



# 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 21, 2010, with a presentation from Dave Feliz, the CA Department of Fish and Game, Wildlife Area Manager for Vic Fazio Yolo Basin Wildlife Area. Dave has vastly improved the Wildlife Area with his balancing act combining the requirements of farming, financing and wildlife. See below for other programs planned for 2010.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park. The public is welcome. Visit our website [www.sacramentoaudubon.org](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org) and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions.

*Lea Landry, Program Chair*

### SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS FOR 2010

- January 21** – Dave Feliz, *Vic Fazio Yolo Wildlife Area—Present and Future*
- February 18** – Jordan Wellwood, *Audubon California—Protecting California's Birds*
- March 18** – Chris Conard, *Topic TBA*—but it will be sensational, Chris just got back from Australia
- April 15** – Ed Harper, *Topic TBA*—but it will be sensational too!
- May 20** – Subhash Chand, *Birding Delhi*

### SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2009-2010

#### Saturday, December 5, Daybreak, Great American River Bird Count

Co-Compilers: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777, Lea Landry, 638-1141, [llandry@softcom.net](mailto:llandry@softcom.net)  
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.

#### Saturday, December 19, Woodfords Christmas Count

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

#### Sunday, December 27, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422, e-mail: [mcudney@aol.com](mailto:mcudney@aol.com)

#### Sunday, January 3, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610, e-mail: [conardc@gmail.com](mailto:conardc@gmail.com)

### Other Christmas Bird Counts:

#### Monday, December 14, Benecia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island), 870-5207, [spskua2@comcast.net](mailto:spskua2@comcast.net) or  
Compiler: Robin Leong, (707) 643-1287, [robin\\_leong@netzero.net](mailto:robin_leong@netzero.net)

#### Saturday, December 19, Auburn Christmas Count

Compiler: Deren Ross, (530) 308-5114, [derenross@sbcglobal.net](mailto:derenross@sbcglobal.net)

#### Sunday, December 20, Putah Creek Christmas Count

Compiler: Steve Hampton, [hamptons@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hamptons@sbcglobal.net)

#### Sunday, December 20, Stockton Christmas Count

Compiler: Jim Roworth, (209) 956-2648, [roworth@sbcglobal.net](mailto:roworth@sbcglobal.net)

#### Wednesday, December 30, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, [ERPfromCA@aol.com](mailto:ERPfromCA@aol.com)

#### Friday, January 1, Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

Compilers: Tom Rusert and Derren Peterie, (707) 939-8007, [www.SonomaBirding.org](http://www.SonomaBirding.org)

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

# Field Trip Findings

**Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills** (11/14) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “We had a great trip this morning to the Serrano-Silva Parkway Trail in El Dorado Hills. There were about 15 of us and in addition to the 40 species of birds we saw, we all watched a series of River Otter families cavorting in the ponds, swimming close to watch us, grooming each other and generally enjoying life. No interesting ducks yet but lots of the usual resident species.”

**Isenberg Crane Preserve/Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk** (11/10) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “It was a beautiful fall morning with no wind and a light cloud cover. All participants had ample opportunity to view the stars of today’s outing, Sandhill Cranes. Other highlight birds were a huge flock of Cackling Geese at the Isenberg Crane Preserve. Wilson’s Snipe and Say’s Phoebe were found at Cosumnes River Preserve. At CRP on the sidewalk paralleling Franklin Boulevard, the group saw nature close up. A Great Egret caught an unidentified passerine for a late morning snack. The group watched with wide eyes as the egret positioned its prey in its beak and then held it underwater for a moment before swallowing the bird in one gulp. The egret then flew to the top of a small tree and proceeded to preen before napping. The outing ended on Bruceville Road where we saw our 61st and final species of the day, a White-tailed Kite. It was a most enjoyable morning of birding at two wonderful locations.”

**Mather Lake** (11/8) — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: “A number of Mather regulars welcomed 20+ students and teacher from Mira Loma High School’s International Baccalaureate program for our morning birding. We were all impressed with their interest, questions and manners. They truly added to our outing. We spotted some 35 species including Golden-crowned Sparrows, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, male Nuttall’s Woodpecker, American Bittern and two female Common Goldeneyes. A less frequently seen Northern Harrier did a fly-by and we got great scope views of a Black-crowned Night-Heron. A treat for all was a pair of American White Pelicans at the eastern end of the lake. It was a first for this observer in over 10 years of birding Mather Lake.”

