

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 68 • NO. 2

FEBRUARY 2016

General Meeting

Thursday, February 18, 2016

Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Searching for Gold Spot: The Wild That Follows Fire
Maya Khosla

Searching for Gold Spot: The Wild That Follows Fire is a film bringing to light the importance of fire to montane (mountain) forests and wildlife of the American West. Mya Khosla will speak about the issues raised in her film which chronicles the current research and conservation efforts of a team of biologists focusing on rare black-backed woodpeckers native to the Sierra Nevada-Cascades Region. The woodpeckers have recently been petitioned for special status species listing (threatened or endangered). Woodpeckers are among the carpenters of the forests. Their nesting cavities are vital for a host of other birds and small mammals that cannot build their own. While searching for woodpeckers, the research team also finds a plethora of wildlife—deer, black bears, sapsuckers, bluebirds, wrens, and raptors, including a nesting northern goshawk and her chicks, and spotted owl chicks—all in the post-fire forests (called “snag forests” for short). Team members travel to National Forests and parks in Stanislaus, Lassen, Plumas, El Dorado, Sierra, Tahoe, Inyo and Sequoia. sForests that have experienced fire are vibrant, dazzling, full of life and rapidly regenerating. Wildflowers and thousands of tree seedlings are bursting from the earth; the air is full of song. And the team members are full of wonder and a sense of discovery.

Fire renews the forest and post-fire forests are the “new old growth”. They are the starting point of old growth forests in the American West. These snag forests are vital not only for black-backed woodpeckers but for other wildlife. Indeed, snag forests are vital for entire ecosystems. Blending a visually exquisite celebration of wilderness with awareness of the challenges involved with saving it, *Searching for Gold Spot* raises important questions about conservation of the wild as we know it.

Maya Khosla is the author of *Keel Bone* (Dorothy Brunsman Poetry Prize) and *Web of Water: Life in Redwood Creek*. Support for *Searching for Gold Spot* was made possible by grant awards from the Sacramento Audubon Society and Patagonia. Her screenwriting work includes narratives for *The Turtle Diaries*, *Shifting Undercurrents and Village of Dust*, *City of Water*, award-winning documentary films. Maya filmed, wrote, interviewed and directed for *Searching for Gold Spot*, her 21-minute film on woodpecker conservation in the Sierra Nevada Mountains—and has hopes of creating a full film on the same subject in the future.

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 and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions. To keep up with current happenings follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/Sacramento Audubon](https://facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

Sally Walters Schmoldt, Program Chair

5TH ANNUAL KIDS’ CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Mara Weston, our new coordinator for the annual Kids’ Christmas Bird Count reported that twenty-two children, ages 4 through 16, and their families participated in the count at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Everyone enjoyed a morning of birding and camaraderie. The kids reported that some of their favorite sightings were a Merlin, large groups of Wild Turkeys, flyover Tundra Swans, and a couple of sparring bucks. One group also saw a coyote. After the count there were fun activities, good munchies and raffle prizes. It was an enjoyable day for all who participated.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT FEBRUARY 12–15, 2016

We want to remind you to mark your calendars for the 19th GBBC, coming up February 12–15. Last year a total of 18,726,079 birds were counted worldwide. The birdcount.org site also contains a gallery of participants’ bird photography including contest winners and category itemization by criteria such as behavior and habitat.

The GBBC is again integrated with the eBird program and now there are dedicated GBBC apps for android and iOS platforms. The BirdLog app from BirdsEye is the exclusive mobile data entry app for the GBBC and allows you to:

- Plot the exact location of your sightings using your phone’s GPS
- Create new personal locations or choose an existing hotspot or personal location for your checklist
- Create checklists even when there is no cell coverage for later submission
- Scroll and review your checklist before submitting it

The apps can be found at gbbc.birdcount.org/birding-apps/

Field Trip Findings

Sweetwater Creek (1/13) — Leader Craig DeMartini reported: “Although no one showed up for the Sweetwater Creek bird walk due to the threat of rain, I decided to check out the area anyway. After a ferocious downpour at 6am (2 hours before the walk) it did not rain again until that afternoon. I totaled 49 species, including my 3 scouting trips. I included birds starting from the rendezvous point at Bella Bru in El Dorado Hills, as well as a stop at Falcon Crest/Old Salmon Falls road Recreation Area just west of Sweetwater Creek. Some birds of interest were Common Raven, Varied Thrush, California Thrasher, Wrentit, Rock Wren, Phainopepla, Steller’s Jay, and Yellow-shafted Flicker. I found a dozen samples of bear scat, as well as a Turkey Vulture feeding on the remains of a carcass (coyote or dog) and 12 Turkey Vultures sunning themselves on 12 fence posts.”

Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley (1/10) — Leader Craig Swolgaard reported: “Fifteen birders met at the Park and Ride on Highway 16 on a foggy Sunday morning to search for wintering raptors and other valley birds. At the intersection of Meiss and Dillard Roads, we were greeted by two Ferruginous Hawks. Though the fog made the first hour or two difficult, eventually it melted away and we had excellent views of the Sierra Nevada and raptors, including Prairie Falcon, Merlin, Northern Harrier, and an adult Bald Eagle. Burrowing Owls are hard to come by in Sacramento County, but a member of our group found one on a hardpan bank close to the shooting range. Past the shooting range we were fortunate to find several Mountain Bluebirds near the road and Lewis’s Woodpeckers in the oaks. I made the decision to re-route our trip to Michigan Bar and Latrobe Roads and on Michigan Bar Road we found more Ferruginous Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Northern Harriers, and an immature Bald Eagle. At the Cosumnes River bridge we scanned the river, finding Common Goldeneyes, Common and Hooded Mergansers, Pied-billed Grebes, and a Ruddy Duck. A Rock Wren was found nearby. A total of 51 bird species were observed, including 10 raptor species. A very fun group of people!!”

Tonzi Road and Western Amador County (1/9) — Leader Gary Fregien reported: “A party of 8 birders, including 3 out-of-

stater birders the back roads, ponds and reservoirs of western Amador County on an overcast day that threatened rain most of the time. While birding along Vaira Ranch Rd we observed 5 Yellow-billed Magpies, Lewis’s and Acorn Woodpeckers, Oak Titmouse, a Phainopepla, Lark Sparrow, Spotted Towhee and Western Bluebird. The Lewis’s Woodpecker was a lifer for the Ohio birder. Obviously, we were quite pleased with this start. Our next stop was on Tonzi Rd, where we added Red-tailed Hawk, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, a Bewick’s Wren and about a half dozen Lawrence’s Goldfinches; lifer #2 for the Ohio birder. The stop at a pond along Sutter-lone Rd produced Canada Goose, American Wigeon, and Double-crested Cormorants. At the lone water treatment plant we saw more geese, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Northern Shoveler, American Wigeon and Black Phoebe. We also saw a Belted Kingfisher in the adjacent creek. A flock of Cedar Waxwings flew over with other flyovers by White-throated Swifts. Red-shouldered and Red-tailed Hawks perched in nearby trees. A Nuttall’s Woodpecker was heard but never seen; too bad, this would have been another lifer for the Ohio birder. On the drive along Dave Brubeck Rd (no, really) we saw Say’s Phoebe, Western Meadowlark and 7 Hooded Mergansers in a small pond. Around Camanche Lake we saw American White Pelican, Eared, Western and Clark’s Grebes, Greater Yellowlegs, a Loggerhead Shrike, Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, American Kestrel and an immature Bald Eagle. The last leg of the trip along Carbondale Rd produced our only Ferruginous and Cooper’s Hawks. The group tally was 72 species for the day.”

New Year’s Day at the Cosumnes River Preserve (1/1) — Leader Tim Fitzer reported: “It was cold with a slight north wind as 15 people braved a morning of birding. The birds along the walk became used to people and in the morning sun were beautiful. Some of the highlights were Cinnamon, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teals, Wilson’s Warbler, Snipe, Sora, Common Yellowthroat and Ring-necked Ducks. Most of the participants were first time or beginning birders.”

Sandhill Cranes and other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley; A Save our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento

Audubon Trip (12/26-27) — Coordinator Mike Savino reported: “On both the Saturday and Sunday after Christmas, despite the cold overcast and the threat of rain, we had about a dozen people show up for our crane viewing tour. Both days, after our usual crane talk at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center, we drove to Staten Island to view the sunset fly-in. When we arrived there was hardly a crane to be seen, but soon they started to fly in from all directions. About 200 landed close enough to get a good look with scopes and many hundreds more settled in much farther away. The cranes do move around a bit depending on the water conditions. Besides cranes and a few shore birds and ducks, our visitors were wowed by gigantic fly-overs of geese, mostly Snow and White fronts. Every once in a while small groups of Tundra Swans flew over close enough to see very well without optics. All our guests seemed to have been very pleased with the outing and many let us know.”

