



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, February 17

General Meeting 7:30pm

Shepard Garden and Art Center

Purple Martins—The season is upon us

Dan Airola, biologist & natural resource planner with Jones & Stokes, Environmental Consultants since 1985, has been conducting and coordinating a volunteer study of purple martins in Sacramento overpasses and elevated roadways intermittently since 1992. Dan has previously worked for the Forest Service in the northern Sierra Nevada where he was active in the Lake Almanor Audubon Society. He has published several papers with information from volunteer research on ospreys, waterfowl, and cowbird parasitism, in addition to his recent work on purple martins. His presentation tonight will address the history, current status, ecology, and management of the remnant purple martin population that occupies bridges and roadways in the Sacramento Region.

Sally Riggs, Program Chair

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Art Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., in McKinley Park. The program is followed by a social time and the public is welcome. For further information please visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Christmas Bird Count Results

FOLSOM, January 2, 2005

"Not a bad day considering what a bad day it was," compiler Chris Conard said in reporting a total of 137 species found on a day marked by non-stop rain. Highlights on this the 27th annual count were Pacific Loon (1 at Lake Natoma, and one in Folsom Lake from the Folsom Lake Peninsula in El Dorado County low foothills), 1 Common Loon (Lake Natoma), Greater Scaup (Cameron Park Lake), Western Screech-Owl (Orangevale and Folsom Lake State Recreation Area), Burrowing Owl (1 on Payen Rd), Hairy Woodpecker (2 in El Dorado Hills), Barn Swallow (4 from Nimbus Hatchery over ponds downstream of trout runs), Steller's

Jay (13 from El Dorado County), American Dipper (1 in artificial waterfalls/ponds at Serrano development in El Dorado Hills—a dipper was also there in 2001).

RIO COSUMNES, January 4, 2005
Despite dense fog and flooded conditions, participants recorded an unofficial total of 152 species, including the count's first record of an Eastern Phoebe and a female plumaged Cassin's Finch. Compiler Andrew Engilis Jr. said swallows were in great numbers with 8 Violet-greens and 11 Barn Swallows counted. Other notables: a Phainopepla (second record for the count), Rock Wren (third count record), 2 Barrow's Goldeneyes (second count record), Eurasian

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Bobelaine Happenings

How many of you have visited Bobelaine sanctuary in the past year? It is located about fifteen miles north of Sacramento on the west bank of the Feather River and is about a twenty to thirty minute drive from Sacramento. Take Hwy 99 north to about a mile past the Feather River bridge to Laurel Ave., turn right and go to the extreme end of the road. It will end in a parking lot adjacent to our metal barn. Come out and enjoy the peace and quiet of the 430 acre sanctuary and enjoy the variety of bird songs and sights that abound there. The sanctuary is a wonderful place to go for a few hours or more to relax and enjoy nature.

Bill Clark, Co-Manager



Stephen D'Amato

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

As a Chapter of the National Audubon Society, we will focus on conservation and environmental education to ensure that the Sacramento region's natural ecosystems and diverse bird populations are preserved, restored, and made available for study and enjoyment.

Field Trip Findings

Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (1/16)

Until January 9, leader Tim Fitzer had never seen the rare, dark-phased Ferruginous Hawk in 25 years of birding. He saw it that day at Salt Springs Valley in western Calaveras County. Then a week later, he and his group saw a dark-phased Ferruginous at the Sacramento Wildlife area near Gridley. Other highlights included two Bald Eagles, two Golden Eagles, and Burrowing Owls.

Gray Lodge (1/15) – Fog, cold and an overcast day did not deter a small but dedicated group of birders who found 80-plus species, including a Eurasian (Common) Teal, also called a Eurasian Green-winged Teal. It was believed to be the first such species ever recorded at the refuge. Leader Brian Gilmore, subbing for Cliff Hawley, said the teal was spotted from the observation deck by Gary Fregien who also sighted two

Eurasian Wigeons on the drive home around Sutter Buttes. Rick Skehen was credited with another Eurasian Wigeon at the observation deck. The group also was treated to an adult Bald Eagle fly-over, a Great Horned Owl, a very vocal Peregrine Falcon, and a Phainopepla. En route home, a huge flock of crows estimated by Brian at 5,000 or more filled the sky and trees near Butte House Road and Highway 99 in Yuba City.