**Bobelaine Sanctuary** (11/1) — Leader Carla Barbaro reported: “It was a glorious fall day as 40+ birders adventured together into Bobelaine Sanctuary ...12 trip birders returned(!). This was a very large group that included 17 Mira Loma High School students studying invertebrates. The students were taken under the wing of two seasoned teachers and the group straggled, losing sight of those ahead and blazing their own trail. Eventually, everyone returned from the maze of trees and trails. Sightings: Great Egret, White-faced Ibis in surrounding fields, Turkey Vultures, Sharp-shinned Hawks, Cooper’s Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, American Kestrel, Killdeers, Ring-billed gulls, Nuttall’s and Downy woodpeckers, Northern Flicker, Black Phoebe, Yellow-billed Magpie, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick’s and House wrens, Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned kinglets, Western Bluebird, Hermit Thrushes, Wrentit, Flocks of Cedar Waxwings, Orange-crowned, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated, and Townsend’s warblers, and Dark-eyed Junco.”

**Bodega Bay** (10/31) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: *Stephen D’Amato* “Seventeen birders enjoyed an absolutely gorgeous day. There was some patchy fog early, followed by mostly sunny skies, calm to light breezes and mild temperatures. We tallied 96 species for the day. Thanks for the tally go to Ed Harper our “compiler.” Highlights included both Red-throated and Pacific loons, in addition to the many Common Loons; a Red-necked Grebe (unfortunately, only seen by one person — me); 2 White-winged Scoters, observed by Ed Harper and Linda Pittman (this was a life-list species for Linda); at least 2 Peregrine Falcons; 17 Surfbirds; a single Red Knot; an Elegant Tern; and several Common Murres and Pigeon Guillemots. We also discovered

25 Eurasian Collared-Doves perched on utility wires near Spud Point Marina. A bonus was a Gray Whale that surfaced numerous times fairly close to shore off Bodega Head.”

**William Pond Park, American River Parkway** (10/29) — Leader Jack Hiehle said sightings included Osprey, Spotted Sandpiper, Green Heron, Common Merganser, Double-crested Cormorant, Herring Gull, Nuttall’s Woodpecker, Bewick’s Wren, and Belted Kingfisher. Two River Otters were seen.

**Calaveras Big Trees State Park** (10/25) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported:

“Birding was SLOW for the small group of birders, but Subash Chand and Marie Bordonaro made the most of the fall color spectrum with their cameras. Subash got some great shots of White-headed and Hairy Woodpeckers, as well as the ubiquitous and noisy Douglas Squirrel. The trees were as big as ever, and the dogwood, maple and hazelnut were in full color.”

**Yolo Basin Wildlife Area** (10/22) — Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “A beautiful fall day provided good birding for eight participants for a mid-week tour through the Bypass. The highlights included an assortment of ducks including three teal species: Blue-winged, Green-winged, and

Cinnamon Teals. Shorebirds were present including a late Pectoral Sandpiper. Flyovers of Greater White-fronted Geese, White-faced Ibis, a single Yellow-headed Blackbird added for nice sky views. But, the most exciting event was the fast moving Peregrine Falcon aiming to catch a meal by flushing up many blackbirds and other waterfowl. We didn’t see if it was successful, but we got to see nature in action. Great day.”

**Solano Lake/Putah Creek** (10/18) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Ten birders had 67 species of birds on a very pleasant mid-October day.



*Findings* continued on page 7

# Field Trips

## 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](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net). for trips through December 20th. From December 21st on, call the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, [spskua2@comcast.net](mailto:spskua2@comcast.net).

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ride-sharing/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.



### **Saturday, November 28, 8am American River between Howe and Watt**

**Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791  
[rey-ality@hotmail.com](mailto:rey-ality@hotmail.com)**

Join Dan at his favorite spot along the Parkway in search of our wintering birds, and get to know an area he knows well. Although Dan birds this spot almost daily, he has rarely seen other birders and is eager to share his knowledge of this oasis behind his home. Last year this area produced a Palm Warbler and a California Thrasher; the former is not likely to be seen at this time of year, but he will work the area well to locate any goodies in hopes of finding them for the group, such as a White-throated Sparrow which he has found the last three years. 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. From Hwy 50, take the Howe Avenue exit and head north; from Howe, take the first exit before the bridge. To do this, you will need to be in the right-most lane. Cross La Riviera Drive and enter the Howe Avenue Access to the American River. There is a fee to park in the lot, or parking is available on La Riviera Drive.