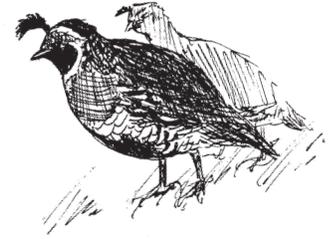
Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (12/23) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Ann Burris, reported: “It was a beautiful, cold but sunny day for 8 birders to bird Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Some of the highlights were Peregrine Falcon, American Bittern alongside our vehicles, Ross’s geese, Blue-morph Snow Goose and Ring-necked Duck. We had a fun day with really fun people!”

William Pond Park (12/20) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “There were only 3 of us on the morning walk—everyone else was holiday shopping? Scared of the weather? Watching Star Wars? On the Stockton CBC? Highlights were pairs of Great Blue Herons already claiming the best nests in the rookery and another Great Blue Heron defending its fishing location against mauling gulls. Newer birder Deb Pintel enjoyed scope looks at Hooded Mergansers fishing and compulsive birder Mark Martucci worked hard to bring our species total up to an even number of 50.”

Davis Wastewater Treatment Plant and Yolo County Landfill Area (12/13) — Leader Steve Hampton reported: “Trip canceled because of storm.”

Pete Hayes

Field Trips



California Quail
Kirsten Munson

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, for trips through February 28, contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, offleash56@yahoo.com, 761-1124. From February 29th on, contact the scheduler Mark Martucci, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com, 833-6722.

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. In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER contact the trip leader for trip status.

Tuesday, February 2, 12:30 PM Colusa National Wildlife Refuge Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1290 (day of trip only) dtankers@winfirst.com

Join Dan for an afternoon of birding at this wonderful NWR. This time of year the majority of white geese are Ross's, and the afternoon 'fly-in' can be spectacular if the weather cooperates. There will be many duck species as well as other wetland birds. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here and we can expect many raptors with the possibility of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. Birding will include the viewing platform and driving around the tour route. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Weather permitting, there should be ample photo ops. Scopes and FRS radios will be helpful on this trip. Meet Dan at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento, take I-80 west to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again to the Park and Ride behind Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Rain, strong wind, or thick fog cancels. You may want to bring snacks and liquids as the trip will end around 4pm.

Saturday, February 6, 7:30am Mather Lake Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457 Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations, and he usually turns up quite a list of bird species. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron and Common Yellowthroat. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional

Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd, take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Sunday, February 7, 8am Beals Point Leader: Deb Weston, 337-2818 notsewbed@mac.com

Join Deb for a 1 to 2 mile morning walk at Beals Point. A variety of oak woodland birds and wintering sparrows should be seen, and grebes, goldeneyes and mergansers will be on the lake. Spotting scopes will be helpful for seeing the birds on the lake. Phainopeplas, Rock Wrens, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows are possibilities. The trip will end by noon. Meet in the parking lot of the Beals Point unit of the Folsom Lake State Recreation Area (turn left as you enter the parking lot, to park near the first row). The entrance to Beals Point is on Oak Hill Drive off Auburn-Folsom Rd, about 2 miles south of Douglas Blvd and about 3 miles north of Greenback Lane. This is a great trip for beginning birders. The entrance fee is \$12 per car, or you may use a state (not county) park pass.

Monday, February 8, 8:30am Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661 MarkSawyer3383@yahoo.com

Join Mark 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 as well as raptors. 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, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS radios and scopes are helpful on this trip, which is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Trip will end before noon. If the bypass is closed due to flooding, the trip is canceled.

February, 13, 14 and 15 Presidents' Day Weekend Fort Bragg/Mendocino area Leader: Linda Pittman pittmanl@frontiernet.net (email preferred), 715-1876

Join Linda for three days of birding in Mendocino County. This year we will be birding on the north coast in the Fort Bragg and Mendocino area and possibly an inland site or two. Please contact Linda for details, a list of accommodations and to RSVP.

February 12 through 15 Great Backyard Bird Count 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. Check the website and see page 1 for more information.

Saturday, February 13, 8am Buck's Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills--A GBBC trip Leader: Maureen Geiger 444-0804, 281-6652 mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen for a leisurely walk through this riparian habitat and look for resi-

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

dent and wintering species such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds, warblers, marsh birds and sparrows. In this varied habitat, there is always the possibility of unusual finds. Meet at the southeast corner of the intersection of Silva Valley Parkway and Serrano Parkway. To reach this spot, exit Hwy 50 at El Dorado Hills Boulevard and turn right. Pass the large Raley's shopping complex and turn right onto Serrano Parkway, then right again at the bottom of the hill onto Silva Valley Parkway and park.