Coastal Birding Trip (1/8) – This trip was rained out.

Goethe Park (1/3) – A Merlin was the bird of the trip, with 10 Wood Ducks, White-throated Swift, Spotted Sandpiper and Yellowlegs also found. But leader Jack Hiehle gave special mention to three Horsehair Worms seen in two puddles. They are brown, 18 inches long and 1/16th of an inch in diameter. They're not seen often Jack says,

“because most people don't look in puddles.”

Bobelaine Sanctuary Walk (1/1)

Leader Brian Gilmore reported that the New Year brought a break in the weather, making birding at the sanctuary enjoyable. Tundra Swans, Greater White-fronted Geese and Snow Geese flew overhead, and dozens of Yellow-rumped Warblers darted in and out of the trees along with numerous Ruby-crowned Kinglets. They also got a good look at a Great Horned Owl along the Oak Trail. At Lake Crandall, they watched three River Otters playing on an island, and 20 Double-crested Cormorants in the trees around the lake. Near the end of their day they spotted a cooperative Red-breasted Sapsucker in an oak tree near the levee and tallied 42 species.

Pete Hayes

Christmas Bird Count Results

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Wigeon, dark phased Ferruginous Hawk, many Cattle Egrets, Grasshopper Sparrow, several White-throated Sparrows, Forster's Tern, American Avocets, White-throated Sparrow, Purple Finch and Swamp Sparrow.

SACRAMENTO, December 26, 2005

Birders recorded 142 species, plus four during count week, compiler Cliff Hawley reported. Talking-point find was 111 Black-necked Stilts plus an American Avocet at Bridgeway Island storm water retention basin south and east of the Sacramento Deepwater Channel in Yolo County. Ed Harper and Steve Hampton reported Western Gulls and Mary Schiedt found a Wilson's Phalarope.

PUTAH CREEK, December 19, 2004

Seventy-four birders reported 142 species, fourth highest in the 34-year history of the count. While no new species were found, record high counts were set for 13 species and tied for four others, according to compiler Steve Hampton. Weather was clear and calm in the canyons and hills, foggy on the valley floor. New highs were reported for Virginia Rail (5-tie), Rock Pigeon (773), Long-eared Owl (2-tie), Anna's Hummingbird (148), Belted Kingfisher (41), Nuttall's Woodpecker (195), Black Phoebe (165), Say's Phoebe (49), Western Scrub-Jay (1,308), Oak Titmouse (491),

Red-breasted Nuthatch (3-tie), Phainopepla (23), Hutton's Vireo (30), Yellow-rumped ("Audubon's") Warbler (1,269), Common Yellowthroat (1-tie), Western Tanager (4), and Golden-crowned Sparrow (1,276).

Noteworthy: On the 2003 count, Putah Creek led the nation in Red-breasted Sapsuckers (with 31), same as this year, and Northern Flickers (with 487).

STOCKTON, December 19, 2004

A number of frequently missed birds showed up, including Eurasian Wigeon, Golden Eagle, Horned Grebe, Rock Wren, Wilson's Phalarope, Barn Swallow, Black Rail and Great-tailed Grackle, compiler Jim Roworth reported. Altogether, birders counted 146 species in the Lodi/north Stockton/delta area on a day of morning fog and afternoon overcast. A disappointment was the absence of the Vermillion Flycatcher that was discovered at last year's CBC and had returned this winter to Turner Road Vintners.

WOODFORDS, December 18, 2004

An immature Northern Goshawk that was stalking a flock of 156 Pinyon Jays in downtown Markleville was a show-stopper for the 22 hardy participants on the frigid Sierra count. Dan Brown, co-compiler with Tim Fitzer, said a Northern Pygmy Owl was another bright spot among the 83

species that were counted as temperatures ranged from 16 to 24 degrees in the morning and climbed to the 30s by 10am when it was sunny.

SACRAMENTO BIRDS GROUP EMAIL LIST

Those of you that have Internet access may want to post your unusual bird sightings on our new "Sacramento Birds" list-serve. For detailed information on how to join check out our Sacramento Audubon Home Page at www.sacramentoaudubon.org.

