



The *OBSERVER*

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, January 18

Shepard Garden and Art Center

7pm General Meeting

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker

John Trochet

On 28 April, 2005, simultaneously in Washington, D.C. and in Little Rock, Arkansas, officials of The Nature Conservancy-Arkansas, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, and Department of Agriculture confirmed the internet rumors that began the night of April 26th and circulated explosively 24 hours later: A living Ivory-billed Woodpecker had been discovered in eastern Arkansas.

John Trochet's own explorations of swamps in the historical range of Ivory-billed Woodpecker goes back to 1974 and a visit to the Big Cypress area of southern Florida. Between now and then he has looked for the woodpecker elsewhere in Florida, Georgia, South Carolina (most recently in March, 2006), Mississippi, Louisiana, and in eastern Texas. "These were all great trips to wonderful country. But I didn't find the bird I sought most. But eight days before that public announcement, my canoe mates and I saw a living Ivory-billed Woodpecker fly by us on Bayou de View. It was a 30+ year-old dream come true."

Having lived in Sacramento since 1981, and married to Glennah Trochet, well known in Sacramento as the County Health Officer, John has been a birder for nearly 40 years. He is a retired physician who returned to school in ornithology after leaving medicine. "I am a long-time volunteer at the Cosumnes River Preserve, where I lead the monthly Tall Forest bird surveys. I work part time now for the Museum of Wildlife and Fish Biology at U.C. Davis. My home away from home is Zuni, New Mexico, where I have a long term interest in the avifauna of the southeastern Colorado Plateau."

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

Sally Riggs, Program Chair

Education Committee

PHOTOS FOR EDUCATION

The Education Committee extends a big "Thank You" to Chris Conard for his more than generous contribution to our digital photo gallery. Chris provided over 100 images of birds, 5 mammal images, 1 kingsnake, and 1 Tiger-swallowtail. Thanks to Chris and previously recognized contributors, we are well on our way to having a photo collection representative of the flora and fauna of the Sacramento region. These photos will be put to good use very soon, as our new education program is set to begin in earnest this month.

Please read the article on page 6 concerning the Education Committee's efforts to get kids involved in the Great Backyard Bird Count which takes place nationally the weekend of February 16-19.

BIRDING FOR FUN WORKSHOP

Spring is a long way off, but we need to get word out now for a very special class. The Sacramento Audubon Society's Education Committee and the Rancho Cordova Recreation and Park District have teamed up to bring the joy of birding to children! Birding for Fun is an inter-generational hands-on workshop for children ages 6-16, accompanied by a parent, grandparent or other special adult. Sheila Green will be teaching the class which explores birding in the Sacramento Area with special emphasis on audio and visual bird identification; where to go exploring; backyard and wild habitat conservation; and, of course, fun! Sheila is a volunteer with SAS and has over 7 years experience teaching the love of birds and nature to kids and adults. Classes will be Wednesdays, 6:30-8pm, March 14 and 21, with a field trip date of Saturday, 9-11am, March 17. Register by calling the Park district's number, 362-1841. The class size is limited, so sign up soon. Cost is \$15.

FEELING LUCKY?

Don't forget that starting with the January meeting every person who enters our doors will receive a free raffle ticket. At the end of the meeting we'll draw three winning numbers and the first number chosen will have the first choice of the prizes available that night. January's top prize will be an Entertainment book valued at \$40.

Field Trip Findings

Sand Creek Road/Arbuckle Area (12/9)

Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Sheila Deaner, reported the group observed three Golden Eagles and Rock Wrens here. Moving on to the Sacramento Wildlife Area, the group found Bald Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Peregrine Falcon, Rough-legged Hawk and Ferruginous Hawk, along with thousands of Snow Geese, including a number of blue-form snows.