### **Sunday, November 29, 8am Road 113, Robinson Road and Birds Landing Area**

**Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207  
[spskua2@comcast.net](mailto:spskua2@comcast.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 at the West Capitol Ave exit Park and Ride. This trip will last into the afternoon.

### **Tuesday, December 1, 8-11am Nimbus Fish Hatchery**

**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

This is a good 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.

### **Saturday, December 5 Great American River Bird Count Co-compilers: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777 Lea Landry, 638-1141, [llandry@softcom.net](mailto:llandry@softcom.net)**

See write up on page 1.

### **Sunday, December 6, 9am-Noon Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311 [calidris@surewest.net](mailto: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 12, 8am-Noon Wetlands and Waterfowl Tour II Leader: Roger Jones, 875-9174 [jonesro@sacsewer.com](mailto: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 short walk guided by a Bufferlands staff wildlife biologist who will explain current wildlife management and habitat restoration techniques. Space is limited. The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Roger Jones during the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

### **Saturday, December 12, 7am 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 two before for exact meeting time and possible updates.

*Field Trips* continued on page 4

*Field Trips* continued from page 3

**Sunday, December 13, 8am  
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge  
Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216  
andisalmi@yahoo.com**

Andi will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way further south. 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. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave exit. Turn left, and the Park and Ride will be on your immediate left. Please note that at the refuge there is a fee for each vehicle: either \$3 for a day pass, or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass.

**Sunday, December 13, 6:40am  
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 19  
Woodfords Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Sunday, December 20  
Stockton Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Saturday, December 26, 7am SHARP  
Coastal Birding  
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471  
shoppe01@earthlink.net**

Join Scott for a day of birding the San Francisco Bay area, looking for wintering shorebirds and waterfowl. Peregrine Hawks and Northern Harriers will be in the area, and Scott will help you sort out the many different species of gulls. Possible stops will be Arrowhead Marsh, Hayward Shoreline and Palo Alto Baylands. Bring lunch and

wear layered clothing for a full day of birding. Scopes and FRS radios are a help. Meet Scott 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, on the north side of the freeway.

**Sunday, December 27  
Sacramento Christmas Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Wednesday, December 30  
Lincoln Count**

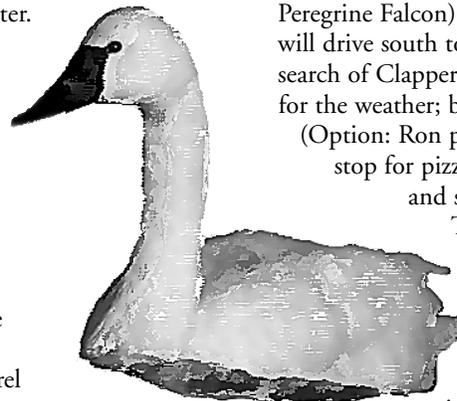
Contact information on page 1.

**Friday, January 1  
Sonoma Valley Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Saturday, January 2, 8:30am  
Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary  
Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146**

Start the New Year with a 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.



**Sunday, January 3  
Folsom Christmas Count**

Contact information on page 1.

**Tuesday, January 5, 8:30am  
Yolo Wildlife Area  
Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758  
IshiM2000@comcast.net**

Join Marlene for a preview of this great area, just minutes from downtown Sacramento, which will be the topic of our January 21st general meeting. On the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl and possible raptors such as Peregrine Falcon. White-faced Ibis and Northern Harriers may be

seen overhead, and Savannah Sparrows and Horned Larks are visible on the road. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78, E. Chiles/Rd. 32A) 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. Scopes are helpful on this trip which is good for both beginners and more experienced birders.

**Saturday, January 9, 8am SHARP  
Hot Birding Spots in the North Bay  
Leader: Ron Storey, (707) 762-5276  
ronstorey@ronstorey.com  
Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207  
spskua2@comcast.net**

Meet Tim at the West Sacramento Park and Ride to start the trip. We'll meet Ron at Shollenberger Park in Petaluma at 9:30, and spend a little time there looking for Blue-winged Teal, Sora and Virginia Rail, and any other odd birds that may be around. We'll then drive to Las Gallinas and do a little bird watching there, looking for Eurasian and Common Teal, Hooded Merganser, and any other odd birds (i.e. Peregrine Falcon). From Las Gallinas we will drive south to Corte Madera Marsh in search of Clapper Rail. Dress appropriately for the weather; bring lunch and water.

