



# The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

## General Meeting

**Thursday, February 16, 2012**  
**Effie Yeaw Nature Center**  
**Assembly Room**  
**7pm General Meeting**  
**Audubon California and**  
**Renewable Energy**  
Garry George

State and federal policies have stimulated renewable energy production to combat climate change by reducing greenhouse gases from burning coal and fossil fuels and to bring us closer to independence from foreign oil. But large scale wind, solar and geothermal generation facilities bring conservation challenges with conflicts with biological resources and habitats that we know and love. Audubon California is working throughout the state on policies and projects to avoid, minimize and mitigate for impacts of renewable energy on birds and habitat. Garry George leads a discussion to inform us of the work of the state office and seeks our input as a key chapter in California.

Garry George is Renewable Energy Project Director and Chapter Network Director for Audubon California, the state office of National Audubon Society. He was elected to represent Southern California chapters on the Audubon California Board from 2004-2008 and serves on the Board of Los Angeles Audubon as Conservation Chair, a position he has held since 2003. Garry birds worldwide and his trip reports are published throughout the internet.

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

*Sally Walters, Program Chair*

## FIRST ANNUAL SAS KIDS' AND YOUNG ADULTS' CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT A SMASHING SUCCESS

The First Annual Sacramento Area Kids' Christmas Bird Count was a smashing success! Attended by 22 children and youth, their associated parents and grandparents plus 10 leaders and 11 other volunteers, mostly from Sacramento Audubon, everyone had a great time. In spite of gale force winds at the Cosumnes River Preserve, the kids and adults exhibited enormous enthusiasm for what they were doing. They all delighted in the many beautiful birds seen on the Preserve which totaled 50 species and nearly 6,300 individual birds.

The kids formed 5 teams before setting off. When the teams returned to the Visitor's Center the Official Compilation began with results projected on the big screen by team, species and numbers of birds. This gave everyone the chance to see what all the teams had observed. During this compilation, children came forward to collect a prize, with each child given the opportunity to choose what she or he most wanted. Prizes included new National Geographic Field Guides to Birds, several Audubon Pocket Bird Guides, bird feeders, bird seed and more. We would really like to thank Wild Birds Unlimited of Loehmann's Plaza for their generous donations of feeders and seed. Refreshments were served, lunches eaten and lots of great bird talk was shared.

Two able photographers memorialized the entire count with photos of everyone in action, from pre-registration chaos to tired but satisfied departures. The images are pure magic, some of which will be posted on the SAS website soon. This was definitely a winner and only the first of many future counts.

*Maureen Geiger*

## COMING THIS MONTH: THE 15TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT! FEBRUARY 17-20

The Great Backyard Bird Count is coming up soon, from February 17-20. It's one of the best opportunities for citizen science to contribute to our knowledge of bird species' survival and population. Plus, it's a great opportunity for some healthy competition in compiling those checklists. Last year California was 5th nationwide in submitting the most checklists and 2nd in the number of species reported, behind Texas. As you may have remarked while out birding, coots are really taking over, turning up as California's most populous species in last year's count. Sacramento was #1 in California with 128 checklists and third in the state, behind San Diego and Napa, with the number of species.

The object of the GBBC is to count all the birds you see in your backyard (or chosen location) in 15 minutes. You can do this any time during the 4 days or once each day. You then record it at the GBBC website. Pretty easy and pretty fun, especially since the results are almost live and you can track results throughout the weekend. The GBBC website is quite interactive and found at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc/](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc/). There's a photo contest every year too. Let's get everyone out counting this year and add to Sacramento's birdy reputation!

## Field Trip Findings

**Road 113, Robinson Road and Birds Landing Area (1/15)** — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Carla Barbaro, reported: “A day of cold wind was braved by 17 birders. Highlights were Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, Burrowing Owl and Tricolored Blackbird.”

**Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (1/14)**—Leader John York reported: “A great group of 15 birders headed to Gray Lodge in excellent weather. We had a steady stream of good birds at Parking Lot 14 to the viewing platform, including a Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Bittern and a Sora that walked out of the weeds in full sunlight. We saw lots of beautiful waterfowl, including Eurasian Wigeons. On the way out, we caught cranes and blue morph Snow Geese around Sutter Buttes. The day was capped off with a stop at Colusa NWR for good looks at the Falcated Duck. A truly fun group and good birds made it an enjoyable trip.”

**Beginning Birder Field Trip (1/14)** — Cathie LaZier, co-leader with Valerie Phillips and Dan Tankersley, reported: “The beginners group tallied 40 different species of birds on this morning walk through William Pond Park. Great Blue

Herons are already claiming nests in the rookery, and Common Goldeneye were displaying on the river. Black Phoebe were cooperative, and Greater Yellowlegs and Spotted Sandpipers were feeding in the river shallows. A couple of river otters were also sighted. A White-tailed Kite gave good scope views and Bufflehead and a Green Heron were scoped on the pond.”

**Beal's Point, Folsom Lake (1/11)** — Leader Margaret Martin reported: “Six of us were treated to a nice pageant of species including sparrows, towhees, juncos, a White-breasted Nuthatch, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and flashy Western Bluebirds before we even stepped out of the parking lot. A walk on top of the dikes rewarded us with close and much-appreciated views of Say's Phoebe, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and Rock Wren. The lake level was very low, increasing our walking distance to the shoreline, but we were glad we had made the trek when a pair of Hooded Mergansers glided along in front of us. Other birds on the lake included Western Grebes, Common Mergansers, and an Eared Grebe (or was it a Horned?). Raptors included

a Red-tailed Hawk feasting in a tree, an American Kestrel, a distant Osprey perched on a stump on an island, and a Bald Eagle seen flying over by one member of the group. We saw at least 35 species on a sunny, windless morning.”