Wetlands and Waterfowl Tour (12/9)

Staff wildlife biologist Roger Jones led this tour of the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands in Elk Grove. He reported: "The tour was planned for two miles of walking. But it was raining and the trails were muddy, so we opted for more driving and less walking. We toured Fishhead Lake, a 100-acre man-made wetland complex, and a 22-acre constructed wetlands facility. At the lake, we observed all of the typical waterfowl and shorebirds seen in our area this time of the year. The design of the cells at the constructed wetlands facility allows close observation of birds. During the short walk we got nice looks at some rails and waterbirds, including Virginia and Sora Rails, American Bittern, Green Heron, and a host of passerines. We also had an opportunity to watch and photograph a Burrowing Owl that uses a winter burrow on the edge of one of the access roads.

Davis Wetlands and Small Pond on County Road 103 (12/4)

— Leader Sami LaRocca reported it was a sunny day but cool at the start. "Tundra Swans greeted us on arrival at the parking lot, sticking out their long necks and sparkling in the sun," she said. "White-fronted Geese so close overhead we could see their speckled bellies; Snow Geese in both 'birds of a feather' flocks and mixed in with White-fronted; Sandhill Cranes flying nearby just across the levee on Conway Ranch; hundreds of American Pipits all morning—more numerous than observers had ever seen. Total species: 45.

Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River (12/4)

— White-throated Swift, Osprey, Glaucous-winged Gull, Barrow's Goldeneye and Green Heron were the better birds, leader Jack Hiehle said.

Caswell Memorial State Park (12-3)

Leader Gary Fregien reported: "Twelve hardy birders braved a clear and crisp early December morning for a trip that could be characterized as much by what wasn't seen as by what was, although there was a strong group consensus that what we did see was 'way better.' Trip highlights were both Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers in the same tree, Varied Thrush, Townsend's Warbler, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, a surprise male Western Tanager calling and seen, and a stationary Merlin."

Effie Yeaw Nature Center (11/30)

Leader Jack Hiehle reported that Phainopepla, Osprey, American Kestrel, and Downy Woodpecker were highlights.

Effie Yeaw Nature Center (11/26)

"A pleasant morning birding the Effie Yeaw Nature Center turned up a calling Varied Thrush and a Hermit Thrush giving its towhee-like call," leader Cathie LaZier reported. "There were good looks at Downy Woodpeckers and a distant view of an Osprey. A Merlin gave us a brief look as it shot past. There were, surprisingly, no Yellow-rumped Warblers."

Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River (11/25)

— Eight birders joined Frank Gray on a morning walk, viewing four species of gull, a Spotted Sandpiper, several Common Mergansers, large flocks of Common Goldeneye, an Osprey, Anna's Hummingbird, and other species. Weather was excellent and the trip provided a great opportunity to explore the finer points of gull ID, Frank said.

Discovery Park (11/19)

— "Three of us traipsed about in the heavy fog but still had good birds," leader Maureen Geiger reported. "We had two trip birds: a Brown Creeper and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. The gnatcatcher was seen well and heard. Also: at least 40 Goldeneyes (couldn't

check them all, but what we saw were Common). Sparrows were out including crowned, Lincoln's and Song, and there were lots of magpies. So even though we weren't enjoying the Central Valley Birding Symposium in Stockton, we had a nice bird outing."

Old Fair Oaks Bridge (11/17)

— Best birds were Osprey, Bufflehead and Cooper's Hawk, leader Jack Hiehle reported.

Lake Solano/Putah Creek (11/14)

Leader Sami LaRocca reported: After an overnight rain the day was sunny and clear. Sightings included: Wood Duck pairs trying to get around without being seen too frequently, Common Goldeneyes, both male and females; Buffleheads were like a miniature regatta sailing on the lake; Hooded Merganser; Osprey, aerial display included one with a fish, possibly feeding an adult-sized young; Belted Kingfisher seen often flying up and down the lake; Brown Creeper in tree adjacent to picnic parking lot; American Dipper under bridge just below Monticello Dam; Bald Eagle trio were jetting south over the top of the Blue Ridge. Total species: 60.

Bodega Bay (11/4)

— "The weather turned out great considering the rain we had off and on for several days before the trip, with comfortable temperatures, sunny to partly cloudy skies and just a light breeze," leader Scott Hoppe reported. "I tallied 73 species of birds including 16 species of shorebirds. Among them were several Snowy Plovers picked out at some distance on the mud flats in the harbor at low tide. They were in the company of many Semipalmated Plovers. Also of interest were both species of turnstone and a small flock of Surfbirds."

