



The *OBSE*RVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, February 15
Shepard Garden and Art Center
7pm General Meeting

Art, Nature, and the Sierra Nevada Revisited!

John (Jack) Muir Laws—Back By Popular Demand

Naturalist, educator and artist John (Jack) Muir Laws delights in exploring the natural world and sharing this love with others. He has worked as an environmental educator for over 25 years in California, Wyoming, and Alaska. He is trained as a wildlife biologist and is an associate of the California Academy of Sciences. His illustrations capture the feeling of the living plant or animal, while also including details critical for identification.

His most recent book, *The Laws Guide to the Sierra Nevada*, is an illustrated field guide to more than 1,700 species of plants and animals and is beautifully illustrated with 2,710 original watercolor paintings. This comprehensive and easy to use guide allows botanists to identify the insects that come to their flowers, birders to identify the trees in which the birds perch, or hikers to identify the stars overhead at night. Jack will present an illustrated lecture about the natural history of the Sierra Nevada, and the process of creating a field guide.

He will also bring original illustrations that have been painted in the field. In the summer of 2004, Laws published *Sierra Birds: a Hiker's Guide*. He is also a regular contributor to *Bay Nature* magazine with his *Naturalists Notebook* column.

He is currently coordinating efforts to create a curriculum to tie the field guide to the State of California education standards and secure funding to donate sets of field guides to every elementary and high school in the Sierra Nevada and to teach field sketching and natural history classes throughout the state.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park, located at 3330 McKinley Blvd. in Sacramento. The public is always welcome. A map with directions can be found at our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org under the General Meetings heading.

Sally Riggs, Program Chair

Great Backyard Bird Count

**GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT
IS FOR EVERYONE, FEB 16-18**

Just because the Education Committee is promoting the GBBC as a kid friendly activity, doesn't mean you can't participate! Birders of all skill levels and ages are welcome! In fact, on the east coast whole towns participate! Sacramento is such a great place to bird that spending 15 minutes (once during the three days) in your favorite spot counting birds could be very productive! Please check out count details at <http://www.audubon.org/gbbc/index.shtml>. When you enter your data, your count location immediately registers on an interactive map and lets you see how Sacramento stacks up with other cities across the country. If you participate, let us know how many different species you counted by dropping us a line at sacaudubon@gmail.com. And, of course, don't forget to tell your friends to count also! Happy Birding!

A BIG THANK YOU FOR SPECIAL DONATIONS

SAS extends a big thank you to Chris Conard and Kimya Lambert for their generous donations of items for the new General Meeting Doorprize Drawings. Chris and Kimya donated a one year subscription to *Birder's World* magazine, a tri-fold pocket field guide to the *Birds of Monteverde, Costa Rica*, and a very attractive tee shirt depicting silhouettes of various raptors.

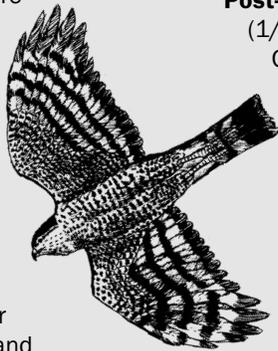
Chris and Kimya also donated a wonderful pair of Nikon, 8x36 Monarch binoculars to SAS's fledgling Education Program. These binoculars carry an MSRP of \$360. The Board of Directors will determine how best the binoculars will serve the program.

Thanks a bunch Chris and Kimya!

Field Trip Findings

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

(1/13) — Leader Lisa Moraga reported, “If you wanted to see a thousand Snow Geese standing on ice, this trip to SNWR was your chance. Freezing temperatures iced over large areas of the refuge creating such amusing scenes, although this point of view was probably not shared by the waterfowl. Fortunately for duck and birder, there were large unfrozen sections available, particularly from the observation platform where we had good views of several Ross’s and Snow Geese for comparison. Other species included a Lesser Scaup, Green-winged and Cininamon Teal and most of the usual duck species. Good views of a Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon were enjoyed by all along the driving route. Total species: 60. At a stop on our return through Zamora, we were greeted by a friendly Hungarian Kuvasz Sheep-guard Dog that temporarily deserted his flock for the attention of several accommodating birders.”



Stephen D'Amato

Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills

(1/7) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “Well, just another wonderful trip today. 22 of us walked the Serrano trail

and checked Bass Lake. The varied habitats produced 60 species of birds. Best birds for Serrano were male and female Hooded Mergansers, a surprising number of Purple Finches and two Virginia Rails. Best for Bass Lake were an adult Bald Eagle flying in just before noon and 2 pairs of Ring-necked Ducks. Nice weather helped.”

Post-Christmas Coastal Birding Trip

(1/6) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Mark Cudney, reported: “What a trip! Nine species of sparrows including White-throated and Harris near Shollenberger Park in Petaluma; ducks, Blue-winged Teal and Peregrine Falcon in flight at Shollenberger, Eurasian Wigeon at Gallinas Water Treatment Plant, and a view of Clapper Rail from 6 feet at Corte Madera Marsh, along with Hooded Merganser. Thanks to Ron Storey (ex-Sacramentan now living in Petaluma) we totaled 104 species.”

Goethe Park (1/2) — Highlights were Phainopepla, Glaucous-winged Gull and Cooper’s Hawk, leader Jack Hiehle reported.

Bobelaine Sactuary (1/1) — From Brian Gilmore: “I was joined by 10 birders for the New Year’s Day Bobelaine bird walk. Highlights were a Fox Sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Downy Woodpecker, and good weather. Many flyovers of Greater White-

fronted and Snow Geese made the day enjoyable. Also passing overhead was a group of about 40 Wood Ducks.”

