



The *OBSERVER*

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2010
Shepard Garden and Art Center
7pm General Meeting

Audubon California Working to Protect California Birds

Audubon California is building a better future for California by bringing people together to appreciate, enjoy and protect our spectacular outdoor treasures. As a dynamic field program of the National Audubon Society with more than 50 affiliated chapters, Audubon California is able to provide a rich outdoor experience for more than 100,000 members and supporters and at the same time promote a variety of robust conservation programs to protect birds, wildlife and habitat across the state.

Audubon's mission is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Audubon California is a non-partisan, non-profit organization responsible for raising its own funds and setting its own strategic course in California. It has a board of directors that serves in an advisory capacity, and helps to guide and support its work. Audubon California focuses on three key strategies to accomplish its goals:

- * Direct conservation
- * Policy & advocacy
- * Education & outreach

Jordan Wellwood is Audubon California's Conservation Coordinator for the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada. She assumed that position in January 2009. Prior to Audubon, Jordan worked on conservation policy in Sacramento. She holds an Honors Bachelors of Environmental Studies from the University of Waterloo in Canada. Jordan works with local chapters on a variety of conservation projects,

THE 13TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FEBRUARY 12-15 2010

The Great Backyard Bird Count is coming up soon. The Great Backyard Bird Count is a great way for people of all ages to connect with nature. Audubon and Cornell invite you to get involved, February 12-15—President's Day weekend. It's easy—just count the birds in your backyard, local park or another location and report what you see online at www.birdcount.org. Taking part in the GBBC helps give scientists important information about birds and the environment we share. When you volunteer to help you become part of a large team of Citizen Scientists across the country. You can see what birds are being reported in your own neighborhood and throughout the United States and Canada by visiting www.birdcount.org. You can count anywhere you choose—at a local park, a school yard, even a city garden.

The SAS Education Committee has many events planned to get our Sacramento area checklist numbers up. Last year for Sacramento alone, 112 species and 216 checklist were reported making it the number one city in California for checklists! This year's goal is to get to the top ten cities in the USA! Not so far away, since number ten last year was Wilmington, North Carolina with 250 checklists, so let's get everyone out counting this year!

To start with, we have a series of Backyard Birds Workshops planned around the Sacramento area. These workshops include a 15 minute PowerPoint presentation about the GBBC followed by a 30 minute introduction to the birds of our Sacramento area backyards. Appropriate for ages 8 and up. Note the special children's event in Old Town Sacramento.

Workshop Remaining for this Year:

Saturday, February 6, 2pm, South Natomas Library

Other Public Event:

Sunday, February 7, 1pm, Kid GBBC Workshop Trailmix in Old Town Sacramento, 116B I Street, right across from the California Train Museum.

GBBC Field Trips continued on page 6



as well as at the state level on Audubon's priority projects for the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada.

Jordan will discuss the major threats that birds face in California and what Audubon California is doing to protect the landscapes that birds will need in order to thrive in the future. She will also share opportunities for local citizens to get involved and make a real difference in their communities.

For more information about Audubon California, log on to: ca.audubon.org

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

Lea Landry, Program Chair

Field Trip Findings

River Bend Park (1/13) — “Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “No one showed up for the morning bird walk so I birded by myself. Disregarding the weather forecast of rain until noon, the sun cast a clear light on 47 species of birds, including a pair of Great Horned Owls, a Red-breasted Sapsucker and an Anna’s Hummingbird busy with very early nest construction. There were also three river otters, an impressive variety of mushrooms and two horsehair worms.”

Salt Springs Valley (1/10) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Mark Martucci, reported: “Fog surrounded the lake but not the valley. Highlights included 7 Ferruginous Hawks, 5 Bald Eagles, 2 Prairie Falcons, 1 Rough-legged Hawk, 2 Burrowing Owls, Rock Wren, Red-breasted Sapsucker. A fun time for 21 participants.”

Hot Birding Spots in the North Bay (1/9) — Leader Ron Storey reported: “We met at the parking lot of Shollenberger Park in Petaluma, but we did not birdwatch at Shollenberger Park. Instead, we drove a short distance and parked in the parking lot for the new Ellis Creek area, adjacent to Shollenberger to the south. There everyone saw Swamp Sparrow (after a long wait), Merlin, Sora, Mew Gull, and Blue-winged Teal. After lunch we drove to Port Sonoma where an Eastern Phoebe had been reported the previous day, but we struck out and could not find the Phoebe. From Port Sonoma we drove to the Corte Madera Marsh where everyone got excellent looks at Clapper Rail.”

Trip coordinator Tim Fitzer added Greater and Lesser Scaup, Red-breasted

Merganser and Horned Grebe for the trip, commenting “Fun time for all 12 people who attended, Thanks to Ron Storey who led the trip.”