"A few of us were lucky in finding an adult male White-winged Scoter. We observed him swallowing a large clam whole (we wondered how he would digest it). Also of note were two Peregrine Falcons that flew over, with one landing in a nearby tree for all to get good looks in the scope."

Pete Hayes

THE RESULTS FROM THE 22ND ANNUAL ARHNA AMERICAN RIVER COUNT (12/2)

Jack Hiehle, longtime coordinator of the American River Natural History Association's annual Wildlife Count, covering the parkway and river from Nimbus Dam to the mouth at Discovery Park, reported that 106 bird species (about average) were recorded on this, the 22nd annual count. Three

new bird species were found—Swainson's Hawk, Northern Pygmy Owl and Tri-colored Blackbird. Fifty three observers, most of them Sacramento Auduboners and some in three canoes, saw 59 turkeys, including 57 toms. (Jack can't say why so few females) Animal species: 65 deer (includ-

ing "Tripod," the 3-legged deer seen on last year's count), 38 ground squirrels, 84 gray squirrels, 149 fox squirrels, 6 cottontails, 5 river otters, 17 black-tailed hares (jack-rabbits), 15 house cats, one pond turtle, 6 red-eared sliders (turtles) and 10 tree frogs. Unusual: no beaver, muskrat or coyotes.

Field Trips

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, spskua1@comcast.net, for trips through February 4th. For trips from February 5th on, call the scheduler Richard Barbieri, 966-4603, offleash56@yahoo.com.

Consider car pooling and share gas expenses with the driver. FRS radios can be helpful on all trips. Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.



Stephen D'Amato

Monday, January 1, 7:30 am **Bobelaine Sanctuary Walk** **Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146**

Join Brian for a New Year's Day stroll through the riparian woods. There are many birds and mammals, and Brian knows just where to find them. To reach Bobelaine, take I-5 north to Hwy 99 towards Yuba City. Two miles after it crosses the Feather River, turn right on Laurel Avenue; follow Laurel to the end and meet in the parking lot. This trip will last until late morning.

Tuesday, January 2 **Rio Cosumnes Christmas Count** **Compiler: Andrew Engllis** **(530) 752-0364** **aengllisjr@ucdavis.edu**

Tuesday, January 2, 8am-Noon **Goethe Park** **Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack for a morning walk through this beautiful park along the American River. Jack will meet at the end of Arden Way on the north side of the River and walk across the bridge into Goethe Park. This trip is great for beginners and more experienced birders alike.

Saturday, January 6, 7am sharp **Post-Christmas Count** **Coastal Birding Trip** **Leaders: Mark Cudney, 987-2422** **mcudney@aol.com** **Co-leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207** **spskua1@comcast.net**

This trip could be to Pt. Reyes, Bodega Bay or both. Mark and Tim will be looking for the rare and vagrant birds seen on various coastal Christmas Counts. Be ready for a faster paced trip for the more experienced

birder. Call or email for a time and meeting place, for the counts will determine where the trip will begin. Bring lunch, liquids and warm clothes and be prepared for a full day.

Sunday, January 7, 7:30am-Noon **Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills** **Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804** **mkgeiger@comcast.net** **(if email problems, please call)**

Join Maureen for a leisurely walk through this riparian habitat and look for resident birds such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds and marsh birds, as well as winter warblers and sparrows. River otters are a possibility. Meet for coffee at 7:30am at the Bella Bru restaurant in the Raley's shopping center on El Dorado Hills Boulevard just off Hwy 50; the group will leave for birding at 8am sharp.