Bushy Lake (12/23) — Joe Ceriani, long-time Sac Audubon stalwart who moved to Eureka, returned to his Bushy Lake haunts to lead a band of birders along the American River Parkway behind Cal Expo. The walk was highlighted by a loudly calling Peregrine Falcon that gripped a bird in its talons while being pursued by a Red-tailed Hawk. The birds disappeared behind trees, but it seemed likely that the Peregrine escaped since, as a *Sacramento Bee* reporter who was present noted in his article, the species can reach speeds of 200 mph. Other highlights included a White-throated Sparrow, resting Snow Geese next to the Cal Expo race track, a Great Horned Owl that burst from a tree near the path, Wood Ducks on Bushy Lake, and a tail-slapping beaver on the river. The *Bee* reporter-photographer team’s report was enlivened by pithy quotes from Tim Fitzer, Maureen Geiger and Valerie Phillips.

Cosumnes River Preserve (12/10) Leader Brian Gilmore reported that he was joined by one other birder, Harlan Perryman, for about an hour of birding in drizzly rain. Many of the usual species were seen—Sandhill Cranes, Pintails, Shovelers, American Wigeon, and a fly-over of about 12 Wilson’s Snipes.

Pete Hayes

2006-2007 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS BY AREA

RIO COSUMNES

Compiler Andy Engilis reported: “I want to thank all 57 participants on this year’s Rio Cosumnes Christmas Count held on 2, January, 2007. The fantastic weather and exceptional access yielded a new record high of 160 species (+ 8 forms) represented by over 1.3 million birds, an exceptional total for an entirely inland count. Three species were recorded for the first time. A Brown Thrasher was found by Andy and Irene Engilis in the Tall Forest of the Cosumnes River Preserve (it was later confirmed by John Trochet on 5, January, 2007). Almost as amazing was a breeding plumage, male Bullock’s Oriole found by Andy Engilis and confirmed on count day by Ed Harper, Irene Engilis, and later by John Trochet. The bird

was at the Cosumnes River Preserve in a Eucalyptus stand near the “Birders Shack.” Most of the local winter records of orioles seem to be Hooded or even a lost Orchard Oriole, so this was a big surprise. Andy and Irene also found the count’s first Thayer’s Gull, a first winter bird, at the Desmond Road Ponds of the Cosumnes River Preserve. One other amazing find was a Blue Grosbeak seen and photographed on Merritt Island by Steve Hampton and Roger Adamson. This is the second Blue Grosbeak found on the Rio Cosumnes count; the first on 29, December, 1999. The latter bird was only one of two Blue Grosbeaks recorded in the United States during the 100th Christmas Count, and I am sure this year’s bird will be as rare.

Other rare birds observed included Horned Grebe (recorded only three times prior—observed on West Laguna Lake in Elk Grove), 9 Barrow’s Goldeneye (8 on West Laguna Lake, 1 on North Stone Lake), 50 Mountain Bluebirds (along Snodgrass Slough, Stone Lakes NWR—a huge number for the valley floor), Red-breasted Nuthatch (Tall Forest, Cosumnes Preserve—a rare find for this count particularly in a non-flight year), an Osprey (Cosumnes Preserve, Valensin Ranch, Dillard Road—only the second record), Eurasian Wigeon (Cosumnes Preserve, Desmond Road Ponds), 2 Redheads (one each at Cosumnes Preserve and Sacramento County Bufferlands), Grasshopper Sparrow (Cosumnes Preserve, Tall Forest Area), and 3 Barn Swallows (2 at Stone Lakes NWR

and 1 at the Sacramento Bufferlands). We had high counts for over 20 species including a staggering 1 million Starlings (an all time high), 150,000+ Brewer's Blackbirds, 20,000 Greater White-fronted Geese, and lots of waterfowl. Another trend was the increasing number of Eurasian Collared-Doves which spread this year from a single bird (last year's CBC) to 15 birds in five areas (essentially the eastern half of the count circle). We did experience all time lows on a few species as well, including Yellow-billed Magpies (151 birds observed) which is well below our lowest prior total of 488 birds in 1998. Last year's total was 169, and the average prior to 2005 was 670 birds (1995-2004). Great-tailed Grackles continue to be seen in multiple areas. With a total of 160 species, not much was missed (Steve and Roger, thanks for bailing us out with the count's only Winter Wren, on Merritt Island -usually we get several along Cosumnes River). There were two additional species possibly seen but not fully confirmed and so not included in the species total. These were Western Tanager and Pine Siskin."

FOLSOM

Compiler Chris Conard reported: "We had wonderful weather for a change and some good birds. The species total was 134. The total is about average (with a range of 123 to 143). Best finds were a Northern Saw-whet Owl in Orangevale by Mark Martucci and a Northern Shrike by Craig Swolgaard and Ginny Hupp. The owl was not refound, but some nice photos were taken on count day. The shrike, an immature, was near Folsom High School off of Iron Point Rd. Other highlights included the continuing male Red-breasted Merganser at Sailor Bar downstream of Nimbus Hatchery, Common Loon (8), over 100 Horned Grebes, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Merlin, Mew, Thayer's, and Glaucous-winged Gulls (and 30,000 gulls on Folsom Lake off Beal's and Folsom Points). 20,000 were flying in over the dam (seen from Folsom Pt from 4:20 to 4:50), 5 Burrowing Owls, Hairy Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Mountain Bluebird, Varied Thrush, Common Yellowthroat (often missed), Western Tanager, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Great-tailed Grackle (42), and Pine Siskin. Misses included Canvasback (count week on Bass Lake), Redhead (missing this millennium, but regular before), Ring-necked Pheasant, American Bittern (often missed), Golden Eagle (too many houses? The answer is yes, but is that why we're missing this bird?), Long-billed Dowitcher (often missed), Western Screech-Owl, Lewis's Woodpecker (two years in a

row), Steller's Jay (two years in a row), Red-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Canyon Wren, California Thrasher, Vesper Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, and Brown-headed Cowbird.