Those who would rather call in their rare or unusual sightings or listen to local area sightings may use our dedicated "Central Valley Bird Box" phone at (916) 783-2331. Both of these systems offer excellent ways to become aware of bird sightings in our area as well as providing a means to ask questions regarding birding. Birding questions may also be directed to the following email and phone numbers: bobelaine@sacramentoaudubon.org, (916) 783-8305 or Chris Conard at (916) 362-5942 or chris.conard@comcast.net. Don't be afraid to ask questions, there are many good birders who would be happy to answer them for you and help you learn.

Bill Clark, Co-Manager

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/she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 961-5871 for trips through February 6th. For trips from February 12th through March 13th call the scheduler Richard Barbieri, 966-4603. For trips from March 19th through April 17th call the scheduler Cathie Lazier, 457-6882, empid@sbcglobal.net. Plan to pool cars and share gas expenses with the driver. Walkie-talkies can be helpful on non-local trips. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.



Stephen D'Amato

Tuesday, February 1, 8am

Walk Along The American River Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack on a 4 hour walk looking at wild-flowers, native plant species, mammals and birds. This is an excellent walk for beginners. You can't go wrong on a walk with Jack.

Saturday, February 5, 8am

Gray Lodge State Refuge and Western Sutter Buttes Leader: Harlan Perryman, (530) 873-3039 or 961-5871

Join Harlan for a full day of action birding at this waterfowl magnet. Thousands of geese and ducks winter at Gray Lodge, including Eurasian Widgeon, Blue-winged Teal, and Ring-necked Ducks, to name a few. There are often Peregrine Falcon and Bald Eagles. On the return trip, Harlan will take the west Sutter Buttes route looking for raptors and wintering sparrows. Bring warm clothes, lunch, liquids, and two-way radios for a full day of fun. We will meet at the Elkhorn Blvd. Park & Ride off Hwy 99 north.

Sunday, February 6, 8am

Grizzly Island – Suisun Marsh State Wildlife Area Leader: Joe Ferreira, 983-2120 jferreir@dfg.ca.gov

Join Joe, who was a resident biologist living on Grizzly Island at one time. He has a full knowledge of the terrain and history of the area. You will see many ducks, shorebirds, raptors, the majestic Tule Elk, and possibly otters. Bring a lunch, liquids and warm clothes for a full day of fun. Meet Joe at the Park & Ride at the West Capitol exit off I-80 just before the causeway. Call for an alternate meeting place. Bring walkie-talkies.

Saturday, February 12, 7am

Foster City/Peninsula/ Charleston Slough Leaders: Marilyn Hemmeter and Eileen Kay, 989-4547 e-mail: birdergirl@earthlink.net

Join Marilyn and Eileen again on this fast-paced trip to the South Bay and its local hot spots, with stopovers at Foster City, Redwood Shores, Baylands and Charleston Slough for looks at shorebirds and sea ducks. This will be an all day trip with a restaurant lunch break or you may bring your own lunch, but do bring a snack and liquids for the day. Meet at the Park and Ride on West Capitol Avenue off Hwy 80. Secondary meeting place will be Foster City in the parking lot of the Recreation Center at Leo Ryan Park at about 9am. The park is on Hillsdale Boulevard between Edgewater and Shell Boulevards.



Sunday, February 13

7:30am Kelton Way Leader: Joe Ceriani, 922-0768

Join Joe on this early morning walk through the wetlands of Robla Creek drainage in southwest Rio Linda. Marsh birds such as moorhens, coots, ducks and hopefully rails are found here. From a distance you will also be able to view the heron and egret rookery. Meet at Java City Coffee House, 717 Del Paso Rd. From Hwy 80, exit at Northgate Blvd. and head north to the dead end at the intersection with Del Paso Road and Main Ave.

Daniel Kilby

Friday, February 18, 8am-Noon

Parkway Walk/Estates Drive Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

This early morning walk along the American River will be just up from the

Watt Ave. 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 birds of the area. Meet at the end of Estates Drive off of Fair Oaks Boulevard.

Saturday-Monday, February 19-21

President's Day Weekend Los Banos & Panoche Valley Areas Leaders: Dan Brown & Kathy Moore 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 several species of raptors. Saturday's birding in the Panoche Valley which is south of Los Banos may turn up Roadrunner, Chuckar, Vesper Sparrow and other ground dwelling birds. Sunday's

birding will include birding along Santa Fe Grade Road and Merced National Wildlife refuge where large numbers of Ross' Geese are usually found. Monday will be spent at the San Luis Refuge which will include an auto tour of the Tule Elk enclosure as well as some various walks. The diversity of habitats that you will encounter on this trip is what will lend to a memorable and rewarding trip. Trip size however is limited, and reserving your space is required. Call Dan or Kathy for reservations.

