



The *OBSERVER*

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

There will be no general meeting for the month of December. Our next meeting will be held January 15, 2009 and Gary Ivey and Mike Eaton from the organization "Save Our Sandhill Cranes" will be our speakers. Please note that on January 17th the town of Galt is holding their 2nd Annual Winter Birds Festival honoring the Sandhill Cranes and other wintering species of the Central Valley. See page 5 for more details.

Happy Holidays to all and see you next year.

Lea Landry, Program Chair

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee has some really exciting events planned in the upcoming months. Mark your calendars!

February 13-16: Great Backyard Bird Count. This is an annual event the whole family can enjoy while contributing to another year's knowledge of bird numbers, movements and behaviors. Look for more information in next month's *Observer*.

March 13: As part of our workshops with the local chapter of California Native Plant Society to help folks build habitat in their backyards, we will be sponsoring a 2 hour seminar about Native Bees with CSUS PhD Candidate, Byron Love, and Jessa Guisse of the Xerces Society.

April 16: John Muir Laws will present an all day Bird Drawing Workshop at Effie Yeaw before his evening presentation at our general meeting.

Julie Serences, Education Chair

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SPONSORED CHRISTMAS COUNT DATES FOR 2008-2009

After our November 20th general meeting find a good count to participate in and sign up. The main qualification is enthusiasm not experience!

Saturday, December 20, Woodfords Christmas Count

Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 916/870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net
Compiler: Andi Salmi, 916/691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Saturday, December 27, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler; Mark Cudney, 916/987-2422, e-mail: mcudney@aol.com

Sunday, January 4, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 916/362-5942, e-mail: conardc@gmail.com
For locations and dates for additional area Christmas Bird Counts see page 6.

CHRISTMAS COUNT DATES FOR OTHER AREAS, 2008-2009

Saturday, December 6,

American River Natural History Association Annual Bird Count (and Mammals!)

Compiler: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Sunday, December 14, Putah Creek Christmas Count

Compiler: Steve Hampton, e-mail: shampton@ospr.dfg.ca.gov

Monday, December 15, Benicia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island), 916/870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net
Compiler: Robin Leong, 707/643-1287, e-mail: robin_leong@netzero.net

Saturday, December 20, Auburn Christmas Count

Compiler: Deren Ross, 530/308-5114, e-mail: derenross@sbcglobal.net

Tuesday, December 30, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, e-mail: E RPfromCA@aol.com

Thursday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

Floyd Hayes, floyd_hayes@yahoo.com

Friday, January 2, Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

Compilers: Tom Rusert & Derren Peterie, 707-939-8007, SonomaBirding.org
For locations and dates for additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit <http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm>

Field Trip Findings

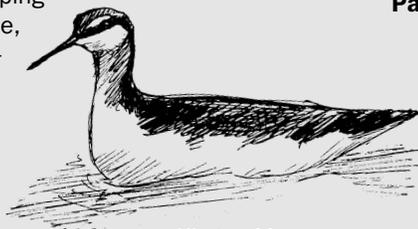
Caswell Memorial State Park (11/15)

— Leader Gary Fregien reported: “On a beautiful autumn day, in the 70s by afternoon, six members of Sacramento Audubon and two Bay Area guests birded Caswell Memorial State Park in southern San Joaquin County. The day started fairly slow, but as temperatures warmed, the activity also picked up. We had three warbler species, including Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned and Townsend’s; the group’s favorite. We also saw four kinds of woodpeckers—Nuttall’s, Downy, Acorn and Northern Flicker. There were three raptor species—Red-shouldered, Red-tailed and an Accipiter. Sparrows included Golden and White-crowned, and Song, as well as Dark-eyed Junco and Spotted Towhee. We had both Ruby and Golden-crowned Kinglets, House and Bewick’s Wren, Oak Titmouse and Bushtit, and White-breasted Nuthatch. There were Wrentits calling and overflights of Sandhill Cranes, Cedar Waxwings, American Crows and Turkey Vultures. The only other corvid was the Western Scrub-Jay. The only hummingbird seen was an Anna’s, and the only flycatcher was the Black Phoebe. A Belted Kingfisher was heard along the river. Thrushes included Hermit and American Robin. The Lesser Goldfinches were very bright yellow. Brewer’s was the only blackbird seen, and Mallard the only duck. Of course, even in pristine riparian forests, European Starlings are all over, imitating any and everything they can. We tallied 37 species on the day.”