Saturday, January 13, 8am **Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge** **Leader: Lisa Moraga, 455-4786** **lmoraga03@yahoo.com**

Sacramento Refuge is home to thousands of wintering ducks and geese which attract Peregrine Falcons. There is a 3.7 mile driving route with a high viewing platform that offers great looks at the many species of waterfowl. On our return, we will take County Road 16 through open raptor country, which can be spectacular. We hope to see the Hungarian Kumar sheep guard dogs on our way to Zamora. This trip will last into mid-afternoon, so bring lunch, liquids and a warm jacket. We will meet at the Jack in the Box parking lot at the Road 102 exit just off I-5 North, as you approach Woodland.

Sunday, January 14, 8am **Staten Island/Woodbridge Eisenberg** **Crane Preserve** **Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603** **offleash56@yahoo.com**

Join Richard in viewing thousands of ducks, geese, swans and raptors in this beautiful delta area south of Sacramento. Next, Richard will look for interesting gulls and shorebirds at the Lodi White Slough Water Treatment Plant. Lastly, he will drive to the Crane Preserve to see ducks, geese and Sandhill Cranes. This trip will last into mid-afternoon, so bring lunch, liquids and be prepared for variable weather. Meet Richard at the Sheldon Road Park and Ride on the southeast corner of Hwy 99 and Sheldon Road.

Monday, January 15, 7am **Pt. Reyes Mammal Trip** **Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Gray Whales, Elephant Seals, Tule Elk and Axis Deer will be the focus of Jack's trip. He will, of course, not ignore birds, but they will be a sidelight of the trip. Bring lunch, liquids and warm clothes as the trip will last into the afternoon. Meet Jack on the north side of Fulton Avenue just before it intersects with Fair Oaks Boulevard.

Saturday, January 20, 8am **Gray Lodge Wildlife Area** **Leaders: John York, 371-2239** **Doug O'Bannion, 681-0257**

John and Doug are enthusiastic, excellent birders who know the area like the backs of their hands. They will take you to Gray Lodge, one of the state's prime wintering areas for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, they will take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes. This area

is great for raptors and grasslands birds including a particular focus on wintering sparrows. Bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. Meet at the Park and Ride at Hwy. 99 and Elkhorn Boulevard.

**Saturday, January 20, 2pm till dark
Sandhill Cranes and other wintering
birds of the Central Valley
A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes"
sponsored trip**

**Leader: Jessica Stocking
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392**

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

**Sunday, January 21, 8am
Salt Springs Valley
Leaders:**

**Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua1@comcast.net
Sheila Deaner, 607-5447
deaner@csus.edu**

This area is located in western Calaveras County about a 1-1/2 hour drive from Sacramento. The open valley and its lake are home to many wintering ducks, hawks, eagles, owls and grassland birds. This is a unique area you will not want to miss. The trip will last into the afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. We will meet at the Park and Ride on the east side of Hwy. 99 at the Sheldon Road exit. Call for an alternative meeting place. Bring scopes and FRS radios.

**Saturday, January 27, 8am
Robinson Road, Road 113, and
Birds Landing**

**Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua1@comcast.net
Sheila Deaner, 607-5447
deaner@csus.edu**

Join Tim and Sheila for a trip to this wintering area of many raptors. Last year finds were Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks,

Golden Eagle, Prairie Falcon, Merlin and Mountain Plovers. Recently this area has been home to a visiting Northern Shrike. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothes and meet at the park and ride at the end of West Capitol Avenue to carpool.

**Sunday, January 28, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Mark Martucci, 722-6098
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley are the focus of this trip. Various hawks, falcons, and occasionally an eagle are also seen on the refuge. There is a 3.7 mile driving loop, and a great viewing platform as well. The trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids, and layered clothes. FRS radios will be helpful on this trip. Take 1-5 north toward Woodland; exit at Road 102 and turn right into the Jack in the Box parking lot to meet Mark.



Stephen D'Amato

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meet at the Visitor Center on Franklin Blvd. for this monthly birding census trip. It's a great birding area, always full of surprises, and joining the group trip is a good way to find out what's happening at

the preserve. You must check the recorded information a day or two before to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details.

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

Join Richard on this trip to a wonderful area just minutes from downtown Sacramento.