Saturday, February 26, 8am-12pm

Wetlands and Waterfowl Walk

Tour a managed seasonal and permanent wetland area within the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands in Elk Grove. The Bufferlands

tour offers a chance to see many bird and mammal species including waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, beavers and coyotes. Tour participants will enjoy a 2.5 mile walk guided by a Bufferlands staff wildlife biologist who will explain current management and restoration techniques. Space is limited. For more information on this tour please contact Kevin Cassady at 875-9196 or e-mail to cassadyk@saccounty.net.

Sunday, February 27, 7:30am

Solano Lake/Putah Creek Area

Leader: Cliff Hawley, 300-2495

yellowhammer74@yahoo.com

Cliff has been our past Sacramento Christmas Count Complier 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 Finches, Common Mergansers, Hairy Woodpeckers, Dippers, Barrow's Goldeneye, Bufflehead and Canyon Wrens. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring a lunch and liquids. Meet Cliff at the West Capitol Ave. North Side Park & Ride in West Sacramento. From I-80, take the West Capitol exit; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park & Ride.

Friday, March 4, 8am till noon

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Meet Jack at 8am in the parking lot of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park. This is Jack's home ground and as you walk the trails down to the river Jack will point out interesting plants, with information about their uses by native Americans. Early nesting birds should be active and Jack will be keeping an eye out for mammals too.

Saturday, March 5, 7am

Bobelaine Sanctuary Walk

Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146

razorbill35@comcast.net

Join Brian on this early morning hike through the riparian habitat of Bobelaine Sanctuary. Depending on conditions, Brian will follow trails less traveled on previous trips. Be prepared for wet grass, gullies, moderate slopes, and distances of

2 to 3 miles. Listening for bird calls and songs will be emphasized. We have a good chance of seeing Great Horned Owls and Red-shouldered Hawks. Bring water and snacks for the trails. Take I-5 north to Hwy 99 towards Yuba City. Two miles after 99 crosses the Feather River, turn right on Laurel Avenue; follow it to the end and meet in the parking lot.

Sunday, March 6, 7:30am

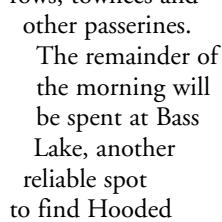
New York Creek, Bass Lake

El Dorado Hills

Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804

mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen for a walk through this delightful riparian area in search of oak woodland birds such as nuthatches, sparrows, towhees and other passerines.



Kirsten Munson

The remainder of the morning will be spent at Bass Lake, another reliable spot to find Hooded Mergansers and sometimes Bald Eagles. Meet at Bella Bru restaurant in the Raley's shopping center on El Dorado Hills Blvd. just off Highway 50.

Saturday, March 12

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.

Sunday, March 13, 7am

Bodega Bay

Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458

naturestoc@aol.com

Join Dan for a full day of birding and exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. This is often one of the best coastal birding areas, with many gulls, shorebirds and waterfowl to see, in addition to possible vagrant songbirds. Meet Dan at the Park & Ride off Highway 80 in West Sacramento. Take the West Capitol Avenue exit; turn left at the light and then left again into the

Park & Ride lot. This Park & Ride lot is on the North side of the freeway, NOT THE SOUTH SIDE LOT. We will LEAVE at 7am SHARP. Bring food, (an option for lunch will be the Tides snack bar), water, and warm clothes.

Friday, March 18, 8am till noon

Sailor Bar Area

American River Parkway

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Meet Jack at the end of Emperor Drive in Fair Oaks, near Winding Way and Kenneth, for a morning walk exploring the plants, mammals and birds of this riparian corridor. A trip with Jack always turns up something of interest.

Saturday, March 19

Bird Walk

Leader: Ron Storey, (707) 762-5276

ronstorey@ronstorey.com

A Ron Storey trip to Petaluma and points west. Save the date, and check the March newsletter for specifics.