Sacramento Old City Cemetery (11/12)

— This trip was billed in the *Observer* as starting at 7:30am but subsequent, incorrect notices in the Bee saying it would begin at 10am and 8:30am resulted in notable challenges for leader

Maureen Geiger. But fortunately, veteran Sac Audubon trip leader Cathie LaZier was among the early arrivals and helped Maureen shoulder leadership duties with the second and third shifts of arriving birders. All told, about 35 people showed up. Highlights included two Barn Owls roosting in a Weeping Cypress tree, Orange-crowned Warbler, a close view of a Brown Creeper climbing a telephone



Kirsten Munson

pole, a Red-breasted Sapsucker seen briefly by Cathie, and two White-throated Swifts soaring high during the last few minutes of the extended trip. Cemetery volunteer gardener Sharon Patrician enhanced the tour by describing the rampant fall color such as red-orange Chinese Pistache trees and blooming perennials amid the monuments. She told of designing the Hamilton section for coverage and forage for birds year-around.

Spenceville Wildlife Area (11/9)

— Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “The trip didn’t reach Spenceville Wildlife area but came close with a stop at Camp Far West Lake by way of several back roads between there and the town of Lincoln. Our first stop in Lincoln produced Marsh Wren, Common Moorhen, Black-crowned Night Heron, Purple Finch, and Great-tailed Grackle. On the back roads we saw Tri-colored Blackbirds, several Western and one Mountain bluebird, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Ringed-necked Duck, Buffleheads, Gadwall, Hooded

Merganser, Savannah and Lark sparrows. At the lake we saw Western and Eared grebes, Rock Wren and a mature Bald Eagle. All told for the day was a count of 75 different bird species. Not bad for a Sunday drive.”

Riverbend Park (formerly Goethe Park) (11/8)

— Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Close looks at Hutton’s Vireo, a pair of Nuttall’s Woodpeckers, and a Cooper’s Hawk were highlights of this morning’s walk on the lower American River, attended by 14 people.

Lea Landry and Valerie Phillips helped new members with bird identifications, and everyone enjoyed a roosting pair of Great Horned Owls.”

Lake Solano/Putah Creek (11/6)

— Leader Sami LaRocca reported: “Twelve birders arrived at Lake Solano on a warm, sunny fall day looking for the various species of wintering ducks. We found many Buffleheads and some Hooded Mergansers. However, we were disappointed not to have seen any Goldeneye (Common or Barrow’s) or Common Mergansers that are normally here by this date. This may be due to the warm, dry conditions that may have delayed the return of these species. Five species of woodpeckers seen were Acorn, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Nuttall’s, Downy and Northern Flicker. The highlight of the trip most certainly was the sightings of Golden Eagles. One sub-adult was seen soaring from Solano County north into Yolo County while we were near the southeast end of the lake. The second seen much later while searching for the elusive Pileated Woodpecker

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HOMESCHOOLER’S GUIDE TO PROJECT FEEDER WATCH

For more than 20 years, Project FeederWatch has been an easy, fun way for children to learn about birds and strengthen their skills in observation, identification, research, computation, writing, creativity, and more. FeederWatchers keep track of the numbers and kinds of birds at their feeders through the winter and report what they see to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

The Homeschooler’s Guide to Project FeederWatch will guide you through bird-related activities that promote learning across many disciplines, including science, math, history, and the arts.