**Salt Springs Valley, W Calaveras County (1/8)** — Leader Linda Pittman reported: “After a frosty morning start, 14 participants enjoyed good visibility in the Salt Spring Valley area with hazy sunshine, light breeze and temps up to the 50s. Raptors were abundant and entertaining throughout the day. Early in the trip we saw a Golden Eagle being dive-bombed by a Red-tail Hawk, giving us a good comparison of the huge size difference between the two raptors. Later, we got good scope looks at an adult Bald Eagle sitting in a tree on the far side of the reservoir. Also tallied were 4 Northern Harriers (one drowning a duck or coot in a stock pond and dragging it to shore for consumption), 15 Red-tailed Hawks, 4 Ferruginous Hawks, and a Red-shouldered Hawk calling. Numerous American Kestrels were seen as well as Merlin and 3 Prairie

*Findings* continued on page 7

## 2011-2012 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS BY AREA

### Sacramento, December 31

Compiler Mark Cudney reported: “All area leaders have finally submitted their tallies. Sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-fifties greeted a record number of participants. We totaled 163 species—three shy of our all-time record set last year but still very high for an inland count. Birds of note included two Semi-palmated Plovers, a Swamp Sparrow, a Hooded Oriole, a Western Gull and a well documented Red-naped Sapsucker. Birds seen on most Christmas counts but missed this year were Redhead, Osprey, Golden Eagle, Western Screech-Owl, Brown Creeper, Wrentit and Pine Siskin.”

### Angwin, Napa County January 1

Compiler Murray Berner reported: “Angwin had its highest species total ever, 147. Previous best was 142. Perfect weather, a little rain two days prior to stir things up a bit. Species total given a big boost by the skeins of Greater White-fronted Geese passing during the forenoon, revealing all other

goose species mixed in. Unusual species were Phainopepla, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Tufted Duck, Lewis's Woodpecker, Swamp Sparrow, Hermit Warbler, Northern Saw-whet Owl. A boating party up Putah Creek for the first time in 20 years added to the quality of coverage. Spectacular countdown dinner followed.”

### Lincoln, December 28

Compiler Ed Pandolfino reported: “For only the second time in its 10-year history, the Lincoln CBC was NOT rained on! 83 birders (about normal for this count) enjoyed the good weather and we tallied 136 species (just over our 134 average). The highlight was finding Black Rail for the first time. Comprehensive surveys for this species have shown them to be widespread in foothill areas of Yuba and Nevada counties and recent surveys in Placer alerted us to their presence in the circle. The good news is that both sites are covered by conservation easements. The bad news (for birders) is that neither location is open to public access. One site may be made available on a

limited, docent-led basis.

“We set new high totals for several species, no doubt because the weather encouraged folks to beat the bushes a little harder than normal. We set new highs for California Quail, Cooper's Hawk, Black-necked Stilt, Northern Flicker, Black Phoebe, Western Scrub-Jay, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Savannah Sparrow, White-crowned Sparrow, Tricolored Blackbird, and Brown-headed Cowbird. There is no question that our new high total of 28 White-throated Swifts was due to the weather. A new high for Eurasian Collared-Dove was expected, given the continuing population increase of this bird in the Valley.

“Our total number of individuals dipped below 100,000 for only the third time, mainly attributable to below average numbers of geese and all dabbling ducks. We set new lows for Wood Duck, Cinnamon Teal, and Northern Pintail. Oddly, most diving ducks were present in higher than normal numbers (103 Common Mergansers was another new species high).

"We missed Golden-crowned Kinglet for only the third time, but numbers wintering in the Valley this year seem to be down everywhere (maybe because of the mild mountain weather so far?) and Cackling Goose was also missed for the third time. Gull numbers set a new low with both the local landfill and wastewater treatment plants seemingly unattractive this year. I guess we just can't compete with the dead salmon on the American River and the higher class of garbage found at the Davis dump.

"Good news came in the form of 3 Burrowing Owls in two new locations. We also found one Short-eared Owl on Waltz Road right near the Placer-Sutter County line. Bad news continued for Loggerhead Shrikes. We averaged nearly 40 prior to the 2005 West Nile Virus outbreak and have averaged less than 10 since. Only 7 could be found this year.

"Good finds included Osprey for only the second time, Pacific Wren (which we miss more often than we get), one White-throated Sparrow, a Black-throated Gray Warbler, 3 Common Yellowthroats (surprisingly hard to find in winter in this area), and 3 Vesper Sparrows in their usual Philip Road haunt.

"My thanks to all who participated and especially to our great crew of Area leaders: Mark Aring, Chris Conard, Rudy Darling, Frances Oliver, John Ranlett, and Deren Ross."

### Folsom, December 26

Compiler Chris Conard reported: "Despite clear and calm weather most parties reported slightly below average activity and species totals. Sixty-five participants in 28 parties (each with at least one experienced leader) provided good coverage. There was a greater number of rarities than in a typical year, but the dearth of waterfowl undercut any chance at a high species total. Perhaps the regional weather has been too calm and dry? December 2011 was the second driest on record for California (after December 1989).

"Of the 135 species (historic range of 123 to 146), the biggest highlight was the report of an adult male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** by experienced observers at a hummingbird mecca near the end of Lake Hills Drive north of El Dorado Hills. They watched the bird for 20-30 minutes. This house has maintained multiple feeders year-round for more than 20 years and has up to 40 Anna's Hummingbirds present all winter over many years. A written report was gratefully received, though two attempts to

return and get a photo were not successful. The number of hummers was impressive; at one point on a follow up trip I counted 19 Anna's on five feeders, with many others calling around me). It will be interesting to see the regional editors' take on this mega rarity for winter.