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley (1/9) — Coordinator Mike Savino reported: “Thirty visitors joined us for this Audubon/SOS Cranes “crane tour.” Paul Tebbel began the tour with a talk about crane behavior. (We did not see any cranes on Franklin Blvd. or Desmond Road and were beginning to think the tour would be a flop.) We then took our guests for a short hike on the Wetlands Walk across from the Cosumnes River Preserve’s Visitors Center while Paul went looking for the cranes. We saw a wide variety of ducks and some other birds while we waited for Paul to call. He called us from Woodbridge Road where the cranes were found in great abundance. We then drove in caravan style down to Woodbridge Road where we saw thousands of Sandhill Cranes, White-fronted geese, and Tundra Swans. A close-up look at a White-tailed Kite was a highlight for many of us. It looked like all our guests, some from the Bay Area, were very pleased.”

Yolo Wildlife Area (1/5)—Leader Marlene Ishihara reported: “Despite the fog, eight participants saw 41 species of birds. The usual ducks, shorebirds, blackbirds, and sparrows were present. But, the highlight was the large flock of Tundra Swans resting in a distant northeast corner of the auto loop. Scope views were attempted but difficult to single out a possible Bewick’s. And, we were delighted by sev-

eral flyovers of mixed flock of Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese. Their calls were music to our ears. As usual, a good day out at the Bypass.”

Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary (1/2) — Leader Brian Gilmore reported that on an overcast day, highlights for eight birders was a Great Horned Owl, plus Snow Geese and Tundra swan flyovers.

Coastal Birding (12/26) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Six intrepid birders set out for the San Francisco Bay Area on this post Christmas Day trip, under threats of rain. And we were not disappointed. The weather held and we tallied 84 species. Highlights included: great views of 3 Clapper Rails at Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland, a pair of Peregrine Falcons strafing shorebirds at the same location, a Burrowing Owl also at MLK and nearly 1,000 Bonaparte’s Gulls at Palo Alto Baylands. At Charleston Slough, we discovered a Sora out in the open on mud flats near some reeds. Soon, another Sora crept out of the reeds onto the flats, and then the two engaged in a short aerial battle, ending with one retreating to the reeds and the other holding its ground on the flats. Also at Charleston Slough we saw 3 Black Skimmers, which were life birds for some in the group. After Charleston Slough, 2 of the group dropped out and the rest of us stopped at Lake Merritt in Oakland, adding Barrow’s Goldeneye, Redhead and Ring-necked Duck to our list. As we were leaving and calling it a day, the rains came.”

Pete Hayes

2009-2010 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS BY AREA

Folsom

Jan. 3—Compiler Chris Conard reported: “The 31st Folsom CBC was held January 3, 2010. This year there were 75 participants—the second highest in count history (there were 79 in the count’s first year). The 8 area leaders did an admirable job further dividing their areas into a total of 26 sub-groups, each with at least one experienced leader. The count obviously wouldn’t be possible without the participants, but the great work of the area and sub-area leaders can’t be overstated. Thank you.

“Last year we reached 146 species (the highest count total so far), and when I

heard of some of the excellent finds, I thought we might break the 150 barrier this time. But it was not to be. Our total was a respectable 138 (within an historic range of 123-146). There were several standouts this year. These include the count’s first Red-throated Loon, a Northern Pygmy-Owl (the first since 1994), a Red-naped Sapsucker, which is the first since 1995, a Northern Shrike at Beal’s Point (5th count record), Sage Sparrows (private property), and Lawrence’s Goldfinches. Also new for the count, but far less of a highlight, were a total of 5 Eurasian Collared-Doves.

“Other highlights included 7 Common Loons, several Ospreys and Bald Eagles, 10

Ferruginous Hawks, 4 Merlins, 2 Peregrine Falcons, 10 Prairie Falcons (a new count high), Mew Gull, Thayer’s Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull (overall gull numbers were well down, around 10,000, probably resulting from the paucity of salmon), 2 Western Screech-Owls, at least two Great Horned Owls already sitting on nests, 2 Burrowing Owls, 64 Lewis’s Woodpeckers, a Hairy Woodpecker, Common Raven (2 areas, and for the 2nd year in a row, but only the 4th count record), 2 Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, Golden-crowned Kinglets (often missed), Mountain Bluebirds (two locations), 1 Varied Thrush, California Thrasher, 3 Orange-crowned Warblers (easy to miss),

101 Phainopeplas (2nd count high), a White-throated Sparrow, and at least 100 Tricolored Blackbirds.

“Despite the great finds and good finds, misses were plentiful: geese other than Cackling and Canada, Tundra Swan, Cinnamon Teal, Canvasback, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Rough-legged Hawk, Golden Eagle (count week), Long-billed Dowitcher, rare gulls, Band-tailed Pigeon, Steller’s Jay, any swallows, Red-breasted Nuthatch or Brown Creeper, Canyon Wren, Common Yellowthroat, Vesper Sparrow, and Pine Siskin.