(Option: Ron plans to make a lunch stop for pizza!). Bring FRS radios and scopes if you have them. To meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot, on the north side of the freeway.

**Saturday, January 9 2pm till dark  
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering  
Birds of the Sacramento Valley  
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored  
trip  
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392**

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip but 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 for a short introduction to crane behavior and biology by Paul Tebbel, then 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 Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. 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](http://www.cosumnes.org). This is a great trip for beginners.

**Sunday, January 10, 8am**  
**Salt Springs Valley**  
**Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207**  
**Spskua2@comcast.net**  
**Mark Martucci, 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. This is a unique area you will not want to miss. 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. The trip will last into the late afternoon so bring lunch, liquids, warm clothing and FRS radios.

**Wednesday, January 13, 8am**  
**River Bend Park**  
**Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882**  
**empid@earthlink.net**

Meet Cathie at the 1st parking lot on your right, just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk through the oak woodland, looking for small woodland birds and woodpeckers. We sometimes have good looks at Red-shouldered Hawks or Great Horned Owls. At the river we should see mergansers, goldeneye, herons, yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpipers and possibly a kingfisher. Walk will end by noon, and it's a great walk for beginners. River Bend (formerly Goethe) Park is at the end of Rod Beaudry Drive, off Folsom Blvd between Bradshaw and Mather Field Roads in Rancho Cordova. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee.

**Saturday, January 16, 8am**  
**Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Leader: John York, 409-9276**  
**sonofyork@att.net**

John will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way further south.

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. We'll return through the Dunnigan Hills, a good area for raptors, Burrowing Owls and wintering sparrows. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. Meet John at the Woodland Jack-in-the-Box. Take I-5 north toward Woodland; exit at County Road 102 (#536); turn right (north) on 102 and turn right into the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot. Please note that at the refuge there is a fee for each vehicle: either \$3 for a day pass, or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass.

**Sunday, January 17, 8am**  
**Gray Lodge Wildlife Area**  
**Leaders: Ken Hashagen, 316-8596**  
**khashagen@mindspring.com**  
**Cathie LaZier, 457-6882**  
**empid@earthlink.net**

Join Ken and Cathie for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, we'll 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 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 \$2.50 per person charge at the Wildlife Area.

**Tuesday, January 19, 8:30am**  
**Yolo Wildlife Area**  
**Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758**  
**IshiM2000@comcast.net**

Join Marlene in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl and possible raptors such as Peregrine Falcon. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78, E. Chiles/Rd. 32A) 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. Scopes are helpful on this trip which is good for both beginners

and more experienced birders. After touring the area, plan to join us at our general meeting on Thursday evening to hear Dave Feliz talk about this special area.

**Saturday, January 23, 8am**  
**Pleasants Valley Rd./Putah Creek**  
**(Solano Co.)**  
**Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636**  
**calaveri@sbcglobal.net**

This outing entails driving to the Vacaville area to pick up Pleasants Valley Road, and birding our way up to Hwy 128, then Putah Creek, Solano Lake and the Monticello Dam Overlook. Gary will make several stops along Pleasants Valley Rd, looking for winter passerines, including Phainopepla, Western Bluebird and Say's Phoebe. Along Putah Creek and Solano Lake, we should see Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, American Dipper, and Osprey. At the Monticello Dam Overlook,



*Kirsten Munson*

we'll be watching for Canyon and Rock Wrens, and possibly Peregrine Falcon. Plan to spend 3-4 hours birding, plus driving time there and back. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along FRS radios, food and water. Our lunch spot will be at Solano Lake County Park, where there is a day-use fee.

We'll also look for Pileated Woodpecker and owls there. Meet Gary 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. Car pooling is strongly advised, due to limited access at stops and the distance traveled.

**Saturday, January 23, 2pm till dark**  
**Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley**  
**A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip**

**Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392**  
Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip but 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 for a short introduction to crane behavior

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*Field Trips* continued from page 5

and biology by Paul Tebbel, then 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 Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. 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](http://www.cosumnes.org). This is a great trip for beginners.