"Additional highlights included a Red-breasted Merganser on Folsom Lake at Granite Bay, a Black-necked Stilt on private land, a Northern Shrike at the Peninsula portion of Folsom Lake SRA, a Canyon Wren upstream of Old Folsom and a first for that site in 40+ years, and a Hermit x Townsend's Warbler (looking mostly like a Hermit Warbler) at Baldwin Reservoir. Actually a low light, reflecting an expansion of this destructive non-native, was four Mute Swans seen on Folsom Lake during count week (which includes the three days before and three days after the count day). Four White-throated Sparrows were good finds and it is too bad the extra can't be saved for when we miss this species entirely. Only one Red-breasted Nuthatch was detected (near Old Folsom); again, it has been a tough winter to find montane species.

"Misses included Snow and Ross's Geese, Tundra Swan, any teal, Canvasback, Redhead, either scaup, Ring-necked Pheasant, "uncommon" loon, bittern or night-heron, Rough-legged Hawk, Long-billed Dowitcher, Band-tailed Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove (surprising given recent trends), Steller's Jay, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet (a tough winter to find these), Mountain Bluebird (surprising, since there have been good numbers in the Valley this winter), Common Yellowthroat, Vesper Sparrow, and Pine Siskin. The lack of storms probably explain missed montane songbirds as well as the missing waterfowl.

"Thanks to all the counters and especially to the area leaders and party leaders. Without you this obviously would not be possible."

### Woodfords, Alpine County, December 18

Dan Brown reported: "Great weather and lots of birds for this high elevation count! 19 of us ended up with a preliminary species total of 77, which is right at our yearly average. Some of the highlights were, 11 Bald Eagles, 8 Golden Eagles, 114 Pinyon Jays and a Sage Sparrow (found by Darrell Mohr's group). The sparrow was new for the count, as were Mountain Quail (10), Wild Turkey (12) and Snow Goose (3). We also had a Grackle species that we can't

count because we couldn't positively I.D. it and attempts to relocate it failed. Oh, well, it was a great day!"

### Stockton, December 18

Compiler Jim Rowoth reported: "The 44th Stockton CBC was held as usual, on the first Sunday of the count period, December 18. The 55 counters included the usual sizable and much appreciated contingent of Sacramento Audubon Society members. The day started very cold and foggy and only cleared in the afternoon. Total species count for the day was 142. This is low by 1990s standards but par for the course since 2000. The near total absence of late autumn/early winter precipitation did not help with numbers or species diversity. Nevertheless, 107,747 individuals were tallied; most abundant species were Brewer's Blackbird (17,373), European Starling (12,526), and Sandhill Crane (11,868). Species highlights included Yellow-bellied Sapsucker (Mickey Grove Golf Course), Swamp Sparrow (Venice Island--not open to the public), and Barn Swallow (Bouldin Island). Count week birds included Burrowing Owl and Townsend's Warbler. Great-tailed Grackle and Eurasian Collared-Dove continue their seemingly inexorable increase in numbers on this count.

Thanks again to everyone who participated, and be sure to mark your calendars for Sunday, December 16 for the 45th Stockton CBC!"

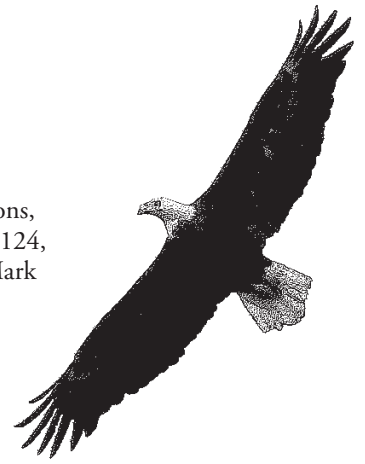
### Auburn, December 17

Compiler Deren Ross reported: "The Auburn Area CBC was held on Saturday, Dec. 17, a banner birding day in the Sierra foothills. With 54 observers in the field and fantastic weather, we tallied a possible record high of 129 species. There were three new species for the count: Northern Waterthrush, Lawrence's Goldfinch, and Great-tailed Grackle. Other birds of note: Cassin's Finch, six Black Rails, a juvenile Trumpeter Swan (Nevada County), Ross's Goose, a high number of Golden Eagles, Peregrine Falcon, Greater Yellowlegs, a good number of Yellow-billed Magpies (Lake of the Pines area, (Nevada County), two low elevation American Dippers found east of Lincoln, five Varied Thrush, White-throated Sparrow, and Pine Siskin.

"Thank you to all the volunteers and leaders for another fun year and continuing the tradition."

Pete Hayes

# Field Trips



## Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Richard Barbieri, 761-1124, [offleash56@yahoo.com](mailto:offleash56@yahoo.com), for trips through March 4th. For trips from March 5th on, call the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, [matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com)

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ridesharing/ carpools. Participants are, however, encouraged to voluntarily share rides. Any carpool arrangements are private agreements between the driver and the passengers. Drivers must carry adequate insurance coverage. Please be courteous and share gas expenses with the driver. FRS radios can be helpful on all trips. Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.