“I haven’t added up all of the numbers on all species yet, but one that stands out is 94 Yellow-billed Magpies. After an average of ~150, numbers went 67, 41, 47, 72, and, now 94. Not to read too much into this, but an encouraging trend all the same.

“It was a great day to be in the field, with weather about as good as you could expect on a CBC. Thanks again to all who participated, and especially to the area and sub-area leaders.”

Lincoln

Dec. 30—Compiler Ed Pandolfino reported: “The Lincoln CBC was conducted for the 8th year on December 30 in excellent weather (in stark contrast to the forecast). We had 96 people in the field (and 20 more counting at their feeders) and recorded 136 species. This species total was just over our average with two new species added to the cumulative list (Red-breasted Merganser and Black-throated Gray Warbler). A male Mountain Bluebird was found north of Lincoln, just the second time that species has been found on this count.

“We counted a Lincoln CBC record of over 192,000 individuals. Even adjusting for party hours, this is a new record for us. This total was mainly driven by outstanding numbers of geese (Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese mainly) and Red-winged Blackbirds. The total for Greater White-fronted Geese was over 27,000 and the Snow Goose total was over 35,000. The white-front number was a record even adjusting for party hours. We counted 409 Red-tailed Hawks, a new high even accounting for party hours and likely to get us the top count for this species of all 2000 North American CBCs (we were the top count for red-tails once before). Right in line with current trends throughout the Central Valley, we hit new highs for Eurasian Collared-dove, Common Raven, and Great-tailed Grackle. Our collared-dove numbers reflect the phenomenal explosion

of this species: zero for 2002-2005, 2 in 2006, 13 in 2007, 7 in 2008, and 102 this year. Where will it peak?”

Sacramento

Dec. 29—Compiler Mark Cudney reported that the Sacramento Christmas Count netted 157 species. “This was not as high as our record-setting performance in 2007 of 163 species, but still one of the highest inland counts in the country,” he said. “Species of note included 3 Eurasian Wigeons, one Greater Scaup, one Common Loon, one Lesser Yellowlegs, 10 Western Sandpipers, one Glaucous Gull, one Violet-green Swallow, two Brown Creepers, two Winter Wrens, one Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, one Varied Thrush, one Phainopepla, one Black-throated Gray Warbler, four Townsend’s Warblers, two Chipping Sparrows, two White-throated Sparrows, one Pine Siskin, and one Western Tanager. Species that we have seen in the past but missed this year included Redhead (although seen count week), Clark’s Grebe, Cattle Egret, Golden Eagle, Bald Eagle, Hutton’s Vireo (ugh), Purple Finch. Thanks to the well-organized area leaders and all 66 participants.”

Putah Creek

Dec. 20—Compiler Steve Hampton reported: “The 2009 Putah Creek Christmas Bird Count had 72 participants, who counted birds in decent weather thru most of the day. By late afternoon, the clouds turned to rain, but most of the teams were nearly done by then. We logged 164 party hours (the same as last year) and traveled 78 miles on foot, 230 miles by car, 8 miles by boat, and 5 miles by bike. Thirteen hours owling was the most in many years.

“We found 142 species, again the same as last year. We added one new species to the count, Ross’s Goose, and one new subspecies, “Slate-colored” Fox Sparrow. This latter issue is under review, as the subspecies we are finding appears to be altavagans, which some consider (and possibly report as) “Red” Fox Sparrow. Record high counts were set for 13 species: Wood Duck, Clark’s Grebe, Red-shouldered Hawk, Merlin, Virginia Rail, Eurasian Collared-Dove (from 2 to 31 to 120 in the last three years), Acorn Woodpecker (for the third year in a row), Nuttall’s Woodpecker, American Crow, Common Raven, White-breasted Nuthatch, Northern Mockingbird, and Orange-crowned Warbler. We also had a 3rd ever count record of “Pink-sided” Junco. Our 628 Lark Sparrows was the highest in 25 years.

“The only record low count was for American Coot. Yellow-billed Magpies seemed to rebound for the first time since the arrival of West Nile Virus, but Oak Timouse numbers remained depressed.

Thanks to all the area leaders, potluck organizers, and others who helped make this a great CBC!”

Stockton

Dec. 20—Compiler Jim Rowoth reported: “What started out as a cold, gray winter day ended up with blue skies and pleasant temps. Our unofficial species count is 143; biggest misses--Western Sandpiper, Rough-legged Hawk, Varied Thrush, Burrowing Owl, Hutton’s Vireo, Prairie Falcon, Swainson’s Hawk. This last species used to be “our” specialty, our count providing the first documented evidence that not all Swainson’s head for the Argentine pampas for winter. Swainson’s Hawk are now showing up on other area CBCs, while we have missed them the past few years.

