill crane tours, led by Cosumnes River Preserve managers and biologists are included so sign up and have your binoculars ready! There will be two tours for photographers: ZenOptic Wetlands Dawn Photo Tour and a Cosumnes River Preserve Photo Blind Tour, sponsored by Canon Camera. Google Galt Birding Festival for more detailed information. Registration for the 6th annual festival will open on December 7, 2012. If you have any questions or would like to be placed on a waiting list to be notified when registration opens, please call (209) 366-7115.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL OF THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

The 14th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in Chico on January 24-27, 2013. "Chico's Own" husband and wife team, Roger Lederer and Carol Burr, who have birded throughout the world, will present *The Amazing in the Familiar: Surprising Facts about Common Birds* at the "Gathering of Wings" Banquet on Saturday night. Their keynote presentation will give you some insight into the individual stories of common birds, such as how Cedar Waxwings tell each other apart, why birds migrate with one eye, what Shakespeare had to do with our avian fauna, and why Ravens talk to wolves. There are currently 65 different field trips and presentations planned.

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.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Terrie Gray, Kenny Mateik, Dixie Robinson, Keith Wagner, Jon Wato and Patricia Wells to the **General Fund**.

Jennifer Davidson, Katherine Dwyer, Michael Eaton, Richard and Mary Howard, Sandra Lane, Kenny Mateik, Dixie Robinson, Dan and Jan Tankersley, Richard Turner and Patricia Wells and Dan Williams to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

HOG ISLAND CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

The application deadline is January 15th for National Audubon Society Scholarships to the legendary 6-day, 5-night birding and nature programs at the Audubon Camp in Maine on Hog Island. 2013 camp instructors include Kenn Kaufman, Scott Weidensaul, Clay and Pat Sutton, and many more. All summer programs include a trip to Eastern Egg Rock, home of the restored Atlantic Puffin colony by Project Puffin director, Steve Kress. There is an early bird special \$50 discount for all registrations received by December 14th.

For more information:
hogisland.audubon.org
or email: hogisland@audubon.org
or call (607) 257-7308 x14

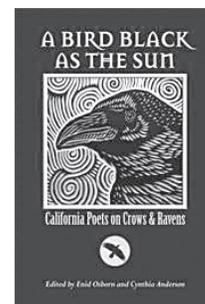
See you on the island!

NEW BOOK FROM JOHN MUIR LAWS

In addition to John Muir Laws new book, *The Laws Guide to Drawing Birds*, reviewed in last month's *Observer*, another book of interest to bird lovers has recently been published.

This is a unique poetry anthology entitled *A Bird Black As the Sun: California Poets on Crows & Ravens*, which has proven to be very popular with birders as well as poetry-lovers. The anthology has attracted praise from luminaries such as nationally renowned poet Jane Hirshfield, who described it as, "A book whose heights, swoops, visions, and versatile multiplicities of flight-path are worthy of the trickster-bird celebrated in its pages." The Los Angeles Review described it as "An accessible and riveting collection." More accolades are posted on the book's website, www.greenpoetpress.com. The anthology is available at select California bookstores as well as the usual online booksellers.

There are over 80 outstanding California poets in the anthology, including Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Philip Levine, Kay Ryan, Christopher Buckley, Carol Muske-Dukes, William Everson, and many more. The contributors come from every region of California, including the state's finest regional poets as well as City Poet Laureates from San Francisco, Livermore, Alameda, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara.



SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Jean Alford	Joyce Jensen
Robert Calmes	Kristin Niemi
Dan Chadderdon	Anna Potter
Allen Jamieson,	Sam Woodward

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. There is no meeting held in December. The next meeting will be on January 29, 2013 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON 2013 PROGRAMS

January 17	David Wyatt, <i>Ringtail Cat</i>
February 21	Brian Sullivan, <i>eBird</i>
March 21	Ed Harper, <i>Birding Montana</i>

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

- Promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds;
- Promote the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach;
- Provide, encourage and support environmental educational opportunities; and
- Provide proactive leadership in the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry46@earthlink.net (916) 638-1141

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.

Observations continued from page 10

the Valensin portion of CRP on 10/18, up to ten **Chipping Sparrows** from various Yolo County locations, a Grasshopper Sparrow at the Blue Heron Trail (Stone Lakes NWR) on 10/5, and the **Harris's Sparrow** in north Davis returning for another season on 10/26.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html).

The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000' contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve (cvbirds.org) and eBird. It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Bruce Deuel, Scott Dietrich, Chris Dunford, Gil Ewing, Claire Gallagher, Cory, Gregory, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Joanne Katanic, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, John Luther, Ron Melcer, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Ron Pozzi, Will Rockey, Steve Rottenborn, Mary Schiedt, Don Schmoldt, John Sterling, Michael Strom, Danny Swicegood, Dan Tankersley, John Trochet, and Sally Walters.

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

Chris Conard

**SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION
ON FACEBOOK**

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



Seasonal Observations

October 1 to October 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

This October had a nice mix of lingering migrants and winter arrivals. The invasion of northern/montane species continued, with high numbers of **Red-breasted Nuthatches** and **Pine Siskins**. **Evening Grosbeaks** were found in the Rancho Cordova area on 10/23 and 10/28, as well as in Esparto, where ten were reported on 10/29. In response to unsettled weather, **Violet-green Swallows**, which are not regular on the Valley floor, were widely reported mid-month, with a high of 250 at the Woodland WTP (WWTP) on 10/12.

Among the water bird highlights was a hatch-year **Surf Scoter** at WWTP on 10/30-11/2. Folsom Lake produced two uncommon loon reports, with a **Red-throated Loon** off Beals Point on 10/30 and a **Pacific Loon** near the Granite Bay launch on 10/31. A **Red-necked Grebe** at Rancho Seco on 10/16 could not be refound despite several attempts. Two **Baird's Sandpipers** were found at the Lincoln's WTP on the somewhat late date of 10/5, and **Pectoral Sandpipers** were reported from Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP), with four on 10/4, and Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA), with two on 10/4. A **Marbled Godwit** was photographed at YWA on 10/28, as was a hatch-year **Franklin's Gull**, which continued through 10/31. A hatch-year **Sabine's Gull** was found at the WWTP on 10/12-16.

Sacramento Audubon Society
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Among the songbird highlights, most notable were a (eastern) **Winter Wren**

at the Orr Forest of CRP on 10/11 (probably the same bird that wintered there last season), a **Gray Catbird** at Bobelaine in Sutter County on 10/19-20, a **Brown Thrasher** mist-netted and banded at Stone Lakes NWR on 10/3 (the second for this location, with one netted at the same spot on 7/10/2008), a **Palm Warbler** at Azevedo Park in Rocklin on 10/28, a hatch-year **American Redstart** in Sacramento near 31st and B Streets on 10/7, and a **Clay-colored Sparrow** on Chadbourne Rd in Fairfield on 10/22. Other interesting reports include a **Harlan's Red-tailed Hawk** at Colusa NWR on 10/16, a **Rough-legged Hawk** seen over Elk Grove Park on 10/30, a **Common Poorwill** at the Bufferlands on 10/7, two **Hammond's Flycatchers** at Putah Creek Fishing Access #1 on 10/14, a very late **Western Kingbird** on Rd 27 northwest of Davis on 10/19, a **Sage Thrasher** at

Observations continued on page 9

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

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