To download the *Homeschooler’s Guide to Project FeederWatch*, visit www.FeederWatch.org and click on the “Education/Home School” button. You’ll be able to download the PDF in low (2.2MB) or high (6.7MB) resolutions.

Examples of the available activities include:

- Natural history: Observe and research a bird’s behavior and life cycle
- Math: Calculate average seed consumption rate and graph data
- Writing: Keep a nature journal to write stories and poetry
- Geography: Research the geographic ranges of birds
- Art: Keep a feeder-bird sketch book or create a papier mache mask

Field Trips



Stephen D'Amato

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net, for trips through December 21st. For trips from December 27th through January call the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net.

Consider car pooling 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.

Monday, December 1, 8am-Noon

Nimbus Fish Hatchery

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

This is another opportunity to explore the Nimbus/American River area. Walk with Jack and look for diving ducks, kingfishers, wintering gulls and other wildlife along the river. He will also be sharing his knowledge of interesting archeological points relating to early Chinese gold mining. Meet in the parking lot of the Nimbus Fish Hatchery off Hazel Avenue.

Thursday, December 4, 8am in Davis

Mix and Gates Canyons on

Vaca Mt. Ridge

Leader: Sami LaRocca

(530) 908-0288

email: Sami182@charter.net

In Solano County off Pleasants Valley Road we'll go up the ridge exploring the oak riparian and chaparral habitats of the Vaca Mountains. Along the ridge there is a stand of Black Oak; we may be treated to a display of golden fall color. Often seen here during winter are a variety of hawks and resident birds such as Bewick's Wren, Oak Titmouse and Pygmy Owl. Seasonal visitors include Fox Sparrow, Stellar's Jay, Varied Thrush, Band-tailed Pigeon and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Meet at the Marketplace Shopping Center (near Big 5 Sporting Goods, 1301 W. Covell in Davis, just east of Hwy 113) at 8am. We'll plan on getting back to Davis about 2pm. All levels of birders are welcome. Bring water, snacks/lunch and binoculars.

Saturday, December 6, Daybreak

Great American River Bird Count

Compiler: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack and other volunteers to assist with this annual count of birds and other creatures along the American River Parkway 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. Contact Jack for details, team assignments, and meeting and compilation locations.

Sunday, December 7, 2pm - dark

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley

A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes"

sponsored trip

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Birding Guides from

Sacramento Audubon

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip, but experienced birding leaders will help with identification of waterfowl and shorebirds that winter here. Ducks, swans and geese, as well as shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center parking lot, at 2pm, and stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, then drive out along Desmond Road and possibly further, searching for more cranes and other birds. Optional dinner at Wimpy's afterwards with SOS Cranes board members for further discussions. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars, scopes and FRS radios if you have them. 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.

Wednesday, December 10, 9am - Noon

Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River

Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311

email: 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 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 Highway 50 and Hazel Avenue (about 15 miles east of Sacramento).

Saturday, December 13, 8am - Noon

Wetlands and Waterfowl Tour II

Leader: Roger Jones, 875-9174

Email: jonesro@sacsewer.com

Tour one of the seasonal or permanent wetland areas within the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands in Elk Grove. The wetlands and waterfowl tour offers a chance to see many bird and mammal species including waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, beavers and coyotes. Tour participants will enjoy a 2 mile walk guided by a Bufferlands staff wildlife biologist who will explain current management and restoration techniques. Space is limited and the meeting location is weather-dependant, so please contact Roger Jones during the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

Saturday, December 13, Very Early

River Walk Bird Count

Cosumnes River Preserve

Recorded Information, 684-2816

Meet at the Visitor Center on Franklin Blvd, south of Twin Cities Road, for this monthly birding census trip. It is a great birding area, always full of surprises, and joining the group is a good way to find out what's happening and to hone your birding skills. This walk covers about four miles at a leisurely pace and takes approximately five hours, so bring lunch and liquids. Be sure to check the recorded information a day or

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3
two before for exact meeting time and possible updates.