“Highlights were Winter Wren, Short-eared Owl, Western Grebe, Redhead, Peregrine Falcon, Townsend’s Warbler, Hooded Merganser, Mountain Bluebird, American Avocet (highest number ever), Rock Wren, American White Pelican, Thayer’s Gull, and possible Black Rail. New to the count was Violet-green Swallow, found among a flock of Tree Swallows by the intrepid Sacramento AS team on Staten Island. Our unofficial final tally of birds is 185,723 individuals. Thanks to the 52 counters who came out to spend the day in the field for our 42nd annual Stockton count.”

Woodfords

Dec. 19—Dan Brown reported: “Thanks very much to all for the help on a nice December day in the High Sierra! And a special thanks to Dave Kirby at Woodfords Station for the great pie and sandwiches!

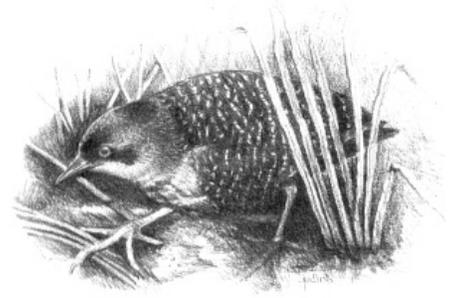
“I have tallied up the count and the species total stands at 81. This is a little better than average, according to my records. The highlight was the Northern Pygmy-Owl found near the Woodfords Store early in the morning by Dan Williams and Terry Thomas! COOL! Also notable were 190 Pinyon Jays, 1 Northern Goshawk and 1 Peregrine Falcon (new for the count, according to my records), 2 Loggerhead Shrikes and 16 Bushtits. Lowlights were the very low numbers of all birds (except Pinyon Jay) and the discovery of Eurasian Collared Doves in downtown Markleeville, also new for the count.”

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 Richard Barbieri, 966-4603, offleash56@yahoo.com for trips through March 7th. After March 8th call the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, 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.



Daniel Kilby

Saturday, January 30, 8:30am
Nimbus Fish Hatchery
Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
rey-ality@hotmail.com

Sharpen your identification skills as this is a gathering place for a variety of gulls. Herring, Thayer's, Glaucous-winged, California, Ring-billed and Mew Gulls are all possibilities. Then we'll walk downstream looking for Hooded and Common Mergansers, Osprey and other raptors, Barrow's and Common Goldeneye, Spotted Sandpipers, White-throated Swifts, and a variety of the smaller woodland birds. Meet Dan in the Fish Hatchery parking lot off Hazel Avenue north of Hwy 50.

Sunday, January 31, 9am
Hansen Ranch Park Preserve
Leader: Jonilynn Okano, 397-1295
jonilynn@rcip.com

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

February 6, 7:30am
Lincoln Grasslands
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@earthlink.net

We will search the back roads of western Placer County for raptors, waterfowl, Tri-colored Blackbirds and Lewis' Woodpeckers. This area is known for high concentrations of wintering raptors (up to 12 species can be seen in a day), and is also a magnet for wintering ducks and geese. Meet Scott at the Brookfield's Restaurant parking lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfield's is behind Shell. Bring lunch, scopes and FRS radios if you have them.

Sunday, February 7, 7:30am
Yuba County Wetlands
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
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.

Sunday, February 7, 2pm till dark
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
This Year's Last Save Our Sandhill
Cranes-sponsored trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

If you haven't been on one of these crane trips, make sure to join Mike for this one. The cranes will be leaving us soon for their nesting areas, which range from relatively



close, like Sierra Valley, to as far away as Siberia. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center parking lot at 2pm for a short introduction to crane behavior and biology by Paul Tebbel, then stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars, scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving

through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners.

Wednesday, February 10, 9am – noon
Jacob Lane area,
American River Parkway
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack on a 3 hour walk looking at native and non-native plant species, mammals and birds. This walk is great for beginning and more experienced nature lovers. Meet Jack at the end of Jacob Lane, which runs south off Fair Oaks Blvd, between Arden and Eastern.

Thursday, February 11, 8:30am
Yolo Wildlife Area
Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
Ishim2000@comcast.net

Join Marlene in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl and possible raptors such as Peregrine Falcon. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A), on your left. Scopes are helpful on this trip which is good for both beginners and more experienced birders.