### **Saturday, February 4, 7am to noon Pine Hill Preserve**

**Leader: Chris Conard, 203-1610  
[conardc@gmail.com](mailto:conardc@gmail.com)**

The Pine Hill Preserve near Cameron Park is made up of several habitat blocks to protect rare plants ([pinehillpreserve.org](http://pinehillpreserve.org)). The habitat is a mix of oak woodland and chaparral, and with that comes a suite of birds a little different than those found on the Valley floor. If it is a sunny day, we may be treated to singing California Thrasher, Bewick's Wren, and possibly Sage Sparrow. Plan for up to three miles of walking with moderately steep grades to Pine Hill. Depending on rainfall prior to the trip, the Cameron Park unit may be a little muddy (red mud), or we might avoid it if too muddy. Steady rain cancels. Meet in the Raley's parking lot in El Dorado Hills. From Hwy 50 east take Exit #30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the shopping center on your right. Meet at the far north end of the parking lot.

### **Sunday, February 5, 8am Birding Yolo County**

**Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471  
[shoppe01@surewest.net](mailto:shoppe01@surewest.net)**

Join Scott in this birding trip exploring Yolo County. This is an incredibly diverse area, and we will be visiting many of the "hotspots". Expect to see many wetland birds, as well as raptors and passerines. And Scott can help with those difficult Gull ID challenges. Scopes and FRS radios are helpful on this trip. 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.

### **Saturday, February 11 (Date changed from February 18th)**

**Family Friendly Trip  
Leader: Sandra Beseler  
Owling trip near Auburn**

These family trips require pre-registration and fill up quickly. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at [mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net), or 444-0804.

### **Saturday, February 11, 8am Buck's Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills**

**Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804  
[mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net)**

Join Maureen for a leisurely walk through this riparian habitat and look for resident birds such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds and marsh birds, as well as possible winter warblers and sparrows. River otters are a possibility. Last year a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker showed up! Meet for coffee at 7:30 in the coffee shop inside the Raley's supermarket in the shopping center on El Dorado Hills Boulevard just off Highway 50. From Hwy 50 east take Exit #30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the Raley's shopping center on your right. The group will leave for birding by 8am sharp.

### **Sunday, February 12, 7:30am Yuba County Wetlands**

**Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603  
[offleash56@yahoo.com](mailto:offleash56@yahoo.com)**

Streams and rivers draining from the foothills to the valley and farmers' irrigation help to create these wetlands and winter habitat on surrounding properties. Join Richard on a trip to one of his favorite places to bird while he looks for ducks, geese, shorebirds, and birds of prey. Meet Richard at the Brookfield's Restaurant parking

lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road exit (105A) and follow straight through the first stop light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Brookfield's will be on your left behind the Shell gas station. Bring lunch, layered clothes, and scopes and FRS radios if you have them.

### **Wednesday, February 15, 8am The Best of Both Sides! River Bend Park and William Pond Park**

**Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882  
[empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net)**

Meet Cathie at the main River Bend parking lot near the bike bridge. (Follow the main road into the park; after you cross the bike trail (stop sign) go about 1/2 mile and turn left at the sign "rafting exit, main picnic area" and continue on the road to the large parking area). For the first half of the walk we'll bird across the bridge into William Pond Park, going downstream along the backwaters of the river and checking out the fishing pond. Then we'll recross the river and go upstream into the oak woodland area. We'll finish before noon, and since our cars will be at the developed portion of the park you may want to bring snacks to enjoy at one of the picnic tables at the end of the trip. As always, this is a great trip for beginners. From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field Road, take Rod Beaudry Drive north into the park, (formerly called Goethe Park). If you come from the William Pond side look for us on the bridge. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**February 17 through 20  
Great Backyard Bird Count  
[www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc)**

Count birds for 15 minutes or more in your backyard or other favorite birding locale; then post your results online and see what's happening in your area and across the country. It's fun for all ages and skill levels. See the article on the front page and check the website for more information.

**February 18, 19 and 20,  
President's Day Weekend  
Eureka/Arcata area  
Leaders, Dan Brown, 362-2458  
naturestoc@aol.com  
Joe Ceriani, joeceriani@usmessage.net**

Please mark your calendars and join Dan and Joe for 3 days of birding along California's North coast. We will be birding some of the traditional spots in the Eureka and Arcata areas and possibly some of Joe's new favorite spots. Please contact Dan or Joe for further details.

**Saturday, February 25, 8:30am  
Winter Raptors and Waterfowl  
Gray Lodge and Sutter Buttes area  
Leader: Don Schmoltdt, 739-6465  
Bajaowl@gmail.com**

Meet at 8:30am at the gas station/market at the corner of Hwy 20 and Acacia Road, approximately 7 miles west of Yuba City. To reach Yuba City drive north on I-5 and SR-99, then west on Hwy 20. Hard rain cancels. In the morning we will drive around Sutter Buttes on Pass Road, West Butte Road and North Butte Road looking for raptors (Golden Eagle, Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, Prairie Falcon, and Merlin are possible, as well as Mountain Bluebird and Lewis' Woodpecker). We will have lunch at Gray Lodge and spend the afternoon walking the trails and driving around the tour loop looking for Blue-winged Teal and Eurasian Wigeon, and to enjoy the winter waterfowl show. Bring water, snacks and lunch. There is a port-potty at the gas station, but there are NO other restrooms on this trip until we get to Gray Lodge! There is a \$4.00 per person fee at Gray Lodge, and you will need exact change for the iron ranger.

**Saturday, February 25, 3:30pm  
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering  
Birds of the Sacramento Valley  
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored  
trip  
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392**

This is the last weekend of the Sandhill Crane trips, before they begin their migration. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center deck at 3:30pm to hear a

brief presentation of Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather and bring binoculars. Scopes are helpful. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at [www.cosumnes.org](http://www.cosumnes.org). This is a great trip for beginners.