Thanks to all who helped with the count."

HONEY LAKE

Compiler Tim Manolis, who started this CBC near Susanville in Lassen County in 1970, reported that eight birders in five parties counted 93 species in cool but sunny weather December 28. The species included lots of raptors and waterfowl and a "Gray-headed" Junco that was new for the count. Other highlights were a Red-shouldered Hawk and 31 Lapland Longspurs. Eurasian Collared-Doves appear to have become established in the area—one on last year's count was the first ever, but 21 were tallied this year. 390 Common Ravens were the most ever on a Honey Lake CBC.

LINCOLN

Compiler Ed Pandolfino reported: "On December 27, we enjoyed a brisk day in the field with rain in the early morning and roaring winds in the afternoon on the fifth edition of the Lincoln CBC. We still tallied 134 species, a bit over our average of 131 and second only to the first year when we found 137 species. We did add five new species for the count: Blue-winged Teal, Osprey (count week), Eurasian Collared Dove, Mountain Bluebird and Purple Finch.

Other good finds were significant numbers of American Avocets and Black-necked Stilts in multiple locations, Western Sandpiper, Winter Wren and Varied Thrush in multiple locations.

Misses included Gadwall (first time), Hooded Merganser and Lesser Scaup (second time), Peregrine Falcon (second time), Wrentit (second time) and White-throated Sparrow (second time).

Two escapees of interest were the male Mandarin Duck returning for a second year and a possible Orange Bishop. Overall number of individuals was down about 10 percent compared to the average with most of the decrease due to waterfowl numbers. We had low numbers of geese—Greater White Fronts low and white geese VERY low. I doubt this is of any significance since one can see great fluctuations in these numbers from year to year and likely from day to day in these areas. We had an all time high in blackbirds with over 45,000 individuals of all species and over 14,000 Brewer's.

Raptor numbers were low as were numbers of many passerines as well. The latter likely due to weather. Yellow-billed Magpies, Western Scrub Jays, American Crow and Oak Titmouse numbers were way down for the second year, which could be due to West Nile Virus or the weather both years or, more likely, both. The number of Lincoln's Sparrows which was nearly double the average, with nearly every area setting a new high. The number of Lincoln's Sparrows exceeded the number of Song Sparrows for the first time and this same trend was seen in nearly every area. Odd.

Participation was down a little with 71 total participants vs. an average of 80 and 107 party hours vs. the average of 124."

MARYSVILLE

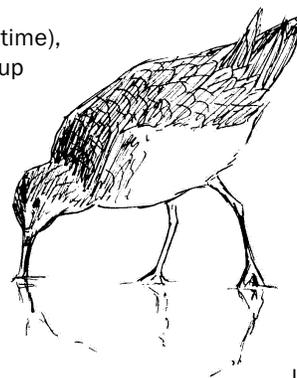
Despite cold winds and rain, the latter especially hard in the afternoon, the 21 participants found 140 species on the Marysville CBC December 21, compiler Tim Manolis said. Highlights were a Bonaparte's Gull, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Townsend's Solitaire, each recorded on the count for the first time, plus Black Rail (regular on the count) and impressive and incomplete tallies of Snow Goose and Northern Pintail (at least 50,000+ Snow Geese and 35,000+ Pintail).

PUTAH CREEK

Compiler Steve Hampton reported: "The December 17 Putah Creek Christmas Bird Count featured high numbers of both birds and birders. Thanks in part to front-page coverage by the *Davis Enterprise* and crisp and clear weather, 96 people participated, falling just shy of the record (100) set in 1976

and 1977. We found 141 species, including one new for the count: Eastern Phoebe. Other highlights included Clay-colored Sparrow, Cassin's Vireo, and five Western Tanagers. Record high counts were set for a whopping 25 species and tied for 5 more. There were no record low counts. New high counts were established for American White Pelican, Great Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Wood Duck,

Common Goldeneye, Barrow's Goldeneye, Turkey Vulture, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Greater Yellowlegs, Least Sandpiper, Anna's Hummingbird, Nuttall's Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Varied Thrush, Wrentit, Northern



Kirsten Munson

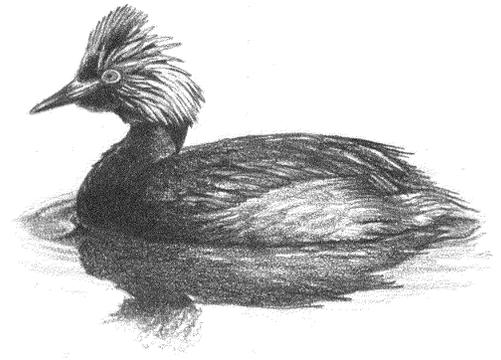
CBC'S continued on page 7

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 Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, spskua1@comcast.net, for trips through February 4th. For trips from February 5th through March 11th, call the scheduler Richard Barbieri, 966-4603, offleash56@yahoo.com. For trips from March 12th, call the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com.

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.



Daniel Kilby

Saturday, February 3, 7:30am
Schollenberger Park and Bodega Bay
Leaders: Valerie Phillips, 722-1802
goskival@yahoo.com
Ron Storey, (707) 762-5276
ronstorey@ronstorey.com

If you want to see up close Blue-winged Teal, Virginia and Sora Rails and many other species of waterfowl, then join Valerie and Ron for a day of action. They will also hit the hot spots of Bodega Bay. This will be a full day of birding, so bring scopes, FRS radios, liquids and warm clothes and a lunch or plan to eat at the Tides Restaurant. Meet at the park and ride at the west end of West Capitol Blvd off I-80 to carpool or meet in the parking lot at Schollenberger Park at 9am.