Sunday, February 14, 7:30am
Rush Ranch and Grizzly Island,
Solano County
Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
Email: mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net
Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277
Email: kenpoe@sbcglobal.net

This trip to Solano County will begin with a brief tour of Rush Ranch, an operating cattle ranch on the beautiful Suisun Marsh owned by the Solano Land Trust. We will then explore Grizzly Island Wildlife Area looking for shorebirds, ducks, raptors, shrikes, and other wintering birds which may be found in the wetlands and grassland habitats, particularly in the winter. There is a \$2.50 fee to enter the Wildlife Area. Bring lunch and liquids as the trip will last into mid-afternoon. Meet at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From I-80, take the West Sacramento Exit; turn left at the light; then left again into the lot. To meet at Rush Ranch, contact Maureen or Ken.

February, 13, 14 and 15
President's Day Weekend
Eureka/Arcata area
Leaders, Dan Brown, 362-2458
naturestoc@aol.com
Joe Ceriani
Email - 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 20, 7:30am
Lake Solano and Monticello Dam
Leader: Dan Williams, (714) 943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

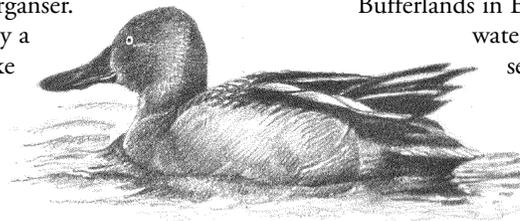
Meet Dan at the West Sacramento Park and Ride and bring lunch for a day of birding that will last into mid-afternoon. Lake Solano is situated at the base of the Coast Range just past the town of Winters and below Lake Berryessa. It is one of the closest spots from Sacramento to see a variety of higher elevation species, including Pileated Woodpecker, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, and American Dipper. A great diversity of waterfowl winter on the lake itself including Barrow's Goldeneye and Hooded Merganser.

We will enjoy a picnic at Lake Solano Park, then finish the day at Monticello Dam where we will hope

to see Bald Eagle, Common Loon, and Rock and Canyon Wren. To reach the Park and Ride, from Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave. Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot, on the north side of the freeway

Sunday, February 21, 8am
Sailor Bar, American River Parkway
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Join Mark for a morning walk checking out the resident birds and looking for early migrants. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee. Meet Mark at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. This is a good trip for beginning birders.



Daniel Kilby

Sunday, February 21
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.

Wednesday, February 24, 9am – noon
Estates Drive area,
American River Parkway
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

This morning walk along the river will be in an area just upstream 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 of course, birds. Meet Jack at the end of Estates Drive, which runs south off Fair Oaks Blvd, between Watt and Eastern Avenues.

Saturday, February 27, 8am – Noon
Bufferlands Wetlands and
Waterfowl Tour
Leader: Kevin Cassidy, 875-9196
cassadyk@sacsewer.com

Tour a managed seasonal and permanent wetland area within the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands in Elk Grove. The wetlands and waterfowl tour offers a chance to see many bird and mammal species including waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, beavers and coyotes. Tour participants will enjoy a 2 mile walk guided by a Bufferlands staff biologist who will explain current management and restoration techniques. Space is limited. For more information on this tour please contact Kevin Cassidy.

Sunday, February 28
7am – early afternoon
Northern San Joaquin County
Leader: Chris Conard, 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

We'll visit a diversity of habitats in northern San Joaquin County. The Mokelumne River fish hatchery below Camanche Dam is a mix of oak woodland, riverine, and riparian habitat. It has recently hosted Lewis's Woodpeckers and two American Dippers—perhaps they'll stick around for us. Flood and Waverly Rds are excellent for raptors and other open country birds. If time and conditions warrant, we'll make

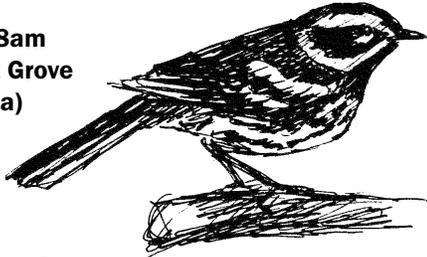
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Field Trips continued from page 5

stops at Lake Camanche and Woodbridge Rd. Be prepared for about two miles of walking and dress for variable weather. Meet at the Park and Ride in Galt at the southeast corner of Hwy 99 and Twin Cities Rd. This trip is good for both beginners and more experienced birders.

Saturday, March 6, 8am
North Fork Pleasant Grove Creek (Roseville area)

Leader:
Scott Dietrich
208-4976
sed25@csus.edu



Kirsten Munson

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 new area will be of interest to beginning and more experienced birders.

Sunday, March 7, 7am
Highway 37 and Schollenberger Park
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

From the West Sacramento Park and Ride, Mark will lead the group towards Petaluma, with various birding stops along Hwy 37. Moving on to Schollenberger Park, he'll look for Blue-winged Teal, a variety of shorebirds, Common Yellowthroat and the occasional rail. 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, on the north side of the freeway. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

Saturday, March 13
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. See the complete write-up on the following page.