**Sunday, February 26,  
7am-mid afternoon  
Northern San Joaquin County  
Leader: Linda Pittman, 715-1876  
pittman@frontiernet.net**

Join Linda for a visit to diverse habitats in northern San Joaquin County. The Mokelumne River Day Use area and fish hatchery below Camanche Dam is a mix of oak woodland, riverine, and riparian habitat. This area has recently hosted Bald Eagle, Lewis's Woodpeckers and American Dipper. Flood and Waverly Roads are excellent for raptors and other open country birds. Be prepared for about a mile of walking. Bring lunch, layered clothes, and scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Meet at the Raley's Shopping Center on Twin Cities Road just east of Hwy 99 in Galt near the It's A Grind Coffee Shop (10420 Twin Cities Rd). This trip is good for both beginners and more experienced birders.

**Sunday, February 26, 3:30pm  
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering  
Birds of the Sacramento Valley  
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored  
trip  
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392**

This is the last Sandhill Crane trip of the season, so if you haven't been to see them this year, be sure to join this trip. See details for February 25th.

**Tuesday, February 28, 9am  
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) 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 and FRS radios are helpful on this trip which is good for both beginners and more experienced birders. Note: trip will be canceled if bypass is closed due to flooding.

**Saturday, March 3, 8am  
North Fork Pleasant Grove Creek  
(Roseville area)  
Leader: Scott Dietrich, 208-4976  
sed25@csus.edu**

The North Fork Pleasant Grove open space area is a river flood plain area scattered with old growth Valley Oaks, riparian habitat and a small wetlands area. It's usually a great place to see raptors such as Barn Owl, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Red-shouldered Hawk and Cooper's Hawk. Also present are some waterfowl including Wood Duck, Mallard, and often Hooded and Common Merganser. Also seen here are Great Egret, Great Blue Heron and Green Heron. Of course there will still be many winter birds, Northern Flicker, sparrows and finches as well as the resident oak habitat birds, Acorn and Nuttall's Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse and Western Bluebird. Meet Scott at Paul Dugan Park in the northeast part of Roseville. In Roseville drive north on Woodcreek Oaks Blvd past Blue Oaks Blvd; then turn right onto Diamond Woods Circle and drive a short distance; Paul Dugan Park will be on your right. Or, coming from Sacramento, take I-80 east to Hwy 65; take 65 north to Blue Oaks Blvd; take Blue Oaks Blvd west to Woodcreek Oaks Blvd, and go north on Woodcreek Oaks to Diamond Woods, then right to Paul Dugan Park. (Thomas Bros Map 219 D1, for those without Internet!) This newer area for Sacramento Audubon trips will be of interest to beginning and more experienced birders.

**Sunday, March 4, 7am  
Highway 37 and Ellis Creek, Petaluma  
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722  
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

From the West Sacramento Park and Ride, Mark will lead the group towards

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Petaluma, with various birding stops along Hwy 37. Moving on to Ellis Creek (near Schollenberger Park), he'll look for Blue-winged Teal and a variety of other waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, Common Yellowthroat and the occasional rail and possibly a Peregrine Falcon. Bring lunch and liquids and layered clothing. Meet Mark at 7am 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. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

**Saturday, March 10  
ARNHA Bird and Breakfast  
Fund Raiser  
Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 489-4918**

Join Sacramento Audubon leaders for a birding walk followed by a delicious breakfast. This fund raiser for the American River Natural History Association is an annual event, and the leaders usually find nesting Anna's Hummingbirds and Bushtits. Various woodpeckers and other small woodland birds, as well as herons, egrets and waterfowl on the river, will also be seen. Red-shouldered Hawks are frequently found in the oak woodland. This fund raiser supports ARNHA's educational work. For sign-up information and price phone the Nature Center at 489-4918.

**Saturday, March 10  
Beginning Birding Field Trip for adults  
William Pond Park  
Limited to 10 people; registration required**

This field trip is for people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. A brief parking lot talk will focus on choice and use of binoculars and a brief overview of birding etiquette and ethics. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the costs of hand-out materials. The field trip will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats and will be led by two or more experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Each trip is limited to 10



*Rosemary Gilbert Bell*

participants. Register via email to Cathie at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net), (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), giving your name, phone number and email address, or by calling Cathie at (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

**Sunday, March 11, 8am  
(Note: Daylight Savings Time begins today.)**

**Effie Yeaw Nature Center  
Cathie LaZier, 457-6882  
[empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net)**

This area of the parkway is excellent for birding and Cathie will be looking for early nesting birds and returning migrants, as well as blooming wildflowers. This is a very good trip for beginners, as well as more experienced birders. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park in Fair Oaks. The trip will end by noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Saturday, March 17  
Family Friendly Trip  
Leader: Sheila Green  
Mather Lake, Rancho Cordova**

These family trips require pre-registration and fill up quickly. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at [mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net), or 444-0804.

**INVEST IN A BIRDY FUTURE  
FOR KIDS' SAKE!**

Sacramento Audubon currently has a small but very popular program offering families an opportunity to take their children birding. Currently, we offer 8 trips a year and, in January, the first Christmas Bird Count for kids. Each trip is about 2 hours long (from meeting everyone to getting back to the cars) and is offered the third weekend of the month September through May. Two leaders are the minimum needed for a maximum of 10 children per trip.

We need help! This program is in jeopardy. The very small cadre of dedicated leaders who are willing to help with this cannot do 8 trips a year. We need more people willing to spend a max of 3 hours a weekend morning a couple times a year to show kids what birding is about. If this worthy endeavor appeals to you, call Maureen Geiger at 444-0804 or [mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net).

**FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING  
BIRDERS 2012**

**Location: William Pond Park on the American River  
Dates, (all Saturdays): February 11, March 10 and April 14  
Time: 8am, ending by noon  
Each Trip Limited to 10 participants: Registration required.**

These outings are geared toward people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. A brief parking lot talk will focus on choice and use of binoculars and a brief overview of birding etiquette and ethics. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the costs of hand-out materials. (If you're a repeat participant and already have the materials no donation is requested.) You do not need to be a member of Audubon to participate.

The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats and will be led by two or more experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Register via email to Cathie at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net), (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number, email address and the field trip date of your choice, or by calling Cathie at (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

**FAMILY FRIENDLY TRIPS**

**Saturday, February 11, Owling trip near Auburn, Sandra Beseler**  
(trip registration almost full)

**Saturday, March 17, Mather Lake, Rancho Cordova, Sheila Green**

**Saturday, April 21, Maidu Park, Roseville, Scott Dietrich**

These monthly birding and nature walks are specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. There is a trip limit to ensure a quality experience for all. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at [mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net), or 444-0804.

## BIRDS OF WINTER IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

**Ed Harper**, long time educator, tour guide, and noted birder of the Sacramento area, will help you learn the finer points of identification, natural history, and calls of the many species of birds resident in winter throughout the Sacramento region. By way of a series of lectures with beautiful photography and field trips, both beginning and experienced birders can improve their knowledge and skills.

Whereas some species of birds such as swallows, flycatchers, and warblers do migrate south for the winter, many more

### Lectures

**Time:** Thursdays, 7–8:30pm

**Dates:** February 23, March 8, and March 22

**Place:** Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park, American River Parkway

**Fee:** \$80 for all lectures and field trips. Pre-registration is required.

Call Effie Yeaw Nature Center at 489-4918 to register.

More information at [www.sacnaturecenter.net](http://www.sacnaturecenter.net)

birds flock to the Sacramento region to spend the winter. Cranes, ducks, geese, gulls, raptors, kinglets, and sparrows are just a few of the many representative groups found during this exciting season. Whether you simply want to distinguish one sparrow species from another or seek help in learning the distinctive “chuck” note of a Hermit Thrush, this course has broad appeal. Anyone who has a serious interest in birds and enjoys their presence in our world can profit from this class.

### Field Trips

Saturday Feb 25, 8am–noon, Ancil Hoffman Park

Saturday March 10, 7:30am–1:30pm, Linden Raptor Route

Saturday March 24, 8am–noon, Yolo Basin Wetlands

Effie Yeaw Nature Center 489-4918

California Avenue and Tarshes Drive, Carmichael, CA 95608

### *Findings* continued from page 2

Falcons (one eating prey on a fence post). It was also a good day for woodpeckers with Lewis's Woodpeckers seen all day and outnumbering Acorn Woodpeckers. The reservoir hosted good numbers and variety of waterfowl including 4 species of grebes (Pied-billed, Western, Clark's, and Eared) and many ducks. We had scope views of Ruddy Ducks, Canvasbacks, Green-winged Teal and small numbers of Cinnamon Teal, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye and Gadwall. The stock ponds yielded Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks, Hooded and Common Mergansers and American Wigeon. We were surprised to see a flock of about 20 Long-billed Dowitchers on the stock pond near the old schoolhouse, apparently flushed up by Northern Harriers. Other highlights included a Great Horned Owl that flushed out, a pair of Rock Wrens, several Phainopepla, both Western and Mountain Bluebirds, Loggerhead Shrikes and Say's Phoebes. We had a great group of participants and tallied 77 species for the day."

**Western Amador County (1/7)** – Leader Gary Fregien reported: "On an early January day that can only be described as spring-like, 19 birders including 5 guests from El Dorado and Amador Counties covered areas of the low foothills below about 1000ft elevation. We enjoyed a magnificent day with highlights including two adult and a juvenile Bald Eagle at a small reservoir. One of the adults flew nearby affording excellent looks and photo opportunities. Our first stop on Tonzi Rd provided 30 species, well over half of the day's total of 55, including Lewis's

Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bewick's Wren, W. Bluebird (50+), Hermit Thrush, Cedar Waxwing, Phainopepla, Fox Sparrow and Lawrence's Goldfinch. Thus, nearly all of the target species for this trip."

**Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (1/4)** – Cathie LaZier, co-leader with Tim Fitzer, reported that 10 birders participated in this mid-week refuge trip. "A brief stop at Colusa Wildlife Refuge gave us a look at the Falcated Duck and a Eurasian Wigeon," she said. "Moving on to the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, an adult Bald Eagle spotted by Karen Zumwalt from the parking lot was a good start. We later had great looks at two immature Bald Eagles, and Valerie Phillips spotted a Peregrine Falcon. Other highlights included several Ross's Geese mixed with thousands of Snow Geese, including a blue phase Snow. Cinnamon, Blue-winged and Green-winged Teal were lined up for inspection, and a Lesser Scaup was among many Ring-necked Ducks. We totaled 57 species for the day."

**Yolo Wildlife Area (12/29)** – Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: "A nice variety of bird species greeted 10 birders on a cloudy but pleasant day at the bypass. In addition to the usual duck and shorebird species, we saw a Loggerhead Shrike (spotted by Farley Cross), a Common Yellowthroat, a smudgy, crescent-faced Blue-winged Teal, Long-billed Curlews, Wilson's Snipes, Buffleheads, and Common Gallinules. Large flocks of Tundra Swans, White-fronted Geese, and Snow Geese were heard and seen flying overhead. Numerous White-tailed

Kites were found hovering and displaying throughout the Bypass. Entertaining were the very large flocks of American Coots and not so entertaining for the Coots were the numerous Northern Harriers, which were flying low over the flocks. The Bypass never disappoints in providing good opportunities for viewing birds!"