Sunday, February 14, 8am
River Bend Park-A GBBC trip
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie at the 1st parking lot on your right, just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk through the oak woodland, looking for small woodland birds and woodpeckers. We sometimes have good looks at Red-shouldered Hawks or Great Horned Owls. At the river we should see mergansers, goldeneye, herons, yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpipers and possibly a kingfisher. Walk will end by noon, and it's a great walk for beginners. From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field Road, take Rod Beaudry Drive north into the park (formerly called Goethe Park). A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Wednesday, February 17, 8am
William Pond Park
Leader: Larry Hickey, 962-0387
Larryhickey1@gmail.com

Meet Larry along the first parking area just past the entrance kiosk for this morning walk looking for wintering and resident birds. Along the river mergansers, goldeneye, herons and egrets can be found in the backwaters. California Quail, Western Bluebirds and Lark Sparrows may be found in the park area and various raptors may be spotted. Trip will end before noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east and it runs into the park. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Saturday, February 20, 8am
North Natomas Regional Park
Leader: Ben Graber, 844-8682
Bgraber984@gmail.com

Join Ben for a leisurely morning walk around the North Natomas Regional Park.

We can expect to see a wide variety of grassland species including Meadowlarks, Ring-necked Pheasants, and Savannah Sparrows, along with herons, egrets, and waterfowl. Various wintering species of raptors, including falcons, are also possibilities. This trip will include approximately 2 to 3 miles of walking over flat terrain, and bringing liquids is recommended. Meet Ben at the parking lot on the North side of New Market Drive across from Inderkum High School. New Market Drive is off Truxel Road approximately a mile north of Interstate 80. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

Saturday, February 20, 10:30am
Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

Join Cathie LaZier and Sue Darst of Sac Audubon and a Nature Center docent for a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, and other resident birds, as well as some wintering species, will be active. Reservations are not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net.

Sunday, February 21, 7:30am
Upper Lake Natoma and Folsom Lake
Leader: Chris Conard, 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

The sheltered canyon of upper Lake Natoma near the Folsom Rodeo Grounds is usually quite productive and Mormon Island to Brown's Ravine is one of the best sites for Phainopeplas. We'll also look for loons, grebes and other waterbirds on the lakes. The woods should be alive with the songs of Bewick's Wrens and other resident breeders. From Hwy 50, exit at Folsom Blvd and go north. After 2.7 miles, turn right on Natoma Street. In 1.0 mile, turn left on Stafford St and park between the library and the entrance to the Folsom Zoo. Be prepared for about three miles of walking. Trip will end by noon. Steady rain cancels.

Monday, February 22, 8am
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Leader: Bob McCleary, 960-3390
bobmccleary@comcast.net

Bob is a docent at the Nature Center and knows the trails, and where to find the birds. On this morning walk he'll be looking for both resident and wintering birds. Meet him in the Nature Center parking lot

in Ancil Hoffman Park. This is a good trip for beginners as well as more experienced birders. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, February 27, 8am
Bushy Lake
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident and wintering species. With most leaves fallen from the trees, there will be better views of the lake, and Wood Ducks are a good possibility. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. You may want to bring water. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders.

Saturday, February 27, 4pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Our Sandhill Cranes will be leaving soon to migrate to their nesting grounds. Don't miss this opportunity to see them, as well as a variety of ducks, swans, geese, and shorebirds. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center deck at 3:30pm to hear a brief talk about Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll walk the Lost Slough Wetlands trail for views of the cranes, 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. This is a great trip for beginners and for families

Sunday, February 28, 7am
Highway 37 and Schollenberger Park, Petaluma
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 the Petaluma area, 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.

Sunday, February 28
Beginning Birding Field Trip for Adults
William Pond Park

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. We explore the varied habitat at William Pond, looking at wintering sparrows, some waterfowl and shorebirds at the river, and those small confusing bushtits, titmice and kinglets. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

Sunday, February 28, 4pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

See the trip information for February 27.

Wednesday, March 2, 7:30am
Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach,
American River Parkway
Leader: Sally Walters Schmoltd
710-1077, bajaowl@gmail.com

Join Sally for a morning bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the American River. Sally will be looking for migrants and resident breeding birds, wrens, towhees, and other small passerine birds. From Highway 50 take Howe Ave north to Fair Oaks Blvd. Turn left onto Fair Oaks and cross over the American River. Turn right on Carlson Ave, which is the first stop light past the American River bridge. Continue on Carlson Ave to its end, at Glenn Hall Park. Meet on top of the levee. This will be a fairly easy walk, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, and rock cobble. This is an excellent trip for beginners.

Saturday, March 5, 8am
Lake Solano/Putah Creek

Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris
Tim: 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net
Ann: 947-7573,
burris.ellieann@gmail.com

This is a great area to find Pileated Woodpecker, Phainopepla, Brown Creeper, Barrow's Goldeneye and many other late wintering birds. Meet Tim and Ann 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.