**Sunday, January 24, 8am**  
**Road 113, Robinson Road and Birds Landing Area**  
**Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207**  
**[spskua2@comcast.net](mailto:spskua2@comcast.net)**  
**Mark Martucci, 833-6722**  
**[matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com)**

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes, and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet 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, on the north side of the freeway. This trip will last into the afternoon.

**Monday, January 25, 7:45am**  
**Colusa National Wildlife Refuge**  
**Leader: Dan Tankersley, 606-6518**  
**[dtankers@winfirst.com](mailto:dtankers@winfirst.com)**

The Colusa NWR is another of the great Central Valley locations to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be many duck species and plenty of Snow, Ross's and Greater White-fronted Geese. This refuge often provides an opportunity to view the elgasi race of the Greater White-fronted Goose. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well. 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 a riparian forest 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. If you have these items, bring your scope and FRS radio. Meet Dan 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. Bring snacks and liquids as the trip will end in the late morning to early afternoon. We will leave the meeting area at 8am SHARP. Rain and/or high wind cancels.

**Saturday, January 30, 8:30am**  
**Nimbus Fish Hatchery**  
**Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791**  
**[rey-ality@hotmail.com](mailto:rey-ality@hotmail.com)**

Sharpen your 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.

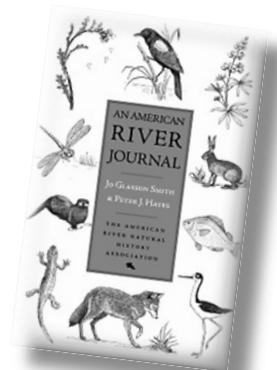
**Sunday, January 31, 9am**  
**Hansen Ranch Park Preserve**  
**Leader: Jonilynn Okano, 397-1295**  
**[jonilynn@rcip.com](mailto:jonilynn@rcip.com)**

If you have never been to Hansen Ranch, you are in for a treat! We will take a nice leisurely walk on the gravel embankment above the pond that overlooks the preserve's many unique qualities. The habitat is mainly marsh but also has open fields and a tree line in the distance. These trees host a heron and egret rookery in the spring. Turkey and coyote might be present strolling across the grasslands. In January, various species of waterfowl, along with hawks and falcons should also be there. The pond has an active beaver colony and other surprises hidden in the reeds; come join us and let us find them together! Wear warm clothing; bring liquids and snacks. This trip is good for beginners and will end before noon. Please bring scopes if you have one. Meet at the Starbucks at 4110 Norwood Avenue and I-80 (North Side) at 8am.

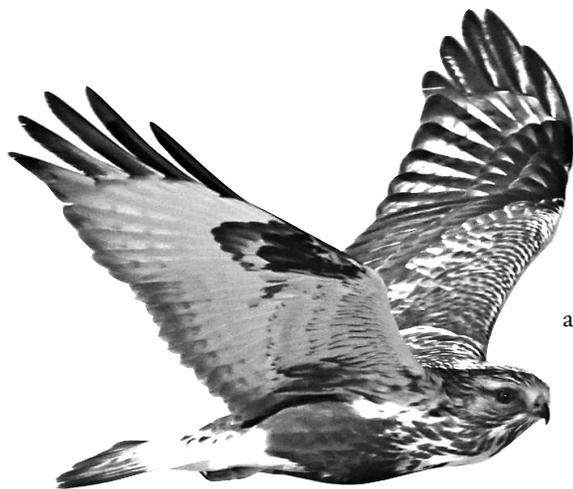
## NEW BOOK FROM ARNHA

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) has published *An American River Journal*, in memory of Jo Glasson Smith, ARNHA co-founder, longtime Sacramento Audubon member and bird-bander, and gifted artist. Her drawings of the flora and fauna along the Lower American River are featured in the little volume, along with essays by Peter Hayes, ARNHA associate board member and coordinator of the Field Trip Findings column in *The Observer*.

In addition to honoring Smith, ARNHA is publishing the book as part of ongoing fund-raising efforts on behalf of the county's Effie Yeaw Nature Center, which has suffered a 50 percent budget cut this year. The book sells for \$9.75, and is on sale at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, [ARNHA.org](http://ARNHA.org), and at selected book stores.