Sunday, February 4, 9am
East Lawn Cemetery
Leader: Mary Beth Metcalf, 456-7382

Bring a friend for a morning walk through East Lawn. This is an excellent place to find many wintering species, and sometimes a rarity. This trip is perfect for beginning birders, is a fun morning walk, and sure beats watching TV. Meet Mary Beth at the gate to the cemetery at the intersection of 43rd Street and Folsom Blvd. Park on 43rd Street. This walk will last for 2-3 hours.

Tuesday, February 6, 8am till noon
Walk Along the American River
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack on a 4-hour walk looking at native and non-native plant species, mammals and birds. This walk is great for beginning and more experienced nature lovers. Dress warmly and bring a snack and liquids if desired. Meet Jack at the end of Jacob Lane, which runs south off Fair Oaks Blvd between Arden and Eastern.

Saturday, February 10
2pm till dark
Sandhill Cranes and other wintering birds of the Central Valley
A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes" sponsored trip
Leader: Jessica Stocking
Coordinator:
Mike Savino, 446-1392

Jessica Stocking, formerly with the International Crane Foundation, and now doing crane research here with the North American Crane Working Group, will lead us as we find wintering birds of the valley, with an emphasis on the Sandhill Crane. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center parking lot, where we will stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands before car pooling to Staten Island to see flocks of cranes come in to roost for the night. Bring scopes if you have them. Optional dinner at Wimpy's with SOS Cranes board members for further discussions and libations.

Saturday, February 10
River Walk Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information: 684-2816

Meet at the Visitor Center on Franklin Blvd. for this monthly birding census trip. It's a great birding area, always full of surprises, and joining the group trip is a good way to find out what's happening at the preserve. You must check the recorded information a day or two before to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details.

Sunday, February 11, 8am
Yolo Wildlife Area
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com

Join Richard on this trip to a wonderful area just minutes from downtown Sacramento. This marshland offers a variety of birds, from sparrows and raptors to many ducks and several species of shorebirds. Given enough time, Richard may drive over to the Davis Waste Water Treatment Plant for a view of what may be there. From Sacramento take I-80 across the Yolo Causeway and turn right onto the frontage road just past the causeway. Turn right at the stop sign and circle under the freeway; then make a left up onto the levee and meet Richard at the first parking lot inside the wildlife area. Bring a lunch, water, and FRS radios if you have them.

Monday, February 12, 8am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Sami LaRocca
(530) 908-0288
Sami182@charter.net

Lincoln's Day holiday may be just the occasion to take advantage of this outing. We will search for wintering ducks, shorebirds, and the Sandhill Cranes. We'll walk the Riverwalk trail at the preserve to seek passerines such as sparrows, towhees and wrens. This is a good trip for all levels of birders, and beginners are welcome. Meet at the Mace Blvd Park & Ride off I-80, (northeast corner, behind Ikeda's Market), or call Sami for an alternate Sacramento area meeting location. Trip will last till early afternoon so bring water, snacks and lunch. Loaner binoculars are available for children and adults. NOTE: High wind or significant rain cancels trip.

**Wednesday, February 14, 8am
Yolo Wildlife Area**

**Leader: Dan Tankersley, 606-6518
dtankers@winfirst.com**

This marshy area, just minutes from downtown Sacramento, is a winter refuge for a good variety of ducks and shorebirds, as well as the larger waterbirds and a variety of sparrows. Uncommon birds are frequently found here. Dan plans a longer stay at the first stop, with a scope set up to give you good views of the birds, so grab your cup of coffee (and a doughnut?) and plan to meet him at the first parking lot inside the wildlife area. From Sacramento take I-80 across the Yolo Causeway and turn right onto the frontage road just past the causeway. Turn right at the stop sign; circle under the freeway; then make a left up onto the levee and down into the wildlife area. This trip will end before noon. Beginners are encouraged to come.

**Saturday & Sunday, February 17 & 18
President's Day Weekend trip
Los Banos and Panoche Valley Areas
Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458
Naturestoc@aol.com**

In winter, the Grasslands Ecological Area in the San Joaquin Valley hosts over 100,000 geese, large concentrations of ducks, White-faced Ibis, lesser Sandhill Cranes, Tri-colored Blackbirds and many species of raptors. Birding Saturday in the Panoche Valley, south of Los Banos, may turn up Roadrunner, Chukar, Vesper Sparrow, Cassin's Kingbird and other interesting land birds. Saturday night will be spent in Los Banos. Sunday will include birding along the Santa Fe Grade Road and Merced Wildlife Refuge where large numbers of Ross' Geese are usually found. The diversity of habitats makes this trip very rewarding. Trip size is limited, so call Dan by the 5th of February to reserve space, for trip details, and to allow time for making hotel reservations.

**Saturday, February 17
Tall Forest Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information: 684-2816**

The Tall Forest is perhaps the best remaining example of riparian forest remaining in the Central Valley and is not generally

open to the public. In this jungle-like habitat, excellent rarities and large numbers of migrants have been found, as well as the resident birds. Check the recorded information a couple of days before the trip for the exact meeting time and place. Arrive a little early, as this trip leaves the meeting place promptly.

**Sunday, February 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.

**Tuesday, February 20, 8am till noon
Parkway Walk/Estates Drive
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

This early morning walk along the American River Parkway will be in an area just upriver from the Watt Avenue Bridge at the end of Estates Drive in Carmichael. Join Jack on this stretch of the river as he shares with you his knowledge of plants, mammals, and of course, the birds. Meet Jack at the end of Estates Drive, which runs south off Fair Oaks Blvd between Watt and Eastern Aves.