Sunday, March 14, 8am (Note: Daylight Savings Time begins today.)
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
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.

GBBC Field Trips continued from page 1

GBBC FIELD TRIPS

Thanks to Marlene, Cathie, Wayne, Robert and Julie, we also have beginning birder Field Trips planned for the GBBC weekend. Come out and sharpen your bird watching skills. All are welcome!

Join Sacramento Audubon members for Beginner Bird Counts on GBBC Weekend February 12-15. Bring binoculars and pencils/pens for recording our species count. Contact Julie Serences at 548-0618 education@sacramentoaudubon.org for more information.

Friday, February 12th, 9am
William Pond Park on the American River Parkway
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882, empid@earthlink.net

Saturday Feb. 13, 9am
SAS and Friends of the River Banks at Sutter's Landing (end of 28th Street at the River) for a GBBC Family count
Leaders: Julie Serences and Robert Sewell

Meet Julie and Robert at the parking lot nearest the skateboard building. Sutter's Landing Park is located at the end of 28th Street behind the B Street Theater and over the railroad tracks! 548-0618 education@sacramentoaudubon.org

Sunday Feb 14, 9am
American River Bike Trail Near the Fish Hatchery
Leader: Marlene Ishihara 635-9758, Ishim2000@comcast.net

Meet at the public parking lot across the street from the Dept of Fish and Game Region II Office. This lot is free; there is no parking fee. To get to the site from downtown Sacramento, go east on Hwy 50 and exit at Hazel Avenue. Go north on Hazel. Turn left on Gold Country Blvd (before Hazel Avenue Bridge). Turn right at the **second** Nimbus Road. Drive about 1/4 mile and the public parking lot is on the left. This is west of the Nimbus Fish Hatchery parking lot.

Monday Feb 15, 9am
Mather Lake
Leader: Wayne Blunk 876-0457 wayne.blunk@worldnet.att.net

Field Trip for Beginning Birders

**Date: February 20 (alternate rain date
February 27)**

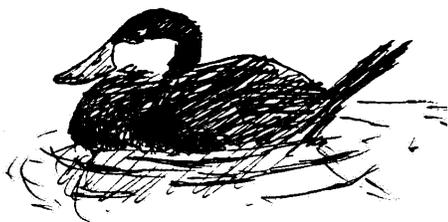
Time: 8am to 2pm

**Location: William Pond on the
American River**

Two of Sacramento Audubon's experienced birders will be leading a field trip for beginning birders. The outings will be 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. Cathie LaZier and Maureen Geiger have been birding in the Sacramento area for many years and enjoy sharing their knowledge with others.

Trips will be limited to 10 participants; please check with Cathie or Maureen for anyone under 14 years of age. There is a \$5 materials charge which will be collected the morning of the field trip and a \$5 parking fee (unless participants park outside the park).

Please register via email to either Cathie (empid@earthlink.net) or Maureen (mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net) or by calling Maureen at (916) 444-0804 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration, you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.



Kirsten Munson

SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS FOR 2010

March 18 – Chris Conard, *Australia and E-bird*—Chris just got back from Australia and since he is always on top of bird statistics for our Observations column, he'll have plenty to tell us about E-bird.

April 15 – Ed Harper, *Topic TBA*—but it will be sensational!

May 20 – Subhash Chand, *Birding Delhi*

BIRDING MONTANA AND THE BIG SKY COUNTRY

Ed Harper will be offering one of his popular Montana tours this summer during the height of the bird migration in the eastern portions of the state, May 24-June 1, 2010. This tour will feature many of the birds of the prairies and wetlands, keying in on the migration of both eastern and western species. Sharp-tailed Grouse, White-rumped Sandpiper, Mourning Warbler, Baird's Sparrow, and Sprague's Pipit are some of the many specialty birds. Tour size is limited to 8 people to simplify logistics and to maximize the outdoor experience. The cost is \$1355 for the 9 days. To see the complete itinerary and details, contact Ed at Sandpiper Journeys via calidris@surewest.net

BIRD AND BREAKFAST: SATURDAY, MARCH 13TH An Annual Spring Classic at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Is that a dirty sock hanging in that tree? No, it's a bushtit nest! And that tiny cup the size of a quarter, built with lichen and spider webs? A hummingbird nest! 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. 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 (916) 489-4918 for details. Checks payable to ARNHA may be mailed to PO Box 241, Carmichael, CA 95609. Be sure to include your telephone number.