Sunday, March 6, 6:30am
Arrowhead Marsh and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline
Leaders: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net
Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Arrowhead Marsh and MLK, Jr. Regional Shoreline, encompassing much of San Leandro Bay, is an extremely productive birding area. It is well known for Ridgeway's Rails, lots of wintering ducks and hundreds of shorebirds during the fall-



Oak Titmouse
Kirsten Munson

ing tides. It has also produced rarities and hard to find species such as Nelson's and Swamp Sparrows. We will likely spend most of the day there. However, time permitting, we may visit other nearby locations. Bring lunch and liquids, and dress for possible cold early morning temps. Meet Scott and Mark 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.

Monday, March 7, 7:30-11:30am
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661
MarkSawyer3383@yahoo.com

Join Mark 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 as well as raptors. 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, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS radios and scopes are helpful on this trip.

Saturday, March 12, 8am
Bushy Lake, Cal Expo Floodplain
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 973-9841
mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident species and Wood Ducks are a good possibility on the lake. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. Bring water and sunscreen. This is a great trip for beginners.

Sunday, March 13
Deer Creek Hills Preserve
Leader: Mark Martucci

Deer Creek Hills is a private preserve and working cattle ranch located in Eastern Sacramento County. The 4500 acres of grasslands and Blue Oak habitat should provide us with a nice variety of bird species. Mark is working out the details for this trip; put the date on your calendar now, and check the field trips next month for starting time and place.

Wednesday, March 16, 8am
Buck's Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway,
El Dorado Hills
Leader: Maureen Geiger
444-0804, 281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen for a leisurely walk through this riparian habitat and look for resident and wintering species such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds, warblers, marsh birds and sparrows. In this varied habitat, there is always the possibility of unusual finds. Meet at the southeast corner of the intersection of Silva Valley Parkway and Serrano Parkway. To reach this spot, exit Hwy 50 at El Dorado Hills Boulevard and turn right. Pass the large Raley's shopping complex and turn right onto Serrano Parkway, then right again at the bottom of the hill onto Silva Valley Parkway and park.

BIRD AND BREAKFAST AT EFFIE YEAW MARCH 19–20, 2016

Traditional Event – Saturday, March 19 at 8am

Family-Friendly Event – Sunday, March 20 at 8am

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and Sacramento Audubon are teaming up to offer a special weekend of morning birding trips coupled with wonderful breakfast fare.

This event, held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael, starts with Bird Walks guided by some of our best local birders. For weeks in advance, these guides scout the Nature Study Area so they will be able to point out nests and local rarities. After the Walk, you will join fellow birders for wonderful food, good coffee and other fun to help raise money for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. No extensive birding experience is necessary—this event caters to all levels.

On Saturday, the Bird Walk will be approximately 90 minutes long, followed by the traditional casserole breakfast buffet provided by some of the best cooks among ARNHA Board members and Nature Center volunteers. Participants can also bid for attractive baskets and experiences in the silent auction.

On Sunday, you can choose to join either a Family Bird Walk, a one hour walk with children 6 or over welcome, or a longer, approximately 90-minute, Adult Bird Walk open to those ages 12 and above. The Sunday event features an excellent pancake breakfast prepared by the Carmichael Kiwanis, and a nature-themed craft activity for children.

Mendocino-based Discount Binoculars will be available on Saturday showing a wide range of binoculars and spotting scopes. They feature over 25 styles of binoculars and scopes, made especially for birding, to compare and test.

Bird and Breakfast often sells out. Reservations are required. Call 489-4918 for information, questions and to make reservations. You can also register online at www.sacnaturecenter.net/birdandbreakfast.html when it becomes available.

2015-2016 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS BY AREA

Woodfords, December 19 (rescheduled to January 2)

Coordinator Tim Fitzer (with Compiler Andi Salmi) reported: "After being rescheduled due to weather on January 2 the Woodfords Count finally happened.

The weather was from 9 degrees to a high of 29 with water lakes frozen and some roads closed by snow. Seventy-four species were tallied by 26 hardy participants. Some of the highlights were American Tree Sparrows, a flock of Pinyon Jays, Goshawk, Black-billed Magpies and Clark's Nutcracker. We finished with lunch at the Woodfords Store, for a fun day of birding in cold Alpine County."

Sacramento, December 26

We'll have the Sacramento CBC report next month.