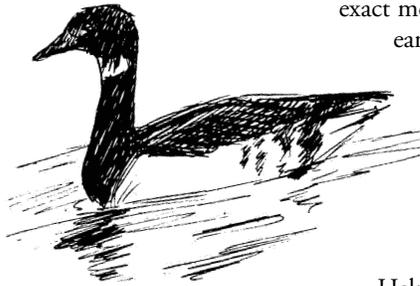
This marshland offers a variety of birds, from sparrows and raptors to many ducks and several species of shorebirds. Given enough time,

Richard may drive over to the Davis Waste Water Treatment Plant for a view of what may be there.

From Sacramento take I-80 across the Yolo Causeway and turn right onto the frontage road just past the causeway. Turn right at the stop sign and circle under the freeway; then make a left up onto the levee and meet Richard at the first parking lot inside the wildlife area. Bring a lunch, water, and FRS radios if you have them.

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

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



Kirsten Munson

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

The Tall Forest is perhaps the best remaining example of riparian forest remaining in the Central Valley and is not generally open to the public. In this jungle-like habitat, excellent rarities and large numbers of migrants have been found, as well as the resident birds. Check the recorded information a couple of days before the trip for the exact meeting time and place. Arrive a little early, as this trip leaves the meeting place promptly.

**Sunday, February 18
Habitat Improvement
Work Day**

**Leader:
Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Help Jack restore native vegetation along the American River Parkway. Tasks vary from month to month so call Jack for details and meeting time, usually early morning.

**Saturday, February 24
Trip to North Bay Area,
Corte Madera Marsh
Meet at 9am in Bay Area
Leader: Ron Storey, (707) 762-5276
Ronstorey@ronstorey.com**

Meet Ron at the Park and Ride at Hwy 101 and Lucas Valley Road at 9am; (take Smith Ranch/Lucas Valley Rd. exit, which is 4.5 miles south of the junction of Highways 37 and 101 in Petaluma – go east and the Park and Ride is on your right immediately after you leave the freeway.)

We will begin the day by driving to the Corte Madera Marsh where we will look for Clapper Rail. Corte Madera is one of the most reliable places in the North Bay to observe Clapper Rail, and anyone who comes there this time of year is seldom disappointed. Ron may then take the group to Las Gallinas, where he's found Tufted Duck and Palm Warbler in the past, but trip destination will depend on current reported rarities. This is an all day trip, so bring a lunch, and wear shoes that you are not concerned about getting a little muddy. (Ron will not lead us through any real muddy areas, but the foliage is wet and ground may be a little muddy.) This trip is quite suitable for

beginner birders who want to venture out of the areas they are familiar with and view birds either hard to find or not normally found in the Sacramento area.

Please note: Rain will cancel this trip, so if rain is predicted, please contact Ron by email or telephone for confirmation.

**Tuesday, February 27, 8am till noon
Parkway Walk/Estates Drive
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

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

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

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



Stephen D'Amato

Upcoming Festivals

11TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL IN MORRO BAY

Coming up soon, this Winter Bird Festival held along the Morro Bay coast takes place from January 12-15. All-day and half-day tours will take participants to a wide variety of habitats, including deep water pelagic, oak woodland and riparian, wetland and estuary, and the unique grassland habitat of the Carrizo Plain. Workshops will cover a vast array of topics ranging from beginner birding classes to gull identification. Outstanding evening speakers will make presentations on Saturday and Sunday. A variety of vendors will be present with nature related artwork, books, field equipment and attire, and local merchant wares.

Morro Bay California is one of the few remaining estuaries on the Pacific flyway. Christmas Bird Counts on the bay have numbered above the 200 species mark, and the festival bird lists have totaled over 220 species for the weekend, making this area on the central California coast a prime birding destination.

Further information and registration can be found at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org

11TH ANNUAL SAN DIEGO BIRD FESTIVAL

The San Diego Bird Festival will be held February 7 through 12, at the Marina Village Conference Center in Mission Bay, sponsored by the San Diego Audubon Society. They have planned dozens of events including field trips, classes, workshops and vendor product displays. The banquet keynote speaker will be Kevin Karlson, photographer and author of many books and articles and an active member of New Jersey Audubon. Kevin was also a speaker at the Central Valley Birding Symposium in Stockton in case you missed him there. Field trips include coastal, pelagic, desert and Ensinada/Baja areas. Other highlights are kayaking trips, and bird calls, digiscoping and butterfly workshops.