Sunday, March 20, 8am

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Leaders:

Carla Barbaro & Cathie LaZier

Carla, 486-1198

cbarbaro@comcast.net

Cathie, 457-6882

empid@sbcglobal.net

Meet Carla and Cathie at 8am in the Effie Yeaw parking lot at Ancil Hoffman Park for a morning walk along the trails and down to the river. They will be looking for signs of Spring, nesting and singing birds, and early wildflowers. This is a good trip for beginners.

Saturday, April 2, 7:30am

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804

mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen for a driving tour around this local wildlife area. From sparrows and raptors in the drier areas, to Yellow-headed Blackbirds, Black-crowned Night Herons and White-faced Ibis in the wetland areas, there's always something to look at. From Sacramento take I-80 across the Yolo Causeway and turn right on 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 Maureen at the first parking lot inside the area. Trip will end before lunch time.

Sunday, April 3, 8am
Jepson Prairie and Yolo Bypass
Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216
andisalmi@yahoo.com

Jepson Prairie is an unusual area of bunch grass prairie and vernal pool habitats, harboring some fascinating native plant species. Wildflowers will be the main focus of the morning and we'll bird the Yolo Bypass in the afternoon. Meet Andi at the Park & Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento at 8am. From Sacramento take the West Capitol exit; turn left and then left again into the lot. Bring a lunch and water. The trip will last into mid-afternoon.

Saturday, April 9
River Walk, Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded information: 684-2816 or
check www.cosumnes.org

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 info or the website a day or two before to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details.

Sunday, April 10, 8am till 12pm
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 (please leave your horse at home) where Main and Sunset Avenues meet in Orangevale, 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 Hawks, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and an assortment of waterfowl and warblers. There may be some short steep climbs on trails, so wear comfortable hiking footwear. Bring liquids and snacks, binoculars, a scope if you wish, and clothing appropriate for the day's weather conditions.

Saturday, April 16, very early
Tall Forest Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: John Trochet
Recorded information: 684-2816 or
check www.cosumnes.org

Meet John at the Farm Center ON TIME to join him on this monthly bird count. John has an appreciation of nature on

Events & Announcements

TANZANIA IN JULY 2005

Ed Harper and Susan Scott are once again leading a safari to one of their favorite destinations. Last year's trip was a real success with six species of cat, elephants, giraffes, black rhinoceros, throngs of wildebeest and zebra, and a barrage of fantastic birds. To join them on their 10th trip to Tanzania this July, either email to calidris@surewest.net or call (916) 971-3311 for further information.

DEER CREEK HILLS WORKSHOPS

Come share your ideas about the stewardship of our oak woodlands, working ranches, and the Deer Creek Hills Master Plan! Help shape the future of the newest preserve in the Sacramento region and learn about the larger area around it. The Deer Creek Hills Preserve contains over 4000 acres of oak woodlands and grasslands, preserves the heritage of working ranches and provides opportunities for public recreation. These workshops will explore strategies for taking good care of the larger natural area and will gather your input for how future site uses at Deer Creek Hills can serve as a model for good land stewardship.

The workshop schedule:

February 1	Rancho Murieta	Rancho Murieta Association building
February 9	EI Dorado Hills	The Pavilion
February 16	Folsom	Folsom Community Center
February 22	South Natomas	Sierra Health Foundation

Attendees should call (916) 313-4611 to register.

DEER CREEK AND SACRAMENTO PRAIRIE VERNAL POOL TOURS

The Sacramento Valley Conservancy sponsors Deer Creek Hills docent-led hikes on the 4th Saturdays of the month, 9am to 1pm, from January through May in 2005. The next tour will be February 26. Meet at Latrobe and Stone House Roads.

The next Sacramento Prairie Vernal Pool Tour will be on Sunday, February 20 from 2 to 4 pm and will highlight Tadpole, Fairy Shrimp & Water bugs. Meet on the east side of Excelsior Road about a 1/2 mile north of Florin Road.

For more information about either trip and to RSVP, call (916) 731-8798.

many levels, and a trip with him is always exciting, whether it's a sighting of an elusive otter, a warbler in migration or just some insights into the resident birds and mammals of the area. You must check the recorded info or the website a day or two before to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details.