**Sunday, December 14, 8am
Discovery Park**

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

This is a great, often overlooked and under-birded park near downtown Sacramento. Join Maureen in finding a variety of wintering species such as sparrows, hawks, woodpeckers and bluebirds. On I-5 from downtown, take the Garden Highway exit and turn left onto Garden Highway. Take the first left onto Natomas Park Drive, and the first right onto Capital Park Drive. Parking is permitted on either side of the Drive. There are no restrooms after the first half mile of the walk. This trip will end before noon.

**Sunday, December 14, 8am – Noon
Habitat Improvement Day**
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack and help restore and improve an area near the American River. Your efforts will help keep this area a beautiful place to be. Call Jack for details as projects vary.

**Sunday, December 14, Sunrise!
Tall Forest Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve**
Recorded Information: 684-2816

Meet at the Farm Center Gate at the intersection of Desmond and Bruceville Roads, ON TIME, to join this monthly bird count. Usually led by John Trochet, this area is normally closed to the public, so this is your opportunity to bird there. John has an appreciation of nature on many levels, and a trip with him is always informative. You must check the recorded information a day or two ahead to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details. Arrive a little early, as this trip always leaves promptly.

**Saturday, December 20
Woodfords Christmas Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Sunday, December 21, 8:30am
Riverbend Park**
**Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
email: empid@earthlink.net**

Meet Cathie at the 1st small parking lot on your left, about 2/10ths of a mile past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk a loop from this parking lot up to the bike bridge and back,

along the river, looking for mergansers, goldeneye, gulls, ducks, herons, sparrows and pipits. This walk is frequently on loose, uneven, and possibly wet cobbles, so wear sturdy shoes. Walk will last from two to three hours, depending on how many birds we find. Riverbend (formerly Goethe) Park is at the end of Rod Beaudry Drive, off Folsom Blvd in Rancho Cordova. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee.

**Saturday, December 27
Sacramento Christmas Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Sunday, December 28, 7:30am
Western Placer County**
**Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
Email: shopped1@earthlink.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 Widgeon, 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 Brookfields Restaurant parking lot in Roseville. From I-80 take the Eureka Road off-ramp and continue straight through the signal light. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfields is behind Shell.

**Tuesday, December 30
Lincoln Christmas Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Thursday, January 1, 8am
Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary**
Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146

A New Year's Day fresh morning walk rather than sitting around watching television! Join Brian for a stroll through this great riparian habitat. Herons, egrets, cormorants and grebes should be on the water. Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a variety of sparrows will be seen. Take Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City and about 2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. Bring liquids and snacks.

**Friday, January 2
Sonoma Valley Christmas Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Sunday, January 4
Folsom Christmas Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Monday, January 5, 8am to noon
River Bend Park (formerly known as
Goethe Park)**

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack at the end of Arden Way to walk across the bridge into River Bend Park. Jack will be looking for mammals and birds along the river and in the park. This is a good trip for beginners. Bring liquids and a snack if you wish.

**Saturday, January 10, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge**
**Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266
Email: jaegermaestro@yahoo.com**

Join Dan to bird this refuge, which is a magnet for the thousands of ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley. Various hawks, falcons, and occasionally an owl or eagle are also seen on the refuge. There is a 3.7 mile driving loop, and a great viewing platform as well. The trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids, layered clothes, and scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Take I-5 north toward Woodland; exit at Road 102 and turn right into the Jack in the Box parking lot to meet Dan.

**Sunday, January 11, 8am
Salt Springs Valley**
**Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Email: Spskua2@comcast.net**

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. This is a unique area you will not want to miss. The trip will last into the afternoon so bring lunch, liquids, warm clothing and FRS radios. Meet in the parking lot in front of the Wal-Mart located on the west side of Hwy 99 at the Elk Grove Boulevard exit.