**Lincoln Grand Canyon (1/1)** – Leader Dave Pearson reported: "Our walk today at Lincoln Hills turned out to be a good walk for all concerned. We covered the Salt Pond and the pond at Anglers Cove. We broke off about 12:30pm. We had a total of 42 species. Sightings included Redhead duck, 2 Green Herons, 3 American Bitterns, 3 Black-crowned Night-Herons, 3 Great Egrets, 1 Snowy Egret, 1 immature Sharp-shinned Hawk, 1 Red-tailed Hawk, 1 Cooper's Hawk, 1 Red-shouldered Hawk, 1 Wilson's Snipe, 4 Double-crested Cormorants."

**East Lawn Cemetery (12/18)** – Leader Mary Beth Metcalf and Cathie LaZier reported an uncommon Red-naped Sapsucker and later the similar Red-breasted Sapsucker were seen by a fairly large group on a fairly cold morning. The Red-naped Sapsucker was a lifer for many in the group. Mary Beth was able to point out the differences of the two sapsuckers. Other birds seen were Yellow-rumped Warbler, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Bluebird, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Juncos, Red-tailed Hawk, Black Phoebe, Western-Scrub Jay, American Crow and Cedar Waxwing. Bushtits were seen by Dan Airola who submitted an eBird list.

*Pete Hayes*

## Birding and Nature Events

### KLAMATH FALLS, WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

The 33rd annual Winter Wings Festival will offer three full days of activities, **February 17-19**. Located in both south central Oregon and northern California, the Basin is a key player on the Pacific Flyway, hosting 80% of the birds that use the Flyway. A total of six separate nearby refuges comprise the total National Wildlife Refuge complex spanning nearly 200,000 acres. This year's festival includes three full days of activities and a pre-festival field trip that begins on Thursday afternoon. Saturday night's keynote speaker will be Kenn Kaufmann, speaking about his book *Kingbird Highway*. Visit the schedule and registration page at [WinterWingsFest.org](http://WinterWingsFest.org) for more info about the many trips and workshops. Registration is now OPEN! Register early as many events fill up quickly, especially field trips and photography activities. This year there will be waiting lists as part of online registration to better handle popular events. On-line registration and brochures are now available.

### GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 17th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 19-25** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days this year is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. Most of the tours are held Thursday through Sunday and then wind down through Wednesday. The northern coast of California offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats on Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where 271 species of birds have been sighted. 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 and even whale watching. Held in honor of the Marbled godwit which is found in the thousands in Humboldt Bay during April, this year's keynote speaker will be Keith Woodley. His recent studies include the Bar-tailed Godwit, which makes the longest known non-stop flight of any bird and the longest journey without pausing to feed by any animal, 7,258 miles along a route from Alaska to New Zealand.

The selection of over 100 small group field trips, lectures, workshops, boating excursions, and community activities are led by experienced local guides. For further information and registration visit [www.godwitdays.com](http://www.godwitdays.com) or call 1-800-908-WING.

### POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

This year's Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival is being held **April 27-30**. The Point Reyes region, endowed with unique geography and extensive wildlands and ranches, is home base for some of the nation's top birders and naturalists, and offers the ideal setting for a spring festival for bird and nature enthusiasts of all levels. Last year, Festival participants took part in over 70 fabulous bird walks guided by top birders. As a whole, Festival outings tallied a cumulative total of 200 species of birds (not to mention dozens of mammals, butterflies, marine mammals, and other wildlife!) in Western Marin and Sonoma Counties.

This year the Festival will again offer a lineup of over 70 outings and presentations, including events for beginners and kids. This year's roster also includes Rich Stallcup, Allen Fish and John Muir Laws, who will give the keynote address at the Saturday evening banquet.

The 2012 Festival website and registration will go live in mid-February. Last year, nearly every walk and outing sold out well before the Festival weekend, so, before you forget, send an email to [prbnfestival@gmail.com](mailto:prbnfestival@gmail.com) requesting to be notified when registration opens! The Festival website is [www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org)

The Festival benefits the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin (EAC). You can read about some of EAC's conservation work at [www.eacmarin.org](http://www.eacmarin.org). See you in April!

### BIRD AND BREAKFAST AT EFFIE YEAW

Please mark your calendar for **Saturday, March 10th**, when the American River Natural History Association will continue it's Annual Spring Classic at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Explore the miracles of spring in the beautiful oak woodland and meadows of the Effie Yeaw Nature Area, in small groups guided by Audubon experts. Then return to a hot, hearty breakfast (vegetarian option available) served in the new Assembly Building at the Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park, California Ave and Tarshes Drive in Carmichael. Participants (not advised for children under 12) should wear comfortable walking shoes and bring binoculars. On this walk one can expect to see some 30 bird species among more than 100 that populate the lower American River's environs.

Sign-ups start in mid-January. Reservations are always necessary for the space-limited, \$35 per person, fund-raiser for educational programs on the American River Parkway. Call the Center at 489-4918 for details. and register using a credit card or just come by and register at the front desk.

### SPECIAL ANIMAL HOUSE ART SHOW AND CONCERT

Take some time out to attend the annual Animal House art show running from **February 21 through March 10**. It will feature animal themed art from all media: painting, sculpture, mixed media, photography and fabric art, with a special youth category (ages 17 and under). There will be over 200 entries and a gala reception on March 10 at which awards will be presented at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center. There will be great food, drink and live music. The reception will be co-sponsored by the Sacramento SPCA, the **Sacramento Audubon Society**, and the Carmichael Park and Recreation District. The SPCA's lovable dogs-up-for-adoption will be there and the Animal House artists will discuss their work with the guests.