## THE BIRDS OF WINTER IN THE SACRAMENTO AREA



Rough-legged Hawk  
Ed Harper

Ed Harper, longtime educator, tour guide and noted birder of the Sacramento area, will help you learn the finer points of identification, calls and natural history of the many species of winter birds in the Sacramento region. Both beginning and experienced birders can improve their knowledge and skills with this series of lectures and field trips. Whether you simply want to distinguish one sparrow species from another or seek help learning the distinctive “chuck” note of a hermit thrush, this course has many facets for wide appeal. Anyone who has a serious interest in birds and enjoys their presence in our world can benefit from this class.

The title of the course is “The Birds of Winter in the Sacramento Area” and it is being taught at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. The three Wednesday lectures will be held on the dates of December 2 and 16, and January 6 from 7-8:30pm. They will be offered along with three associated local field trips. The December 3rd trip is to Ancil Hoffman Park, December 17th is to Yolo Basin Wetlands, and the January 7th trip is to the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. The cost is \$80 for the lecture and field trips or \$40 for the lectures only.

Advance registration is required. Contact the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (916) 489-4918 or e-mail at [arnha.org](mailto:arnha.org). Information is also at [www.arnha.org](http://www.arnha.org).

### *Findings* continued from page 2

Highlights included Prairie Falcon, Hairy Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Golden-Crowned Kinglet, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Phainopepla, and Green Heron.”

**Snowberry Creek (10/17)** – Leader Lea Landry reported: “The weather was warm (although humid), the sun was shining, the trails were passable, the 10 attendees were enthusiastic, but someone forgot to invite the birds. A total of only 30 species were seen or heard. Several expected residents were heard, only. The best sightings were Red-breasted Sapsucker, Phainopepla, and Rufous-crowned Sparrow. Lake Natoma was a complete wash-out—only Double-crested Cormorant, Mallards, an unidentified gull, and a Great Egret were seen in the water. The group enjoyed applying the tips on Sparrow ID that Ed Pandolfino gave us in his General Meeting presentation this past week. The birding lull was filled in with plant identification by Cathie LaZier.”

**Bannister Park (10/15)** – Leader Jack Hiehle reported that the group saw Phainopepla, Spotted Sandpiper, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Green Heron, Greater Yellowlegs and Lesser Goldfinch, among others.

*Pete Hayes*

## SAN JOAQUIN RIVER RESTORATION WATER DELIVERIES

Our San Joaquin Valley is suffering, no question. Economic recession, drought, and the foreclosure crisis have hit this region with particular brutality. But to blame the hardship in the Valley on the Delta smelt or on the Endangered Species Act is not logical.

We are in the middle of an economic recession, and California (not just the Valley) is suffering from record unemployment levels. We are in the third consecutive year of lower-than-average precipitation. Demand for water is dangerously exceeding supply and even in wet years it has become difficult to meet these demands without totally destroying the ecological framework of our state’s waterways.

A recent study by the University of the Pacific Business Forecasting Center showed that construction job losses driven by the foreclosure crisis are eight times greater than those created by water shortages. And although unemployment rates in the Valley have risen recently, over time they have fluctuated with no correlation to water deliveries.

It’s true that water deliveries were reduced to some areas in the Valley for part of this year. In particular, to areas with junior water rights. In other words, to those who are promised less water in dry years. Deliveries were reduced largely as a result of low precipitation for three consecutive years, but also in part because of mandated water deliveries to help fish species in the Delta from going extinct.

There is a belief among some people in the Valley that water flowing down a river and to the ocean is wasted. That instead it should be entirely captured and diverted for our use. But if we treat our rivers this way, if we overlook the inherent value of a living river system, we are simply poor stewards of these resources.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta sustains the most important estuary on the west coast of the Americas and provides drinking water for the majority of Californians. An entire food chain relies on conditions in the Delta, and by allowing conditions to continue to worsen we risk losing the entire system.

If our elected representatives make policy decisions based on propaganda instead of facts, both nature and people will lose out in the long run. Instead, we must insist on an approach to water policy that reflects the best science available to us.