Folsom, January 3

Compiler Chris Conard reported: "We had a very good Folsom CBC with nearly perfect weather given the time of year. The species count was 145, one short of the record, within an historic range of 123 to 146 over the past 38 years. This was a good species total since we missed all geese (except for Canada) as well as Tundra Swan. Twelve Mute Swans hardly compensate; they're getting more common in our area as they are breeding and expanding from several small reservoirs. Folsom always has relatively low waterfowl diversity compared to the Valley floor. We did okay with ducks, getting Cinnamon Teal, which we often miss, missing Canvasback and Redhead, getting 68 Ring-necked Ducks, three

Lesser Scaup, 28 Barrow's Goldeneye, and 32 Hooded Mergansers (down from last year's 71). Folsom Lake was very low, so perhaps it's no surprise that the numbers of Common Loons (3) and grebes were low too, with only 9 Horned and 15 Eared Grebes, though we still got over 300 Western-types (many too distant to separate Western from Clark's).

"Three Bald Eagles, three Ferruginous Hawks and one Rough-legged Hawk were good finds, and a single Golden Eagle was a good pick-up of a species that we're now missing most years. Shorebird numbers and species diversity were low, as is often the case. We missed Long-billed Dowitcher. Among 20,000+ gulls, none were unexpected species, though we did have a few Thayer's and Glaucous-winged, but missed Mew Gulls.

"After last year's invasion of Band-tailed Pigeons, we were lucky to have a single party report 43. Owls included two Barn Owls (sometimes missed), four Western Screech-Owls, one Burrowing Owl, and a Long-eared Owl flushed from a day roost near Sweetwater Creek. Lewis's Woodpeckers, while not as numerous as last year, still came in at 98. Five Hairy Woodpeckers was a good total for the count (a species found about 2/3s of the time), including one continuing along Lake Natoma, but a little farther downstream (nearer Parkshore Dr) than the reports last winter from just below the Young Wo Circle access. We had six Merlins, two Peregrine Falcons and four Prairie Falcons. Five Loggerhead Shrikes from three areas, including one from the Peninsula portion of

Folsom Lake, was encouraging.

"Steller's Jays were nothing like last year's numbers, but we still had 16 among three parties. Common Ravens used to be rare, but were up to 23 among four parties. Yellow-billed Magpie numbers were low, at 61, which is down from 134 last year, but way up from 23 the year before. Hard to know what that means. We had two Brown Creepers and two Red-breasted Nuthatches, but missed Golden-crowned Kinglets (had two on 1/1 for count week), and had three Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Rare/uncommon sparrows included three Chipping Sparrows, two Bell's Sparrows (Sweetwater Creek vicinity), and four White-throated Sparrows. We recorded an impressive 856 Western Bluebirds, and two Mountain Bluebirds were a nice find along Payen Rd. We had nearly 2000 American Robins, and 23 Varied Thrushes (reported from four areas), down from last year's 217 (we miss this bird some years). At the tally we thought we had yet again missed Tricolored Blackbird, but four were reported from Area 4 (El Dorado Hills vicinity). There were two separate detections of calling fly-over Red Crossbills (a flock of three and a single) near the older part of Folsom. Last year we had 355 Pine Siskins, a species we sometimes miss, but this year had to settle for a still impressive 115, with reports from six of eight areas.

"Thanks to all who participated and especially to the area leaders who do a lot of extra work organizing their teams (Ed Pandolfino, Maureen Geiger, Tim Fitzer, Cathie LaZier, and Scott Hoppe).

Birding and Nature Events

CALIFORNIA DUCK DAYS, FEBRUARY 19-20, 2016

Yolo Basin Foundation sponsors this annual event, which takes place in the heart of the Pacific Flyway, minutes from Sacramento. It features a wide variety of field trips, workshops, and special activities for people of all ages. There are two events: a reception Friday night and then the all day festival on Saturday. Enjoy field trips to sites around the region. Workshops such as waterfowl identification, wood duck box building, and duck calling for kids are held throughout the day. One of the most popular events at Duck Days is the kids' fishing activity. Children may fish for trout in the demonstration wetlands and then have their fish cleaned and packed to take home. The Duck Days Exhibit Hall will have interactive displays from local environmental organizations and will feature the crowd-pleasing Mallard ducklings, as well as live raptors, and activities for kids. More information and tickets can be found at yolobasin.org/california-duck-days/.

2016 KLAMATH FALLS WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL FOUR DAYS! FEBRUARY 11-14

The 37th Annual Winter Wings Festival will be held in **Klamath Falls, Oregon**. The 2016 festival is once again loaded with birding and nature photography talent. There are numerous photography workshops and field trips including some especially for youth; many raptor and owl prowl trips, and Bald Eagle flyouts. Registration is now open and required for all activities with an associated fee. The website with the complete schedule and registration information and forms is at winterwingsfest.org. Further information is available at 877-541-BIRD (2473).