Kirsten Munson

**Saturday, February 24
Corte Madera Marsh
Meet at 9am in Bay Area
Leader: Chris Conard
Coordinator:
Cathie LaZier
457-6882
empid@earthlink.net**

Due to scheduling conflicts, Chris Conard will be leading this trip, in lieu of Ron Storey. Meet Chris at the Park & Ride at Highway 101 and Lucas Valley Road at 9am; (take Smith Ranch/Lucas Valley Rd exit, which is 4.5 miles south of the junction of Highways 37 and 101 in Petaluma—go east and the Park & Ride is on your right immediately after you leave the freeway.) We will begin the day by driving to the Corte Madera Marsh where we will look for Clapper Rail. Corte Madera is one of the most reliable places in the North Bay to observe Clapper Rail. We may then go to Las Gallinas, where Tufted Duck, Eurasian Widgeon, and Palm Warbler have been found in the past, but trip destination will depend on current reported rarities. This is an all day trip, so bring a lunch, and wear

shoes that you are not concerned about getting a little muddy. This trip is quite suitable for beginning birders who want to venture out of the areas they are familiar with and view birds either hard to find or not normally found in the Sacramento area. Please note: Rain will cancel this trip, so if rain is predicted, please contact Cathie at 457-6882 to check trip status.

**Sunday, February 25, 7:30am
Solano Lake/Putah Creek Area
Leader: Cliff Hawley, 300-2495
yellowhammerca@gmail.com**

Cliff has been our Sacramento Christmas Count Compiler for several years, and is an excellent birder who knows this area well. Solano Lake is a great place to look for ducks this time of year. He will also lead the group along Putah Creek and up to Monticello Dam. Putah Creek is one of the most reliable areas to find Hooded Mergansers. Other possible species include Purple Finch, Common Merganser, Hairy Woodpecker, Dipper, Barrow's Goldeneye, Bufflehead and Canyon Wrens. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring a lunch and liquids. Meet Cliff at the Park & Ride off I-80 on West Capitol Ave (south side of West Capitol, across from the gas station.)

**Tuesday, February 27
Parkway Walk/Estates Drive
TRIP CANCELED**

**Thursday, March 1, 8am till noon
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Meet Jack in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park for a 4 hour walk on the trails winding through the oak woodland and down to the river. This is an excellent birding spot and Jack will also share his knowledge of the native and non-native plants and trees of this parkway area.

**Saturday, March 3, 8am-Noon
Bushy Lake/Cal Expo Floodplain
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net**

Join Maureen for a look at some of the birds that live along this section of the American River Parkway. Wood Ducks are usually seen, and river otters and beavers are a possibility as well. This will be about a 4 mile walk and will end near lunch time. Bring water and appropriate footgear as it may be muddy. Meet at the parking area at

Field Trips continued on page 6

Field Trips continued from page 5

the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Newer birders will enjoy this trip.

Sunday, March 4th, 7am to noon Folsom Lake, Mormon Island to Brown's Ravine

**Chris Conard 362-5942
conardc@gmail.com**

Be prepared for a two mile walk along a rolling trail in the oak covered hills overlooking Folsom Lake. On the lake, we'll look for loons, five species of grebe and other waterbirds. This site is often an excellent place to see Phainopepla. Hairy Woodpecker and Purple Finch may be found. The woods should be alive with the song of Bewick's Wren and other resident breeders. Meet across from the Folsom Outlets in the parking lot behind Burger King near the CircleK on Iron Point Rd. From Hwy 50, exit at Folsom Blvd and go north. Make the first right on Iron Point, then a right into the parking lot. There's a \$5 per car entrance fee at the State Park. We will attempt to arrange a car shuttle from Brown's Ravine back to Mormon Island. Steady rain cancels.

Saturday, March 10, 7:30am Best Slough and Yuba County Wetlands

**Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com**

Best Slough's drainage runs west out of the foothills and ends near Hwy 70 to meet with Algodon Slough which runs south and feeds into the Bear River. It's here at this confluence that Richard will lead you to see some of Yuba County's wetland habitat and surrounding properties. Meet Richard at the Park & Ride at Hwy 99 and Elkhorn Blvd. Take I-5 north from Sacramento; at the I-5/Hwy 99 split, take 99 and take the first exit after the split. Turn left over the freeway; the Park & Ride is on the southwest corner.

Sunday, March 11, 8am Goethe Park

**Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net**

Meet Cathie at the first parking lot on your right past the entrance kiosk. This is a good time of year for singing and nesting birds, as well as early blooming plants. Pipevine Swallowtail Butterflies should be active. We'll walk through the oak woodland over to the river. Beginning birders are welcome on this trip, which will end before noon. There is a \$4 entrance fee to the park; if you wish to carpool a short way in, meet Cathie at 7:45 on Rod Beaudry Drive just off Folsom Blvd.

Saturday, March 17 ARNHA Bird & Breakfast Effie Yeaw Nature Center Ancil Hoffman Park Contact: 489-4918

This morning bird walk is a fund raiser for the American River Natural History Association. Join experienced birders for an informative walk on the Nature Center trails and share in good company during the hearty breakfast. This gathering

is for those 13 years of age and older. For more information, and to make reservations, call the Nature Center at 489-4918.

Saturday, March 17, very early 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, so this is your opportunity to bird there. John has an appreciation of nature on many levels, and a trip with him is always exciting. You must check the recorded information a day or two previously to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details. Arrive a little early, as this trip always leaves promptly.