**Wednesday, January 14, 7am
Point Reyes Birds and Mammals**
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

This is Jack's annual trip to Point Reyes to see elephant seals, other mammals, birds and fauna. Be prepared for a full day; bring lunch, liquids, warm clothes and FRS radios. Meet Jack on Fulton Avenue just before Fair Oaks Boulevard. Call for details.

Saturday, January 17, 8am
Gray Lodge Wildlife Area
Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
Email: rey_ality@hotmail.com

Dan is a great birder who knows this area well. He will take you to Gray Lodge, one of the state's prime wintering areas for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, he will take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes. This area is great for raptors and grassland birds including wintering sparrows. Bring lunch, liquids, warm clothing and FRS radios. Meet at the Park and Ride on the southwest corner of Hwy 99 and Elkhorn Blvd.

Sunday, January 18, 2pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes" sponsored trip

Co-coordinator: Mike Savino
446-1392, yogooombah@yahoo.com
Birding Guides from Sacramento Audubon

We will gather together at the Cosumnes River Preserve parking lot off Franklin Blvd at 2pm. We'll walk the short, one mile, universally accessible Lost Slough Wetlands Walk trail to look for cranes and other exciting winter visitors such as Tundra Swans, White-faced Ibis, and migratory ducks and geese. There should be a wide variety of waterfowl, shore birds and perhaps a surprise visitor or two. We will then drive to Staten Island in the hope of seeing hundreds of cranes fly in to their roosting

sites with the sun setting behind them. After the sun sets we will go to Wimpy's for dinner and every one is invited. Call Mike Savino, 916-446-1392, for details or last minute changes. No RSVP's are required for the tour, but they would be appreciated. No RSVP's are necessary for the dinner; you can decide at the last minute. To RSVP for the trip (or send questions) call Mike Savino at 916-446-1392, or email to yogooombah@yahoo.com. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars, scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners.

Sunday, January 18
Habitat Improvement Work Day
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Help Jack restore native vegetation along the American River Parkway. Tasks vary from month to month, so call Jack for details and meeting time, usually early morning.

Monday, January 19, 8am
Davis Wetlands
Leader: Sami LaRocca
(530) 908-0288
Email: sami182@wavecable.com

This joint Yolo and Sacramento Audubon trip is planned to take advantage of the

weekday opening of the Davis Wetlands at Davis Waste Water Treatment Plant during duck season. Many species of ducks and other shore birds will have taken up winter residence at this very special wetland habitat. Come with me and together we'll identify as many as possible. Driving to and from the wetlands we will check the surrounding county roads for special sightings. The fields often have wintering curlews, hawks, and owls; we'll see if we can spot some.

Meet at the Park and Ride off Mace Boulevard (northeast corner of Hwy 80 and Mace, behind Ikeda's) in Yolo County at 8am. Bring water, snacks and hiking shoes. We'll plan on returning to the Park and Ride by noon.

Thursday, January 22, 8am - Noon
Yolo Basin Wildlife Area
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 359-2829
Email: dtankers@winfirst.com

Meet Dan in the first parking lot (Lot A, on your left) at the beginning of the auto tour. Waterfowl and shorebirds should be plentiful. Marsh Wrens, American Bitterns and White-faced Ibis are also possible. From Sacramento take I-80 west, and 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 onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Rain or high wind cancels. This is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders.

CENTRAL VALLEY RAPTOR SURVEY

GALT, 2ND ANNUAL WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The City of Galt is hosting its 2nd Annual Winter Bird Festival, Saturday January 17, 2009 at the McCaffrey Middle School facility located in Galt. The purpose of this event is to advance public awareness and conservation of the regions wildlife. Sandhill Cranes, Canadian Geese, Tundra Swans, pintails, and hundreds of other birds call Galt and its surrounding cities home. The Winter Bird Festival will offer the community a chance to spend time discovering, learning, and educating themselves on the importance of these feathered creatures as well as the wetlands, agriculture, and open space which are all crucial to their survival.