Further information and registration can be found at www.sandiegoaudubon.org/birdfest.htm

SALTON SEA INTERNATIONAL BIRD FESTIVAL

The dates for this festival are February 16-19. The Sunday evening keynote speaker will be Gary Kramer, an award-winning writer/photographer based in Willows, California. His photographs and articles are regularly published in magazines including Ducks Unlimited, Wild Bird, Living Bird and Birder's World. During his 26-year career with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Gary was a biologist and refuge manager at several NWR's including refuge manager of the Salton Sea (1984-89) and Sacramento (1990-99) National Wildlife Refuge Complexes. He retired in 1999 to pursue wildlife photography and writing full time. Gary's presentation, "Barrow to Baja, Wetland Birds of the Pacific Flyway" is a photographic journey from the tundra to the tropics following waterfowl and other wetland birds as they travel along the Pacific Flyway.

Further information and registration can be found at www.newriverwetlands.com/saltonsea.html

12th ANNUAL GODWIT DAYS IN ARCATA

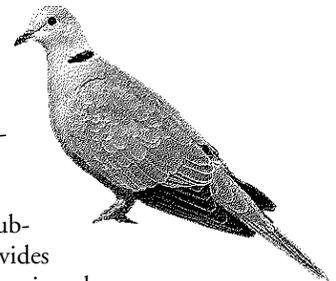
Extraordinary birding opportunities await you at the 12th annual Godwit Days spring migration bird festival. Mark your calendar now for April 20-22. California's North Coast offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats of Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where 271 species of birds have been sighted. Further information will soon be available at www.godwitdays.com.

SAS KIDS EDUCATION EVENT IN FEBRUARY PROMOTING THE GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT

This February, the Sacramento Audubon Society plans to involve as many kids as we can in the GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT! In January and February, we will be working with after-school organizations, giving brief talks to kids about the GBBC and citizen-science, as well as showing kids pictures of common birds (a script and pictures will be provided). We will need people to give the talks and/or help us distribute the poster brochures. It's not too late to get involved so if you know of after school organizations or teachers that might be interested in participating, or you would like to help in any way, please contact Julie Serences at 944-1505 or better yet e-mail: jpseren@pacbell.net

From February 16-19, people of all ages, from beginners to experts, are invited to join this event which spans all of the United States and Canada. Participants can take part wherever they are—at home, in schoolyards, at local parks or wildlife refuges. Observers simply count the highest number of each species they see during an outing or a sitting, and enter their tally on the Great Backyard Bird Count web site at www.birdsource.org/gbbc.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the GBBC, and Audubon and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology are challenging people everywhere to "Count for the Record," by participating in greater numbers than ever before. Greater participation, with more checklists submitted, provides more information about bird population trends – and helps to better inform conservation efforts.



Last year, participants submitted more than 60,000 checklists – and reported 7.5 million birds overall and 623 different species. The count helped chronicle the early spring migratory routes of Sandhill Cranes, documented lingering migrants such as Orange-crowned Warblers and Tree Swallows, revealed the ongoing range expansion of introduced Eurasian Collared-Doves, and recorded declining numbers of American Crows.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to all
of these new members:

Dianne & Ron Kurtz
Helen Lazorisak
Mary Morris

SOME UPCOMING PROGRAMS You Won't Want To Miss

February: Jack Laws
Topic TBA

March: Allen Fish
Identifying Perched Raptors

April: Orien
Rail Program

May Ed Harper
Topic TBA

SAS BOARD DONATIONS

The Sacramento Audubon Board has voted to donate \$1,000 to the Point Reyes Bird Observatory to further their research work.

PRBO Conservation Science is dedicated to conserving birds, other wildlife, and their ecosystems through innovative scientific research and outreach. For more information about their many projects and benefits go to www.prbo.org.