Jordan Wellwood  
Central Valley/Sierra Nevada Conservation Coordinator  
Audubon California

## *Birding Festivals*

### **GALT, 3RD ANNUAL, WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL**

The City of Galt is hosting its 3rd Annual Winter Bird Festival, Saturday, January 30, 2010, at the McCaffrey Middle School facility located in Galt. The purpose of this event is to advance public awareness and conservation of the region's wildlife. Sandhill Cranes, Canada Geese, Tundra Swans, pintails, and hundreds of other birds call Galt and its surrounding cities home. The Festival collaborates with Cosumnes River Preserve and offers a sunset tour out to Staten Island in the Delta to view all the Sandhill cranes coming in to roost for the night. For the first time they are also offering a guided tour to Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge which is rarely open to the public. For more information see their website at [www.ci.galt.ca.us](http://www.ci.galt.ca.us), or call their 24 hour recorded information line at (209) 366-7220.

### **KLAMATH FALLS, WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL**

The 31st annual Winter Wings Festival will offer three full days of activities February 12-14, 2010. Guest speakers include Bill Clark, a photographer, author, and lecturer with over 45 years experience working with birds of prey. Rick Sammon, a Canon camera photographer will present a special slide show "Exploring Wildlife and Nature Photography." The keynote speaker will be Scott Weidensaul, His topic: "Living on the Wind: The World of Migratory Birds." Of course there are the usual festival activities with highlights particular to the special Klamath Falls area.

Check out the website at [www.WinterWingsFest.org](http://www.WinterWingsFest.org) for the latest in Festival planning information. On-line registration will not begin until early or mid December unless otherwise notified. Brochures are scheduled to be distributed in early December and will also be available on-line.

### **FOURTEENTH ANNUAL SAN DIEGO BIRDING FESTIVAL**

San Diego is birdier than ever, the county having just recorded its 500th bird species, a Snow Bunting. In addition, the San Diego Bird Festival—now in its 14th year—set a new record during the 2009 festival for the number of species counted. Several field trips observed more than 100 species per trip.

The 2010 festival is set for Thursday through Sunday, March 4-7, 2010. An exciting new field trip for 2010 is a behind-the-scenes look at the world-famous San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park. For the latest information and to register, visit [www.sandiegoaudubon.org](http://www.sandiegoaudubon.org) and click on the Bird Festival tab, or email [birdfest@cox.net](mailto:birdfest@cox.net). For more information and for a brochure to be mailed, call (619) 682-7200.

### **FIRST ANNUAL POINT REYES BIRDING FESTIVAL**

Plan now to attend the first annual Point Reyes Birding Festival, April 23-25, 2010. The event is sponsored by the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

Point Reyes and the West Marin area are home to one of the most diverse bird populations in North America. April is a great time to see and hear breeding birds, and to admire shore birds and waterfowl (and many other species) on their way north.

Top bird experts like David Wimpfheimer, Keith Hansen, and Jules Evens will lead participants on trips to discover the best birding sites in the region. Displays and exhibits will expand your bird knowledge. The event will also feature other walks to see the West Marin natural world, including the famous wildflower displays, butterflies, and more.

Go to [www.eacmarin.org](http://www.eacmarin.org) to learn more about this exciting event. We look forward to seeing you at the start of what we are sure will be a great annual tradition.

### **AUDUBON OUTREACH**

This year's Lodi Crane Festival was a success for Sacramento Audubon. We had our Outreach Table there for the weekend and had great attendance. Peggy Gerrick, Marlene Ishihara and Lea Landry helped at the table; Ken Hashagen and Darrell Mohr each spent an entire day there; Harlan Perryman and Mark Martucci helped in the afternoon after leading crane tours in the morning, and Tim Fitzer gets the most credit for leading crane tours both days and helping at the table both afternoons. Our next tabling will be at the Galt Winter Bird Festival, Saturday, January 30, 2010. Contact Cathie LaZier at 457-6882 or [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net) if you can help on that day.

### **GOVERNOR SIGNS PARKWAY PLAN BILL**

The Governor has signed the American River Parkway Plan bill, ending the long approval process. And the plan takes effect immediately, so projects dependent on it can move forward at once, according to Leighann Moffitt, principle planner in the county planning department.

Credit is due Assemblyman Dave Jones, who introduced the bill and saw it through the legislative process, and to Leslie McFadden, the County's legislative advocate, Moffitt notes, as well as to the many people who participated in the approval process.