A MARSH REBORN IN SAN PABLO BAY

Audubon California and the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge are restoring 65 acres of tidal marsh, sub-tidal, and marsh-upland transition environments on the Refuge at Lower Tubbs Island. In December 2009 the project was completed with improvement of hydrological flow and tidal flushing in San Pablo Bay, one of the Bay Area's most important places for birds. For a video demonstrating some of the work and the moment when the last levee was breached allowing for tidal flow, go to: ca.audubon.org/videos-sanpablobayll.php

Ballot Measure Would Provide Stable Funding To Protect State Parks And Conserve Birds And Wildlife

Continuing its long support for California State Parks, Audubon California has endorsed the State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010, a proposed statewide initiative slated for the November 2010 ballot that, if ultimately approved by voters, would provide a stable source of funding that would keep state parks open.

The State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010 would ensure a dedicated and reliable funding stream for state parks through an \$18 annual surcharge on most California vehicles. By law, the trust fund could only be spent on state parks, urban river parkways, wildlife, natural lands and ocean conservation programs. Vehicles subject to the surcharge would receive free, year-round admission to all state parks. Californians will no longer pay day-use fees at any state parks.

California's 278 state parks, which include state beaches and state historic parks, are priceless public assets and a vital legacy for our children and future generations. Twice in the past two years, state parks were on the brink of being shut down. Only last-minute budget reprieves kept them open. But nearly 60 state parks will be shut down part-time or their hours of operation reduced because of this year's budget cuts, and more park closure proposals and budget cuts are expected next year.

Jordan Wellwood
Central Valley/Sierra Nevada Conservation Coordinator
Audubon California

Birding Festivals

KLAMATH FALLS, WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL

The 31st annual Winter Wings Festival will offer three full days of activities, February 12-14. 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. A unique, strong cooperative partnership between farming, water resources, and the refuges provides an abundance of food and water that attracts vast numbers of waterfowl and raptors. Scott Weidensaul, a well-known wildlife writer, lecturer, and field researcher, will be the keynote speaker Saturday night. Many field trips and photography workshops are planned. Check out the website at www.WinterWingsFest.org for the latest in Festival planning information. On-line registration and brochures are now available.

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL SAN DIEGO BIRDING FESTIVAL

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

15TH ANNUAL GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 15th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held April 15-21. Godwit Days is a three-day spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast which offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats of 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. The area offers a wide array of habitats and species for your observation and enjoyment. 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 or call 1-800-908-WING. Registration is now open.

FIRST ANNUAL POINT REYES BIRDING FESTIVAL

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

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

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

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

SANDHILL CRANE MIGRATION 40TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION

The 40th annual Rivers and Wildlife Celebration will be held March 18-21, 2010, in Kearney, Nebraska. Organized by Audubon Nebraska and the Nebraska Bird Partnership, the conference gathers together nature enthusiasts from across the county to witness the migration of over half a million sandhill cranes and millions of waterfowl and other birds through central Nebraska. Events include guided field trips, a photography workshop, a family fun room, and daily visits to river blinds operated by Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary for up-close views of cranes roosting on the Platte River.

The celebration is open to the general public. Registration materials can be found at www.nebraska.audubon.org. Or contact Audubon Nebraska to be put on the mailing list: Nebraska@audubon.org; (402) 797-2301. Rowe Sanctuary has information about viewing the sandhill crane migration, (308) 468-5282; www.rowesanctuary.org.

2ND SATURDAY BIRDS AT FINE ARTS CENTER

The Sacramento Fine Arts Center is a non-profit organization that holds art shows, workshops and does community outreach on the arts. Their annual Animal House Art show takes place from Feb 23-March 13. The 2nd Saturday reception is March 13th at the Fine Arts Center, 5330-B Gibbons Drive, Carmichael, CA 95608.

Sacramento Audubon will be there with an info booth. SPCA, their co-sponsor, will be there with an animal rescue operation. There will be a couple hundred animal themed art entries, painting, photography, sculpture, etc. The 2nd Sat reception will be a big event and should be of interest to Audubon members. They always have many entries featuring birds.

Richard Turner, Co-Chair of Animal House

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 held on February 23, 2010 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

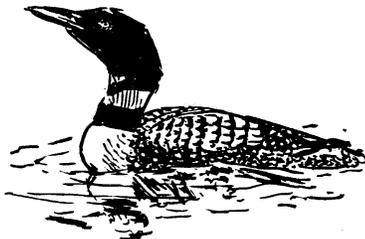
Edna Bohannon	Dell Richards
Bruce H Bostick	Sonja Sorbo
Anne C Bourget	Terry Thomas
Joan L Clark	Therese Valdez
Elfie Nadell	Melody F
Jeff Park	Whitcomb

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Julia Andrews, Bruce Bostick, Carole Elzey, Pablo Garza, Bob Gjestland, LaVerne Ireland, Loretta James, Alan Kilgore, Martha Lennihan, Iona Luke and Melody Whitcomb, to the **General Fund**.