Sunday, March 18, 8am Effie Yeaw Nature Center Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882 empid@earthlink.net

Spring is a great time to walk the paths of the Nature Center, looking for nesting hummingbirds, blooming Giraffe's Head

and Dutchman's Pipe, and listening to all the bird activity as they sing to attract mates and establish territory. Meet Cathie in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park. This walk is great for beginning birders, and anyone interested in natural history. Walk will end by noon.

Sunday, March 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.

Tuesday, March 20, 8am to noon Sailor Bar Area Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

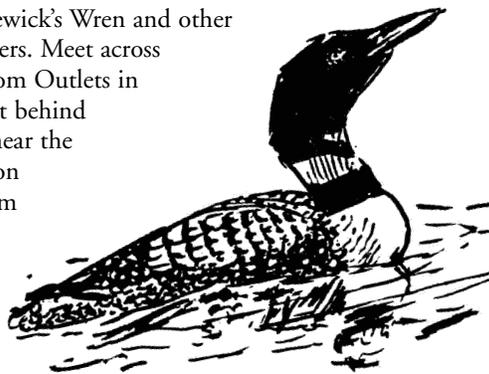
Meet Jack at the end of Emperor Street to explore the plants, birds and animals of this riparian corridor along the American River Parkway. From Winding Way, turn south on Kenneth, then east on Emperor Street to the end.

Saturday, March 24, 8am to noon Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek Leader: Lea Landry, 638-1141 llandry@softcom.net

Meet Lea in the parking lot of the Snowberry Creek Equestrian staging area where Main and Sunset Avenues meet in Orangevale, (1/4 mile east on Main), for a morning walk which will include some riparian habitat, some ridge trails, and a good view of Lake Natoma. Possible sightings include Cooper's Hawk, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and an assortment of waterfowl. There may be some short steep climbs on trails, so wear comfortable hiking footwear. Beginning birders are welcome on this trip.

Sunday, March 25, 8am to noon Orangevale Park Leaders: Paul Cordero and Mark Martucci, 833-6722 matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Meet Paul and Mark in the parking lot on Filbert Ave at 8am. They will be looking for a variety of resident, wintering and early migrant species. Be prepared for a one to two mile hike on potentially muddy trails. To reach Orangevale Park take Hazel Ave to Oak Ave. Go East on Oak Ave to Filbert Ave. Take a right on Filbert; the parking lot is on your right. This is a great trip for beginning birders.



Kirsten Munson

Saturday, March 31, 7am
Caswell Memorial State Park
Leader: Gary Fregien, 451-2767
calaveri@sbcglobal.net

Caswell Memorial State Park is located in the Central Valley near the town of Ripon, about an hour south of Sacramento. The park's position along the meandering Stanislaus River affords a combination of water and riparian vegetation. Although now merely a remnant, the park's 258 acres are mostly wild, in stark contrast to the surrounding agricultural lands, and present a pristine example of the once extensive riparian corridor along the river. The habitat is primarily mature riparian valley oak woodland. Its multi-level canopy provides lush cover, nesting and feeding grounds and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant species. This habitat also harbors the endemic riparian brush rabbit, not known to occur elsewhere. For more information about the park, go to www.parks.ca.gov, click on "Find A Park" and use the drop-down menu to find Caswell.

We had a nice variety of birds during our March '06 trip; 52 species in all, including a White-throated Sparrow. The December, 2006 trip was also quite productive with 49 species.

There is a day-use fee to enter the park. We plan to spend several hours in the park along some of the numerous nature trails, so bring food and water. The trails are primarily level, but these paths and the vegetation along them may be damp. Dress appropriately. We will meet at the Park & Ride on the east side of Hwy 99 at the Sheldon Rd exit.

Sunday, April 1, 8am
Upper Sunrise,
American River Parkway
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Mark will lead you on a morning walk along the American River Parkway. You will see a nice variety of resident birds and maybe a few early spring migrants. From Hwy 50, drive North on Sunrise Blvd, turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd, and take the first left on Pennsylvania. There is a \$4 per car entrance fee. This is another great trip for beginners and for more experienced birders alike.

CBC'S continued from page 3

Mockingbird, Cedar Waxwing, Phainopepla, Hutton's Vireo, Western Tanager, Spotted Towhee, Lincoln's Sparrow, and Golden-crowned Sparrow. Record highs were tied for Eared Grebe, Virginia Rail (5, for the fourth year in a row), Eurasian Collared-Dove (2), Cassin's Vireo (1), and Clay-colored Sparrow (1). The latter three had only been found once before on the count. Many species bounced back from record low counts during last year's rainy count, including Great Blue Heron and Red-tailed Hawk.

The good weather enabled a cleaner analysis of the impacts of West Nile Virus (WNV). Despite the good weather and increased party hours, slightly fewer Yellow-billed Magpies were seen than last year. In terms of magpies per party hour, the steep two-year slide continued so that that numbers are now about 60 percent below the historical trend. Both Western Scrub-Jays and American Crows rebounded substantially, though remain below their historical trends. Oak Titmice recovered only slightly, and remain over 50 percent below their trend. Perhaps the most interesting stat is that total birds per party hour was 24 percent higher during last year's torrential rains, suggesting rain curtails birders more than birds."

STOCKTON

"The Stockton CBC was held Dec. 17 amid glorious weather, in marked contrast to the abysmal conditions last year," compiler Jim Rowoth reported. "The 47 counters tallied 144 species and some 1,101,489 individual birds, over 80 percent of which were starlings. This fact is due largely to the increasing number of acres of vineyards in the count circle. We missed Rough-legged Hawk for only the 6th time in 39 years. Lesser Scaup is also becoming harder to find of late. There were no real rarities that day, but species of note included Osprey, Swainson's Hawk, all the expected falcons, Redhead, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pine Siskin, Winter Wren, Rock Wren, Glaucous-winged Gull, and Phainopepla. Rapidly becoming a regular on this count, unfortunately, is the Great-tailed Grackle (21 this year)."