The festival's events will include a variety of specialized tours to the Cosumnes River Preserve, a youth Art Gallery showcasing Galt Elementary School children's drawings of migratory and resident winter birds, performances and live entertainment, workshops, guest speakers, local food vendors and much more. For more information see their website at www.ci.galt.ca.us, or call their 24 hour recorded information line at (209) 366-7220.

Our Central Valley, along with the Texas/Louisiana Gulf Coast, supports the highest diversity and abundance of wintering open-country raptors in North America. However, this habitat, already compromised by agriculture not compatible with raptor needs, is increasingly under pressure to be developed. The Central Valley Winter Raptor Survey is a volunteer-run avian research project sponsored by the Central Valley Birding Club, with funding from the California Rice Commission, and Sierra Foothills, San Joaquin, Sacramento and Yolo Audubon Societies. This project aims to document the abundance, diversity and habitat association of wintering open-country raptors in the Central Valley. The survey consists of 19 driving routes through open habitat in the Central Valley, conducted by volunteers familiar with their local area of the valley. The results will provide baseline documentation for use in future development planning and habitat protection.

This type of project is where much of your Sacramento Audubon membership dues are used, and you can see the exciting work being done by logging on to researcher Zach Smith's website at www.centvalleyraptor.blogspot.com/.

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(not found) up Putah Creek. As surmised by its enlarged crop, this first-year eagle had just had a filling meal. It was flying low adjacent to the road, crisscrossing the hillside as it gained elevation, and then disappeared over Thompson Ridge (part of Bobcat Ranch). The numbers of birds was very low but we did have a surprising count of 55 species."

Old Fair Oaks Bridge (11/5) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported that his group saw Green Heron, Spotted Sandpiper, Cedar Waxwing, Western Bluebird, White-breasted Nuthatch and Greater Yellowlegs.

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area (11/2) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: "Seventeen participants enjoyed a nice variety of birds. Best birds were two Great Horned Owls roosting in a tree in well camouflaged surroundings on the right side of the road about 100 yards south of the main parking lot. Great scope views were enjoyed by all. Good spotting, Tim Fitzer! Other good birds were fly-overs of Greater White-fronted Geese, Snow Geese, and Sandhill Cranes. And, it was a teal day with many Cinnamon Teals, a few Green-winged Teals, and at least one Blue winged Teal. A small flock of American Pipits and several White-tailed Kites were also present."

Sacramento National Wildlife Area (11/1) — Leader Andi Salmi reported: "An intrepid group of seven birders enjoyed a rainy day (with rain breaks) at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. We observed a variety of ducks, including Ring-necked and Ruddy ducks, Mallard, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Bufflehead, Cinnamon and Green-winged teals, American Wigeon, one Eurasian Wigeon, and thousands of Northern Pintails. Other highlights included Greater White-fronted and Snow geese, flocks of White-faced Ibises, and Great Horned Owl."

Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk (10/28) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: "Eleven enthusiastic people participated in this half-day outing to the Isenberg Crane and Cosumnes River Preserves to enjoy a beautiful fall morning of birding. The highlights on Woodbridge Road were the many Sandhill Cranes and a few Cackling Geese. On the drive down, it was noted that a field on the west side of I-5 near Stone Lakes NWR, hosted an estimated 150 Long-billed Curlews. Our walk at the Cosumnes River Preserve afforded the group good looks at several duck and shorebird species, including great views of several Wilson's Snipes. To cap off a great morning, a Peregrine Falcon was observed by some group members on Bruceville Road near the tower."