OLYMPIC BIRDFEST 2016, SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

From **April 15-17** the 13th annual Olympic Birdfest will take place in **Sequim, WA**. The festival offers a most spectacular setting where you can visit the rain shadow of the Olympic Peninsula to discover the birds of the coastal Pacific Northwest. Pre and post-festival trips are also offered in this fascinating area. More information can be found at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 21st annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 13-19** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. 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 over 270 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. Further information can be found at www.godwitdays.org or call 1-800-908-WING.

POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

Save the dates of **April 22-24** for the Bay Area's best birding and nature extravaganza! Enjoy birding at the height of spring migration with some of the best naturalists around. For more information and to sign up for their email newsletter, visit www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org. Tickets are scheduled to go on sale in February, and all proceeds benefit the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

LAST CHANCE FOR DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

A great trip for families, youth groups and newer birders, this is an opportunity to work on duck identification as well as other wetland birds.

Stop by the Cosumnes River Preserve and check out Ducks In Scopes, where docents have a row of scopes set up, including lower ones for children, giving you good views of the many colorful ducks and other wetland birds. A microscope and hand lens provide close-up looks at 'Duck Soup', dishes of water dipped from the pond full of sand fleas, dragonfly nymphs, and other squiggly things that provide the protein the birds are feeding on. The Preserve is a quick drive from Sacramento—south on I-5 to Twin Cities Road; left (east) on Twin Cities for 1 mile; then right (south) on Franklin Blvd. The viewing area is in the first parking lot on your right as you drive into the preserve. Come any time between 10am and 2pm, on the following dates:

January: Saturday, 1/23, Sunday, 1/31

February: Saturdays 2/6, 2/13 and 2/27
Sunday 2/21

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2016

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Saturday, January 30
Sunday, February 28

Registration: Required and limited to 10 participants

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.

The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on where to look and what important field marks to look for. This walk will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. An optional brief session at a picnic table afterwards will cover field guides, smart phone applications and optical equipment.

Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 457-6882, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON FUTURE PROGRAMS

2016

- March 17** Eric C Hansen, *Giant Gartersnake*
- April 21** Ed Harper, *Birding Alaska*
- May 18** Lou Regenmorter, *Birds Seen in Saudi Arabia*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Polly Bethany and Jane Taylor made donations to the **General Fund**.

Chris Holmstrom, William Patterson and Jane Taylor made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

SAS also received a large donation of \$5,000 from an anonymous donor. Wonderful! The Board of Directors would like your help in raising \$15,000 for Education and Conservation projects in 2015-16. Please donate generously.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Bobelaine is a 430 acre wildlife sanctuary owned by the National Audubon Society and managed by volunteers of the Sacramento Audubon Society. Now we need your help to maintain Bobelaine because Robert Thomas, our amazing volunteer, has retired. He has worked maintaining the 5 miles of trails at the Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary for many, many years. Maintaining the Sanctuary means keeping the trails clear and the Sanctuary available for all to enjoy. The board has formed a committee to evaluate options. If you would like to join a team of volunteers to help maintain the Bobelaine Sanctuary please contact Larry Hickey at President@sacramentoaudubon.org. Donations to support Bobelaine can be made through the website: www.sacramentoaudubon.org/payments.html.

HELP SPREAD THE JOY OF BIRDING VOLUNTEER FOR SAS OUTREACH

Spring events are coming up and we need volunteers to work at the SAS table. You do not need to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding and talking to people about our field trips. You would be working with an experienced volunteer.

Your help would be appreciated at one of the following events:

- Return of the Swainson's Hawk, Sutters Landing Park, April 9.
- Wildflower Wonders, American River Parkway at Soil Born Farms, April 16.
- Creekweek, Carmichael Park, April 9
- Walk on the Wild Side, south of Freeport, May 14.

If you can work a 3 or 4 hour shift on one of the above days, please contact Bill Bianco at biancowm@yahoo.com, or 372-3318.

ONLINE DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP NOW AVAILABLE

You can now charge donations to SAS on your credit card or via PayPal on the SAS website. You may make either one-time or recurring monthly donations in any amount at sacramentoaudubon.org/payments.html. Several smart people have already taken advantage of this for both donations and membership. Note please that the Board of Directors would like your help in raising \$15,000 for Education and Conservation projects in 2015-16. Please donate generously.