WOODFORDS

Heavy snow by 11am and 24-32 degree temperatures cut short this Alpine County CBC and the 27 participants were "chained up and heading for home by 1:30pm," Dan Brown reported. The group counted 86 species, not bad in spite of the weather, said Dan, who subbed for compiler Tim Fitzer, ailing from apparent food poisoning. Highlights were nine American Dippers, 24 Mountain Bluebirds, an American Tree Sparrow, and 515 Pinyon Jays.

COLLABORATIVE FUNDING GRANT AWARDED TO SAS

Last July, at the suggestion of President Keith Wagner and subsequent approval of the Board of Directors, the Education Committee participated in Audubon California's Collaborative Funding Grant Program. The program funds Audubon Chapter environmental projects, including education, by awarding grants to chapters submitting proposals following set guidelines. Fewer awards are available than proposals submitted.

The Board of Directors determined a very worthy project was to fund the purchase and donation of binoculars to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center for use in their programs with elementary aged children. As we all know, viewing nature through binoculars greatly enhances the experience, peaking interest and the desire to learn. More than 8,000 children per year participate in EYNC programs which enlist the aid of binoculars. The Nature Center had only 6 pair of very old and worn binoculars that had to be shared by as many as 24 children on nature walks. In many instances when viewing wildlife, the object of study departed before every child had the opportunity to use the binoculars.

The Education Committee submitted its grant proposal, and Audubon California sent word on October 20 that it was successful. SAS was awarded \$1,850. Utilizing Eagle Optics' "Matching" program for non-profits, SAS purchased 16 pair of binoculars. With the match, 32 pair of binoculars were delivered to EYNC on December 19.

Recently, Julie Serences, SAS' K-8 Education Coordinator, assisted Brian Gilmore with his 1st-2nd grade Winter Fun Birding Class at EYNC. Julie reported, "We used the binoculars SAS purchased for the first time and the kid's loved them. We saw over 16 species, but the highlight was of course just being outside enjoying nature and each others company on a gorgeous winter day! The binoculars are easy for kids to handle, and will be much used and enjoyed!"

Upcoming Events

CALIFORNIA DUCK DAYS

This event is being held nearby in Davis on February 23rd and 24th and is a wetlands festival in the heart of the Pacific Flyway. A gala reception for everyone interested in wetlands and wildlife will launch the festivities on Friday evening at the Davis Art Center, 191 F St, Davis. In addition to refreshments and good company, the reception will feature an outstanding wildlife art exhibit by Yolo County high school students.

On Saturday, the festival will feature one full day of field trips and workshops at the Yolo Wildlife Area Headquarters facility in South Davis. Among the dozen field trips to be offered are Local Owling and Wildlife Friendly Farming at the Conaway Ranch. Workshops will be held throughout the day and include Waterfowl Drawing, Bird Dog Demonstrations, and Bird Box Building. The always-popular Mallard ducklings will be on display. All participants should pre-register due to limited space on field trips and workshops. For more information and registration materials, please call the Yolo Basin Foundation at (530) 757-3780.

SAN DIEGO AND SALTON SEA FESTIVALS

The San Diego Bird Festival will be held February 7 through 12, at the Marina Village Conference Center in Mission Bay, sponsored by the San Diego Audubon Society. Besides wonderful speakers and workshops, field trips include coastal, pelagic, desert and Ensinada/Baja areas. Other highlights are kayaking trips, and bird calls, digiscoping and butterfly workshops. Further information and registration can be found at www.sandiegoaudubon.org/birdfest.htm.

The Salton Sea Festival runs from February 16 to 19. Look for more information in January's Observer or go online at www.newriverwetlands.com/saltonsea.html.

12TH ANNUAL GODWIT DAYS IN ARCATA

Extraordinary birding opportunities await you at the 12th annual Godwit Days spring migration bird festival. Don't forget to mark your calendar for April 20-22. Held at the peak of spring migration, shorebirds abound and special opportunities are planned to see many other species, including Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Snowy Plover. The area offers a wide array of habitats and species for your observation and enjoyment. The selection of nearly 100 small group field trips, lectures, workshops, boating excursions, and community activities are led by experienced local guides. Special pre- and post-festival birding trips are available that can extend your enjoyment to a full week. The "Humboldt Big Day" trip consistently observes over 110 species in a single day!

Further information is now available at www.godwitdays.com.

NATURAL HISTORY WILDERNESS WORKSHOPS

These naturalist-led hikes explore botany, geology and birds in the Eastern Sierra's Golden Trout Wilderness above Lone Pine. At 10,000 feet elevation, the walk-in camp (three mile hike) offers tented cabins and all meals as you dayhike in the Cottonwood Lakes Basin area. Three one week sessions in June and July are scheduled.

This adult and family camp has been running since the 1970's. Birds are an important component of the program. Camp naturalists (even the cooks) are all members of various Audubon chapters (Santa Barbara, Ventura, Eastern Sierra et al).

Reserve early, they often fill up quickly. Call Paul at (805) 668-8344, or email paul.roark@verizon.net or visit the web site at www.1startists.com/gtc. Golden Trout Natural History Workshop is a 501c3 non-profit.

SACRAMENTO BIRDING FOR FUN WORKSHOP

Sign up now!

Who: Sheila Green is a volunteer with SAS and has over 7 years' experience teaching the love of birds and nature to kids and adults.