Calaveras Big Trees State Park (10/26) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: "The Giant Sequoias were impressive as always and the dogwood, hazelnut and maple were in full fall color. In the morning we spotted some White-headed Woodpeckers, and a Hairy, and then Dan Williams found us a male Williamson's Sapsucker. High above were the usual assortment of kinglets, nuthatches, creepers and chickadees, and one Varied Thrush. The afternoon walk was relatively birdless, but we did add Townsend's Solitaire, Western Bluebird and Golden Eagle to our list. In the late afternoon when most of us had left, Kim (?) from San Mateo, (sorry, don't know his last name), found a Pileated Woodpecker and showed it to Mark and Laura Martucci."

Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek (10/25) — Leader Lea Landry reported: "The lovely fall weather brought out mountain bikers, joggers, dogs and horseback riders on the Snowberry Creek Equestrian Trail to join the eight of us on the Audubon field trip,

Saturday. We were off to a strong start with excellent views of Nuttall's Woodpeckers and Phainopepla early on, but species dwindled with more and more activity on the trail. Along the Natomas Lake trails, bird species were down because there was a rowing regatta being held, along with attendant kayaks, canoes, and motor boats. Despite these difficulties, a total of 33 species were seen and/or heard. It was growing quite warm by the time the group returned to the Shadow Glen Parking Lot."

William Pond Park (10/22) — Leader Jack Hiehle's group enjoyed a sunny day on the American River Parkway, observing Osprey, California Quail, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Double-crested Cormorant, Mute Swan, and Cedar Waxwing. Interestingly, the waxwings were flycatching, instead of feeding on berries as they customarily do, Jack said. Also observed were a dozen Pond Slider turtles and Fox, Gray, and Ground squirrels.

Solano Lake/PutahCreek (10/19) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: "Eleven birders had 61 species of birds. Highlights included Brown Creeper, Wilson's Snipe, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Phainopepla, Golden-Crowned Kinglet, and Pine Siskin."

Tall Forest Bird Count, Cosumnes River Preserve (10/18) — Leader John Trochet reported: "It was quite a decent outing, actually. We found small numbers of Black-throated Gray, Townsend's and Wilson's warblers, and Western Tanagers. These are all scarce but probably regular species for the date. But we also found four other species that were unexpected for the time and place: one Band-tailed Pigeon, two Red-Breasted Nuthatches, a Phainopepla and a Pine Siskin."

Pete Hayes

DON'T MISS THESE CLASSES

INTRODUCTION TO ORNITHOLOGY

Introduction to Ornithology (Bio 332), will be offered this coming Spring Semester at Sacramento City College. This course covers the ecology, behavior, and identification of birds, and will meet on Fridays beginning on January 23, 2009. Lecture will be from 11:30am - 12:50pm, and lab from 1:30 - 4:35pm, in Lillard Hall, Room109. There also will be several Saturday field trips during the semester. Please contact Professor Alexis Ackerman if you have questions (ackerma@scc.losrios.edu).

"HOW TO BIRD" CLASS AT LEARNING EXCHANGE

If you are a beginning birder or know anyone who is, this is the chance to join local birder and SAS field trip leader Maureen Geiger, in a class for new enthusiasts that covers all the basics of how to be a birdwatcher. Topics include: finding birds and other birders, increasing observational skills, dressing for success, birding by habitat and season, field trips and bird festivals, choosing optics, birder's code of ethics, and keeping notes and records. The class is offered at the Learning Exchange on Howe Avenue, February 25 and March 4 from 7-8:30pm followed by a field trip on Saturday, March 7th. Contact Maureen at 444-0804 or the Learning Exchange at 929-9200 for more information. The Learning Exchange web address is www.learningexchange.com.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Barbara J Alexander	Jerald and Laura Simkinis
Grant S Green	Craig Swolgaard
Robert and Muriel Parker	Lynne Tweten Jimmie W Vowell

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Jon Courtway, Gail and Harry Janke, Geraldine Klein, Sheila Larkin, and William Venables to the **General Fund**.