Seasonal Observations

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

After two years of severe drought, this winter, while not a particularly wet one so far, feels far more typical for the season. Last winter's invasions of **Band-tailed Pigeons** and **Steller's Jays** were not repeated, but winter finches flocked the Valley in good numbers. In early December, high numbers of **Blue-winged Teal** were reported at the Bridgeway Island Pond in West Sacramento, with the highest being an astounding, carefully counted 120 on 12/6. High numbers of **Ring-necked Ducks** were found at the Woodland WTP, with up to 2,000 present, and a **Red-breasted Merganser** was a rare find for the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 12/2.

A **Black Rail** was seen from the Lost Slough Boardwalk at CRP on 12/17. Given the calling birds at Stone Lakes and CRP last spring, it is tempting to think this species is getting more regular in our area. Two **Pacific Golden-Plovers** continued at the

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) from last month, with one to two reported through 12/6. A **Marbled Godwit** was found at Staten Island on 12/20. A cooperative **Northern Pygmy-Owl** was at the Cache Creek Campground on 12/5, while the only **Short-eared Owls** reported were up to two in the ag fields northeast of Davis on 12/27, continuing into January.

A **Red-naped Sapsucker** was photographed on 12/23 in the Putah Creek Canyon near the Canyon Creek Resort and a **Cassin's Vireo** was a nice find on 12/2 at CRP in the riparian corridor adjacent to the Lost Slough wetlands. A **Black-and-white Warbler** was found on the 12/20 Stockton CBC and continued through 12/26. Four **Thick-billed Fox Sparrows** were found above Mix Canyon on 12/20, where seldom reported but likely regular, and two **Swamp Sparrows** were reported on 12/27 from the YBWA.

The few **Red Crossbill** reports last month grew by early December, and continued into January. Reports came from the Colusa-Sacramento River State Park in Colusa

from 11/29-12/9 and the steady stream of reports in Sacramento came first from near the Guy West Bridge on the 12/5 ARNHA Count, continuing there for several days. Reports from the City Cemetery on 12/8 continued unabated into January, with highs topping 40 individuals. **Red Crossbills** were also found at the Sutter Cemetery from 12/29 into January. All of the crossbills reported in the Central Valley this month appeared to be type-3 (western hemlock) birds. A male **Lawrence's Goldfinch** visiting a feeder in Davis on 12/8 was a nice surprise. **Evening Grosbeaks** were also reported from several locations, but were not nearly so common as the crossbills. Reports came from Rumsey Canyon Rd on 12/5, the Sacramento City Cemetery on 12/8-9, and calling flyovers in Davis throughout the month, with one seen well on 12/24.

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

The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Chris Hurley John Mott
Brad Lael Tom Sampson
Katherine
McCreery Klusky

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 23, 2016 at 7pm. Board meetings are held at the Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room, 601 Munroe St, Sacramento, 95825.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to Board Minutes.

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

Mara Weston, Membership Chair, mara_weston@yahoo.com
7708 McClintock Way, Sacramento, CA 95828-4321

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.

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



Observations continued

lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000' contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve (cvbirds.org) and in eBird. It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Keith Bailey, Lily Douglas, Todd Easterla, Bob Ellis, Gil Ewing, Bob Greenleaf, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, James Holmes, Stanton Hunter, Joanne Katanic, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, John Luther, Mary Muchowski, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Linda Pittman, Jim Rowth, Mark Sawyer, Ken Schneider, John Sterling, Kirk Swenson, Craig Swolgaard, John Trochet, Deb Weston, Mara Weston, and Rick Williams.

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

Chris Conard

A MESSAGE FROM CHRIS

A couple of my coworkers at the Bufferlands, Roger Jones and Steve Scott, have been getting some great wildlife videos with their trail cameras for the past few years. It has been a while since I sent a note about this. A new video is added each Tuesday, and the latest has an assortment of birds using the same post over the course of a week. Another of many to check out (just scroll down the page past the otters and coyotes) is the November 10th video—a day in the life of a Burrowing Owl. You don't need to be signed up to Facebook to watch the videos: www.facebook.com/SacRegionalSan

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

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

Sacramento Audubon Society
7708 McClintock Way
Sacramento, CA 95828-4321

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit #1934
Sacramento, CA

Address Correction Requested

Dated Material: Please Expedite Delivery

Sacramento Audubon Society



www.sacramentoaudubon.org



White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

Correspondence: P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Membership/Subscriptions: Mara Weston, 7708 McClintock Way,
Sacramento, CA 95828-4321
mara_weston@yahoo.com

Seasonal Observations: Chris Conard, 2405 Rio Bravo Circle,
Sacramento, CA 95826
203-1610, e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

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.

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

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

February 18, 2016

Maya Khosla: *Searching for Gold Spot: The
Wild That Follows Fire*
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm



*Black-backed
Woodpecker*
Maya Khosla