What: Birding for Fun is an inter-generational, hands-on workshop for children ages 6-16 accompanied by a parent, grandparent or other special adult. Sheila will be covering birding in the Sacramento Area with special emphasis on audio and visual bird identification; where to go exploring; backyard and wild habitat conservation.

Where: Cordova Community Center, 2197 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova

When: Classes will be 6:30-8pm, Wednesday, March 14 and 21 with a field trip 9-11am, Saturday, March 17

How: Register by calling the Park District's number at 362-1841. The class size is limited, so sign up soon. Cost is \$15.

Why: For Fun!



Audubon At Home

Did you know that the California Live Oak—*Quercus agrifolia*—attracts Oak Titmouse, Western Scrub Jay, Steller's Jay, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and about 30 other species of birds. While you may not have room in your yard to plant a Live Oak birds rely on the resources that you and nature provide. Often plants which supply them with fruits, nuts and an array of insects, also provide shelter and nesting sites along with nest material, perches from which to survey, and safe places to sleep or wait out a storm.

Science has proven that certain birds prefer the foods and resources offered by particular native plants with which they may have coevolved. This provides a logical and simple solution to the question of how to help common local species: plant the plants that the birds use. Plant a variety of species to mimic natural habitat. You can find help from the California Native Plant Society. Sacramento's chapter can be found online at www.sacvalleycnps.org.

Check Audubon at Home often for an expanding regional plant database and further resources. They can be found online at www.audubon.org (then click on Audubon at Home).

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to all
of these new members:

Richard Begley Linda Ramer
Sally Cooper Al Young
Linda Geraci Karen P Zumwalt
Robert W Meagher

SOME UPCOMING PROGRAMS You Won't Want To Miss

March: Allen Fish
Identifying Perched Raptors
April: Orien
Rail Program
May Ed Harper
Topic TBA



Kirsten Munson

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS

J.R. Beck, Carole Anne Elzey, John Hervey, Laverne Ireland, Kathleen Knight, Judith Lamare, Don Lee, Leon & Rita Marowitz, Robert Meagher, Noreen Rademacher, Julie Serences, Douglas Thompson, James Waddell, and Kay Williams, to the Conservation and Education Fund.

J.R. Beck, Dana deFarcy, Carole Anne Elzey, Thomas Graham, Sidney Hibma, Norman Hill, Laverne Ireland, Marc Irish, Fred Klass, Kathleen Knight, Judith Lamare, Don Lee, Martha Lennihan, Lachlan McClenahan, Bebe McKenzie, Leon & Rita Marowitz, Julie Serences, Jan Taylor and Kay Williams, to the Bobelaine Fund.

Maria Nicholas Kelly and Mary Morris to the General Fund.

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 \$ _____

Donation for maintenance Bobelaine Sanctuary \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

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



Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be February 27, 2007 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

Seasonal Observations

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

In December, it is typically a rare waterbird or a lingering or vagrant songbird that makes headlines, but this December several owls topped the list. At the very top is a **Snowy Owl** that was found by a fisherman near Grizzly Island in Solano County. The news got out on 12/30, and hundreds have now seen the bird, mostly from a boat leaving Suisun City. This is the second year in a row that California's only **Snowy Owl** has turned up in Solano County (prior to last year, there hadn't been a Snowy Owl record for the state since 1978). The bird continues through press time. Another notable was a **Northern Saw-whet Owl** found in Orangevale on the Folsom CBC on the last day of 2006. It was not refound, but several nice photos were taken. A **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was reported on the 12/2 American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) Count, and a **Long-eared Owl** was found off of Cantelow Rd in Solano County on the 12/17 Putah Creek CBC.

Other December CBC highlights (more details on pages 2, 3 and 7) include an **Eastern Phoebe** and a **Cassin's Vireo** near Winters on the 12/17 Putah Creek CBC. On the 12/30 Sacramento CBC, a female **Red-breasted Merganser** was reported at Greenhaven Lake, as was a **Ruff** from the Conaway Ranch, a **Western Gull** at the Davis Wetlands (DW), and one of the continuing **American Tree Sparrows** at the Yolo Wildlife Area (not reported since October). Also reported were three "**Kumlien's Gulls**," one adult and two first year birds, at DW. This race is currently classified as a sub-species

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of **Iceland Gull**, but is now often considered to be a hybrid between the nominate population of **Iceland Gull** and **Thayer's Gull**. Harder still to classify were two dark swifts that may have been **Vaux's or Chimney Swifts**—either species would be an outstanding report for the date. Other highlights of the 12/31 Folsom CBC include the male **Red-breasted Merganser** at Sailor Bar on the American River Parkway (ARP) that was

first reported on 12/9, and an immature **Northern Shrike** near Folsom High School. This has been an incredible season for **Pink-sided Junco** reports. In addition to one reported from William B. Pond along ARP on 10/30, there was a well-described bird reported at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 12/5, and another from Folsom on 12/24. Although all **Dark-eyed Juncos** are considered a single species, there is much to be learned about the movements and relationships of identifiable races. There are many intermediate individuals, so caution is advised.

Other interesting reports include a **Marbled Godwit** at DW on 12/3, a **Ruff** on Sherman Island from 12/20 through at least 12/29, a **Red-naped Sapsucker** at Larchmont Park downstream of Gristmill and south of ARP from 12/8 through press time, a **Swainson's Hawk** from Larchmont Park on 12/9, and the continuing immature **Northern Shrike** near the entrance to Jepson Prairie from 11/30 throughout December. **Varied Thrushes** were reported in good numbers in the Sacramento area, with 60-70 at CRP most impressive.

Many of these birds were first reported on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit www.cvbirds.org and click "Listserv" for details. Thanks to all for their reports.

Chris Conard

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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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