The week following the reception, on **March 17**, the Sacramento Fine Arts Center will present the Dave Brubeck Institute Jazz Band and the Poet Laureate of Sacramento, Bob Stanley. The concert, co-sponsored by the Sacramento Poetry Center and the Sacramento Fine Arts Center, will begin at 7pm. The galleries are located at 5330-B Gibbons Drive, Carmichael. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. Please call (916) 971-3713 to reserve tickets. Space is limited to 150 guests.



## SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to this  
new members:

Ian Baldwin	Linda Miller
Samuel D Clemens	Robert Mundhenk Anne Z Ofsink
Yvonne Fenner	Janice and Ed Saunders
Roberta Gear	Saunders
Kathryn Griffin	Craig R Sells

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Julia Andrews, Roberta Gear, Tom Graham, J.B. Hervey, Maria Nicholas Kelly, Ann Kohl, Wendy Money and Flora Yen, to the **General Fund**.

Alice Corley, Judy Hirano, Marc Irish, Wendy Money, Patricia Moses, Sonja Sorbo, Jane Steele, Steve Totheroh, Carolyn Woodruff and the Robert and Maria Kelly Stewardship, to **Conservation and Education**.

Brian Regan and Lynn Barbaria made a donation as a Christmas gift to their sister-in-law, Cathy George, a long-time birder, and in memory of Cathy's late husband Kevin Regan.

## SACRAMENTO AUDUBON 2012 PROGRAMS

<b>March 15</b>	David Carle, <i>Around the World Starting at Mono Lake</i>
<b>April 19</b>	TBD
<b>May 17</b>	Julie Serences, <i>Native Bees in Our Yards</i>

## 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 on February 28, 2012 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

## JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

### Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry46@earthlink.net (916) 638-1141

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

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

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

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Observations* continued from page 10

at East Lawn Cemetery on 12/15. The **Black-throated Sparrow** in Esparto continued through most of December, and a **Lapland Longspur** continued in a field north of Rd 27 from 11/17 through at least 12/9. From last month, 26 **Mountain Plovers** on a portion of Sherman Island without public access on 11/10 provided the first record in over a decade for Sacramento County.

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

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve. Visit [cvbirds.org](http://cvbirds.org) and click "Listserve" for details. With over 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:

Steve Abbott, Brian Acord, Roger Adamson, Bruce Deuel, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Gil Ewing, Maureen Geiger, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, Dan Kopp, Lea Landry, Jim Laughlin, Mary Beth Metcalf, Frances Oliver, Michael Park, Kathy Parker, W. Rockey, Krysta Rogers, Jennifer Rycenga, Craig Swolgaard, John Sterling, Dan Tankersley, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, Bruce Webb, Dan Williams, and the local CBC counters and compilers.

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

December 1 to December 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

[www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

December 2011 was one of the driest Decembers on record, with just over a quarter-inch of rain. Many local CBCs reported lower than average numbers and diversity, especially waterfowl and irruptive species likely to be driven into the Valley by severe weather (see the CBC reports for details). Yet, the mostly spring-like weather led to many observers in the field. The most notable report was a male **Falcated Duck** found at the Colusa NWR on 12/8. It was missed on a couple of days, but for the most part was very cooperative, continuing into January. If accepted by the California Bird Records Committee, it would be only the third record for the state and the first for the Central Valley. Prior to 2002, the occasional reports of this species were considered escaped captives, but recent reports on the West Coast suggesting vagrancy from Asia have gained wider acceptance. Additional waterfowl of interest included an aberrant or hybrid **Emperor Goose** found on 12/23 at Sutter NWR, a first-year **Trumpeter Swan** at Lake of the Pines on the 12/17 Auburn CBC, a **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** at the Yolo Wildlife Area on 12/17, and a female **Red-breasted Merganser** at the Granite Bay access to Folsom Lake on 12/26.

A **Swainson's Hawk** on 12/8 at Williams was rare for winter that far north in the Valley. Single "**Prairie**" **Merlins** were reported from Nader Ln, north of Lincoln

Sacramento Audubon Society  
11054 Autumnwind Lane  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

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on 12/3 and near Granite Bay on 12/26. Gulls at the Yolo County Landfill included an adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** and an adult **Glaucous Gull** on 12/10. The latter bird may have been the same one present on 12/31, with a second-cycle **Glaucous Gull** present on 12/30. An

adult **Western Gull** was at Ancil Hoffman Park along the American River on 12/28. One of the most intriguing reports of the month was of a male **Black-chinned Hummingbird** near El Dorado Hills on the 12/26 Folsom CBC. It was seen well, though attempts to refind this bird were unsuccessful. A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was seen by many at East Lawn Cemetery beginning on 12/13. The hint of excess red on the face may indicate a **Red-breasted Sapsucker** somewhere in its ancestry.

Other excellent finds included a **Western Kingbird** on Oak Ave northwest of Folsom on 12/12-13, a **Northern Shrike** at the Peninsula portion of Folsom Lake, two **Cassin's Vireos** in town on the 12/15 Marysville CBC, a **Canyon Wren** near Old Folsom on 12/26 (the first for this site in 40 years), a **Northern Waterthrush** near Lake of the Pines on the 12/17 Auburn CBC and again on 12/19, an apparent **Hermit X Townsend's Warbler** at Baldwin Reservoir on 12/26, a first winter **Harris's Sparrow** in north Davis from 12/4 into January, and two **Evening Grosbeaks**

## Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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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.

*The Observer* is published monthly January through December, except June and August, by the Sacramento Audubon Society.

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