Paul Cordero, Grant Green, Ken Head, Richard Howard, Nancy Ree Joye, Jerald and Laura Simkinis, Dan and Jan Tankersley, and Dee Warenycia, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Sara Gillespie to **Bobelaine**.

Mary Bisharat made a donation to **Sacramento Audubon** in memory of Dorothy Harvey.

Karen Benson, Tim Fitzer, Ed Harper and Susan Scott, Dan and Jan Tankersley made donations to the **Education Committee** in memory of Sheila Martignetti Deaner.

The Sacramento Audubon Society Board made a donation in Shelia's memory to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Home Study Course Scholarship Program.

FUTURE SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS, 2009

February 19 – Debbie DuVall, Linda Davidson, Doug Forbes, Wildlife Care

March 19 – Chris Conard, *Birding Alaska*

April 16 – John (Jack) Muir Laws, *Exploring the Sierra Nevada as a Naturalist and an Artist*. Julie Serences has coordinated an Education Program with Jack on the 16th, prior to the General Meeting.

May 21 – Mike Bradbury, Friends of the Swainson's Hawk (SAS/FOSH Field Trip in June)

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

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

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. There is no meeting in December. The next meeting will be held next year on January 27, 2009 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

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to thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Roger Adamson, Dan Airola, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Steve Hampton, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Ed Pandolfino, Phil Robertson, Deren Ross, Jim Rowoth, Mary Schiedt, John Sterling, John Trochet, Bobby Walsh, and Dan Williams.

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

Chris Conard

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

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

Seasonal Observations

October 1 to October 31
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

In avian terms, September gives way to October without the page-turning abruptness of the human calendar. The songbird migration continues, but begins to sputter after the first week. Waterfowl numbers build, and reports of our uncommon raptors—**Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin**—increase. Each fall is a bit different from the one before. This year, **Pine Siskins** have been widely reported, and **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** staged a minor invasion of the Putah Creek watershed. Always a favorite, **Lewis's Woodpeckers** returned in good numbers to the blue oak savanna. To our south, a million or more **Tree Swallows** staged in corn fields west of Tracy in the latter half of the month, and were gone before the calendar turned to November. They were first detected on weather radar, as a flock this size shows up when it disperses in the morning, and they made a splash in the local news.

Standouts for the month include a **Red-necked Grebe** at the Winters Sewer Ponds on 10/19, a female **Surf Scoter** at the Lincoln WTP on 10/27, and a **Red Phalarope** at the same location on 10/7-8. A **Blackpoll Warbler** was reported along Putah Creek, west of Winters, on 10/4. The following day, a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** was found in north Davis. The male **Northern Parula** found at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 7/26 continued until at least 10/2. A **Lapland Longspur**

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was reported at the junction of Brewer and Nicholas Rds in Placer County on 10/15. The most tantalizing report of the month was of one or two **Red-throated Pipits**. The bird(s) were heard calling on 10/21 as they flew over a Yolo County field near Rds 105 and 29.

Other interesting reports include a rather late **Solitary Sandpiper** found at the Yolo Wildlife Area on 10/18, **Band-tailed Pigeons** from Discovery Park on 10/7 and CRP on 10/18, a **Northern Pygmy-Owl** from southeastern Sacramento County on 10/17, three **Common Poorwills** from the same location on 10/15 and one at CRP on 10/5, and a **Hammond's Flycatcher** at CRP on 10/12. A trip up Yolo County's Rayhouse Rd on 10/13 produced two **Hammond's Flycatchers**, two **Chestnut-backed Chickadees**, and three **Cassin's Finches**. A "bold pair" of **Pileated Woodpeckers** continued at Lake Solano, and an albino **Eared Grebe** was at CRP on 10/11. Along the American River Parkway, the **California Thrasher** continued upstream of the Howe access, and a **Red Fox Sparrow** was found for just one day on 10/12 near the Gristmill access.

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit www.cvbirds.org and click "Listserv" for details. With over 100 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want

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