Entertainment Books

As a prize for our first raffle at the general meeting this month we will give away an entertainment book. Be sure to be there and be sure to get a ticket on your way in the door.

And if you don't win be sure and purchase a book at the meeting as they won't be available much longer. The books offer money saving coupons for many area restaurants and reduced price coupons for area activities. They can also be purchased at Wild Birds Unlimited, 2561 Fair Oaks Blvd. in Loehmann's Plaza next to Noah's Bagels (971-0719) or Wild Birds and Gardens, at 5339 Sunrise Blvd. (Sunrise and Madison), phone 966-5958. For further information you can call Tim Fitzer at 870-5207 (cell). All proceeds go to the Sacramento Audubon Society.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Donation for maintenance Bobelaine Sanctuary \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

(Adopted by the Board 8/29/06)

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

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



Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be January 30, 2007 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

Seasonal Observations

November 1 to November 30
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

Despite some nice finds, November was bound to be a bit of a letdown after last month's **Taiga Flycatcher** and **American Tree Sparrows**. This November was notable for a number of lingering songbird migrants as well as widespread reports of **Golden-crowned Kinglets** and **Varied Thrushes**. **Rough-legged Hawks**, which had been nearly absent last winter, were well represented. It was, however, the shorebirds that stole the show.

An **American Golden-Plover** was found on 11/6 at the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. It continued for nearly two weeks, and was last found on a Central Valley Birding Symposium tour at nearby Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge on 11/17. Unlike the **Pacific Golden-Plover**, this species is not known to winter in the state, and this individual was unusually late and long-staying. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** was reported at the Davis Wetlands on 11/5. **Mountain Plovers** were reported from their usual haunts south of Dixon, and a small flock was found near Hwy 113 and Rd 16 in Yolo County. On 11/8, a **Ruff** was found at the Yolo Wildlife Area and continued through at least 11/21; in fact, two were present on 11/16, along with a **Pectoral Sandpiper**. A **Marbled Godwit** was seen at Stone Lakes on 11/17.

On 11/30, a first-year **Northern Shrike** was found along the entrance road to Jepson Prairie and it continues through press time. Other highlights were late migrant songbirds, including a **Cassin's Vireo** at Slide Hill Park in Davis on 11/3 and a **Wilson's Warbler**

Sacramento Audubon Society
PO Box 160694
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at Ambassador Park along the American River Parkway on 11/10. Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) produced near daily reports of **Townsend's** and **Black-throated Gray Warblers**, plus a more remarkable late **Hermit Warbler** on 11/4. A **Cassin's Vireo** was found on 11/23 and a particularly good outing at CRP on 11/24 produced a **Yellow**

Warbler, three **Western Tanagers**, a **White-throated Sparrow**, and, best of all, a **Swamp Sparrow**.

Other interesting reports include a **Long-eared Owl** at the Yolo Wildlife Area headquarters on 11/3, an adult **Bald Eagle** at Lower Sunrise on 11/10, and a single **Evening Grosbeak** flying over Slide Hill Park on 11/15. A **Rock Wren** was out of place near the Farm Center at CRP on 11/16-17, and a **Red Fox Sparrow** was found at CRP on 11/28. An adult **Glaucous-winged Gull** at CRP on 11/23 was unusual for Sacramento County away from the upper American River Parkway and Folsom Lake. A female **Barrow's Goldeneye** reported on 11/26 was also unusual for CRP. A probable first-year **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was reported at Davis WTP on 11/27. A gorgeous **European Goldfinch** was found at the Sacramento Regional WTP Bufferlands on 11/8, and three **Nutmeg Mannikins** were found there on 11/1; both of these species are surely escaped captives.

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

Chris Conard

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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

Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Membership/Subscriptions: Lea Landry, 11054 Autumnwind Lane
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
(916) 638-1141, e-mail preferred: llandry@softcom.net

Seasonal Observations: Chris Conard, 2405 Rio Bravo Circle,
Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 362-5942,
e-mail preferred, NOTE new address: conardc@gmail.com

Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail: sawelma@cwnet.com

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