Marilyn Armbruster, Edna Bohannon, Alice Corley, Carole Elzey, Thomas Graham, Tomiko Ibser, LaVerne Ireland, Marc Irish, Alan Kilgore, Jude LaMare-Pachl, Rita Marowitz, Wendy Money, Jeff Park, Noreen Rademacher, Dell Richards and Flora Yen to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.



Kirsten Munson

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.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

Observations continued from page 10

One of the more interesting birds was the returning **Bufflehead x Common Goldeneye** at Lake Solano, first found the previous winter. A **Semipalmated Plover** at Staten Island on 12/20 was very good for the season. An adult **Glaucous Gull** at the Yolo County Landfill on the 12/27 Sacramento CBC was one of the better finds; others from the CBC include two **Brown Creepers** (largely absent from the valley this winter), four **Townsend's Warblers**, and two **Chipping Sparrows**, all from the City of Sacramento portion of the count. **Red Fox Sparrows** were found on 12/5 at both the ARP near Gristmill and CRP. **White-throated Sparrows** were well represented, with continuing reports from ARP upstream of Howe Ave, CRP and the Bufferlands, along with two found in Sacramento on the CBC. Also of note were much higher than usual reported numbers of **Puget Sound White-crowned Sparrows** (almost identical to the drab brown, yellow-billed **Nuttall's White-crowned Sparrows** seen on trips to Point Reyes and Bodega Bay).

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

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

Chad Aakre, Dave Bell, Dan Brown, Scott Dietrich, Jim Dunn, Andy Engilis, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Dan Kopp, Lea Landry, Don Marsh, Ed Pandolfino, Nancy Sage, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, and John Trochet.

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

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

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

Local Christmas Bird Counts and the ARNHA Wildlife Count had a lot of birders in the field. The biggest highlights of the CBC season came in January (see next month or the CBC summaries), though there were a number of nice finds this December. One of the most spectacular events reported and nicely photographed was a huge flock of **European Starlings**, in the hundreds of thousands, often pursued by a **Peregrine Falcon**. A similarly huge flock was in the Elk Grove area. In spite of the damage starlings do to our native cavity nesters, these undulating flocks, twisting, breaking apart, recombining, are amazing to behold.

The low foothills of Amador County have been getting more consistent coverage the last two winters. Highlights this month included two **Eurasian Wigeons** at Goffinet Reservoir east of lone, three **Barrow's Goldeneyes** at the lone WTP, and a **Mew Gull** at Lake Camanche. The ducks were reported several times in the first part of the month and the gull was found on 12/3. The Lincoln WTP produced a nice assortment of moderately rare ducks. Best was a **Red-breasted Merganser** on 12/30, followed closely by a **Eurasian Wigeon** reported on 12/24, missed on the 12/30 Lincoln CBC and found again the following day, and seven **Redheads** on 12/18. Two **Redheads** at Willow Hill Reservoir near Folsom High School on 12/12 didn't stick around for the Folsom CBC. The same can be said for

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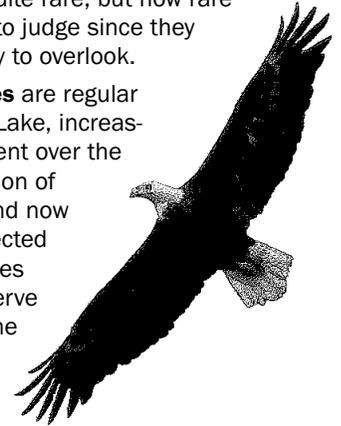
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a **Band-tailed Pigeon** in Folsom the following day. A **Band-tailed Pigeon** was also found near Ancil Hoffman on the 12/5 ARNHA Count. A **Long-eared Owl** was reported the same day from the upper portion of the American River Parkway (ARP). This is one of the most enigmatic of our regular birds, perhaps equaled in this respect only by **Least Bittern**. They are

certainly quite rare, but how rare is difficult to judge since they are so easy to overlook.

Bald Eagles are regular at Folsom Lake, increasingly frequent over the upper portion of the ARP, and now not unexpected at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP), Stone Lakes NWR, and the SRCSD Bufferlands.

An adult was at the Bufferlands on 12/14 (an infrequent visitor last winter was only the second record in over 20 years) and, perhaps the same bird, was seen eating a **Northern Shoveler** at CRP on 12/20. **Ferruginous Hawks** were widely reported, but **Rough-legged Hawks** were few and far between. A **Swainson's Hawk** was seen over Pedrick Rd to the west of Davis on 12/3, but this species was missed on local CBCs.



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Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, sawise7@sbcglobal.net

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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Observations continued on page 9