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 22 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

Observations continued from page 6

Thanks to the following for their reports (the majority were taken from http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central_valley_birds/) :

Steve Abbott, Roger Adamson, Mark Ackerman, Jennifer Albright, Peter Armstrong, Dennis Braddy, Dan Brown, Daniel Burmester, Mary Chambers, George Chaniot, Daryl Coldren, Bruce Deuel, Leo Edson, Andrew Engilis, Gil Ewing, Mike Feighner, Jim Gain, Maureen Geiger, Brian Gilmore, Ed Greaves, Helen Green, Richard Hall, David Hamilton, Denise Hamilton, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Clifford Hawley, Dave Johnson, Evan Jones, Nancy Jones, Dan Kopp, Lea Landry, Jeri Langham, Don Lewis, Cindy Lieurance, Calvin Lou, Barbara Mohr, Ron Melcer, Kurt Mize, Scott Morrical, Kathy Parker, Michael Perrone, Terry Ronneberg, Jim Rowoth, John Schick, Craig Swolgaard, Irene Torres, John Trochet, Neil Whiting, Bud Widdowson, Brian Williams, and Sylvia Wright.

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

December 1 to December 31
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
783-2331

The focus on birds in December usually relates in some way to the local Christmas Bird Counts. When an unusual bird is found before a count, we hope it will stay. When it's found just after the count, we're sorry it was missed. Some of the better reports for the month are from the Christmas Counts, but it is the near misses that we seem to remember the longest. The returning **Vermilion Flycatcher***, found on last year's Stockton CBC at the Turner Rd Vintners in Lodi, was missed this year, and has apparently not been seen since the end of November.

Among the highlights from this year's Sacramento CBC on 12/26 was a **Wilson's Phalarope*** (seasonal rarity). This is the second year in a row that the species has been found wintering at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA). A **Western Flycatcher*** (seasonal rarity) found at the Sacramento River and Suterville Rd on 12/20, and later on count week, was a nice find, but didn't turn up on the day of the count. One **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** and several **Violet-green Swallows** were also found on the count. The Putah Creek Count on 12/19 produced two **Long-eared Owls*** along Putah Creek upstream of Winters and four **Violet-green Swallows** at the Winters WWTP. Out-of-season swallow reports are a continuing trend from the last few years, with a **Barn Swallow** on 12/18 and a **Northern Rough-winged Swallow** on 12/2, both from Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). An immature male **Hooded Oriole*** (seasonal rarity) was reported on the Lincoln CBC west of Sheridan on 12/29, along with tens of thousands of **Snow Geese**, including good numbers of blue-morph **Snow Geese**.

The **Eastern Phoebe*** and **Swamp**

Sacramento Audubon Society
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Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

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Sparrow*, found 11/13 and 11/18 respectively, continued at CRP through press-time. An **Eastern Phoebe*** was also reported from Putah Creek above Winters on 12/2. A **Least Bittern** was reported on 12/11 at the CRP Barn Ponds. Another bird unexpected for the season was an adult male **Yellow Warbler*** (seasonal rarity) at CRP on 12/2. Other reports from this location include two **Townsend's Warblers** and six **Western Tanagers** in the Orr Forest on 12/9. **Black-throated Gray** and **Townsend's Warblers** were regularly reported from the Tall Forest until flooding rendered access impossible toward the end of the month. A **Western**

Tanager was found along the American River Parkway (ARP) near the Howe access on 12/31. A **Red Crossbill*** was reported in east Davis on 12/10.

Mountain Plovers were reported south of Dixon in low numbers along Hwy 113 between two and three miles north of Hwy 12 from 12/2 through at least 12/13. This is also an excellent area for raptor viewing, and one of the few sites reporting **Rough-legged Hawk** this season. 13 **Mountain Plovers** were reported from Yolo County Rds 102 and 17 on 12/31.

Other interesting reports include **Red Fox Sparrows** from several locations along the ARP throughout the month and two at Rancho Seco Park on 12/26. Two **Common Loons** were reported from Lake Natoma on 12/7, and two or three **Horned Grebes** were reported from the Lincoln Sewage Ponds on the same date. On 12/5, single **Pileated** and **Hairy Woodpeckers** were reported from Lake Solano. An adult **Western Gull** was reported from Sailor Bar along the ARP on 12/29. The first-year **Harris's Sparrow*** found at Colusa NWR continued through 12/6, with as many as 9 **Eurasian Wigeons** found at that location on 12/4. And finally, up to three **Merlins** were found in Davis throughout the month.

Documentation of species listed with an asterisk (*) should be submitted to the Sacramento Bird Records Committee.

Observations continued on page 5

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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Sacramento, CA 95826
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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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