*Bill Dillinger  
Publicity Chairman*

### **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 26, 2010, at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

## SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these  
new members:

Donna Brown	Marjorie
Stuart Clancy	McBride
Jackie DeLu	Christine Miller
Doris Flair	Patricia Moses
Rodney	Colene Rauh
Kingsnorth	

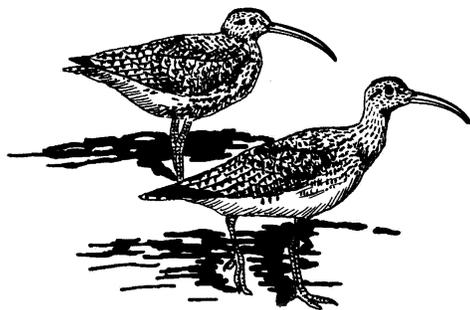
### A LITTLE QUIZ:

**How can you tell when you should renew your Sacramento Audubon Membership?**

- A Look at the expiration date above your address on *The Observer*.
- B Respond to the renewal reminder you'll receive during the month before your membership expires.
- C Respond to the SECOND renewal reminder you'll receive 2 weeks after your membership expires.
- D A and B

Answer: D

Waiting for the Second Renewal Reminder wastes postage and paper that could be better spent on conservation and education efforts AND you might miss out on the interesting articles in the next issue of *The Observer*.



Stephen D'Amato

## 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

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

Date \_\_\_\_\_ *The Observer* Newsletter \$25 per address \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Barbara Klocek, Ann Kohl, Linda Pittman, and Keith Wagner, to the **General Fund**.

Jon Courtway, Barbara Klocek, Dixie Robinson, Julie Serences, Jerald Simkins, Rick Soehren and Jan Tankersley, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

*Observations* continued from page 10

Beginning with January 2009, we are now featuring photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (<http://sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html>).

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit [www.cvbirds.org](http://www.cvbirds.org) and click "Listserv" for details. With nearly 100 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want to thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Dan Airola, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Steve Hampton, Scott Hoppe, Dan Kopp, Ryan Phillips, Vance Russell, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, Jim Tietz, John Trochet, Jonathon Widdicombe, 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](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

As might be expected, things slowed a bit from last month, with the songbird migration tapering off by the middle of the month. As most of the warblers and other favorites left us until next April, we were compensated with building numbers of waterfowl, raptors, and sparrows. But October always holds a few surprises.

This year they included a **Chestnut-sided Warbler** along the American River Parkway (ARP) on 10/4, a **Brewer's Sparrow** at the Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA) on 10/10, and a **Bobolink** along Putah Creek at UC Davis on 10/6. A female-type **Costa's Hummingbird** was a nice find at Wildhorse Golf Course in Davis on 10/18-19.

Another event that must be mentioned is the incredible storm that dumped two to four inches of rain in the Sacramento area on 10/13. The storm can be blamed for the loss of some nice trees and premature flooding of shorebird habitat, but it also filled wetlands, leading to an early showing of several hundred **Canvasbacks** and **Ring-necked Ducks** at the Sacramento County Bufferlands.

On 10/11, an impressive 300+ **Turkey Vultures** were recorded on a roost in suburban Land Park. Other highlights included an immature **Bald Eagle** over ARP on 10/12 near Watt Ave, a **Pacific Golden-Plover** at the Woodland WTP on 10/28, two **Band-tailed Pigeons** over Putah Creek near Pedrick Rd on 10/4, a very late **Western Kingbird** at Wildhorse

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Golf Course on 10/18, a late **Cassin's Vireo** in north Davis on 10/10 and even later at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 10/17, and late **Wilson's Warblers** at CRP on 10/18 and YWA on 10/22.

Burrows seem to be a limiting factor for **Burrowing Owls** in the open areas of the low foothills in eastern Sacramento County. They rarely breed in these habitats and often winter in culverts (until they flood), among rocks, and even in piles of trash or concrete. The walking trail from Rancho Seco out to the Howard Ranch has provided another option for them, as they now winter under footbridges along the trail. Where these owls spend the breeding season is an open question.

**Lewis's Woodpeckers** were reported several times in unusual locations on the Valley floor (they are usually in the blue oak savanna on either side of the Valley). At more typical sites they were in impressive numbers, with over 100 along Michigan Bar Rd in eastern Sacramento County on 10/25, with some flying 1,000 feet in the air. An amazing 206 were counted on a survey at Bobcat Ranch near Winters at the end of the month.

*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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