



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, January 16, 2014

Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Migration Patterns of Northern Saw-whet
Owls near Forest Ranch, CA

Dawn Garcia

The elusive saw-whet migrates into the Sierra Nevada foothills predictably every autumn. Dawn shares 8 years of migration data from one of the few northern saw-whet owl banding stations in western North America. The banding effort, located at the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve, east of Chico, CA, gives a glimpse into saw-whet migration annual demographics. The study revealed a few surprises, but leaves a lot of questions unanswered. In this gathering of scientists and bird enthusiasts Dawn encourages discussion about research possibilities that will enlighten the ecology of the secretive saw-whet in the Sierra Nevada.

Dawn Garcia is an avid birder, with an ear for birdsong and a passion for identifying seasonal changes as indicated by the presence/absence of birds. She has conducted monitoring and research-oriented field work with birds and other taxa since 1993 with her first bird banding position in Kansas. Dawn educates and shares her enthusiasm with communities to encourage individuals to cherish and conserve birds and wildlife.

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://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

Sally Walters, Program Chair

DON'T FORGET THE 3RD ANNUAL SAS KIDS AND YOUNG ADULTS CBC!

Saturday, January 11 is just a few days away and it's the date for the Third Annual Sacramento Area Kids/Young Adults' Christmas Bird Count. A great event for an exciting opportunity to get kids and young adults outside looking at birds and nature! Join the Sacramento Audubon Society's Third Annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count. Families can join citizen scientists all over the world and practice finding, identifying and counting all the birds they see followed by a companionable lunch with other birder families. **Mark your calendars for the morning of January 11, 2014** at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Reservations are required, so contact Maureen Geiger at mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net or 444-0804 to register and for more information.

THE 17TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT! FEBRUARY 14-17, 2014

The Great Backyard Bird Count is coming up next month from February 14-17. It's one of the best opportunities for citizen science to contribute to our knowledge of bird species' survival and population. Plus, it's a great opportunity for some healthy city, county, and state competition in compiling those checklists. For all the information you need go to www.birdsource.org/gbbc/whycount.html

Scientists and bird enthusiasts can learn a lot by knowing where the birds are. Bird populations are dynamic; they are constantly in flux. No single scientist or team of scientists could hope to document and understand the complex distribution and movements of so many species in such a short time. Your participation can really improve the quality of their results.

The GBBC website is quite interactive and found at www.birdsource.org/gbbc/. There's a photo contest every year too. Let's get everyone out counting this year and add to Sacramento's birdy reputation! Also, at ebird.org are some tips for posting your CBC counts as well as those from the GBBC and Birdlogs for mobile devices.

2014 SAS CALENDARS STILL AVAILABLE

Our 2014 calendar is still available online, at general meetings and at some local book and birdfeed stores. You'll be so impressed with the wonderful photos of local birds taken by SAS photographers and you can support our conservation and educational programs at the same time!



Nuttall's Woodpecker
Bird for May, Lon Yarbrough

Field Trip Findings

Yolo Wildlife Area (12/15) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “This was a wonderful trip for 8 of us on a crisp, clear, no-wind day at Yolo. We saw all the usual suspects but the real show was a series of murmurations that were just too incredible to describe. It was huge flocks of birds, definitely starlings, but I thought they were also other blackbirds. They are one of the most amazing phenomena I have ever seen: tens of thousands of birds swirling around in the air making incredible patterns. We also enjoyed lots of lovely ducks; almost no shorebirds (not good habitat); and a surprising number of raptors such as Kites, Red-tails, harriers, Red-shoulders and a Kestrel. Throughout the morning, large flocks of swans, Greater White-fronted geese and Snow Geese were seen above. One curlew was also heard flying over. But the best of show was a peregrine sitting on a tiny island very close to the auto loop heading north, willing to just sit there while we watched him until we had to leave.”

Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River (12/8) — Leader Ed Harper reported: “Even with a leisurely 9:30am start and the sun brightly shining, it was a chilly beginning to our day. Ice-sheathed puddles and frost-coated grasses greeted 24 eager birders. Despite the chill, we were not disappointed with the birds. A good salmon run equated to a great gathering of gulls, yielding six species to study at length. We had good views of Thayer’s and Glaucous-winged Gulls along with throngs of Herring, California, and Ring-billed Gulls of different age classes. A single Mew Gull gave us a good study as the trip was concluding. The continuing adult Peregrine Falcon made its appearance, first with an overhead flight and later when perched on a snag downriver. A half-dozen Tree Swallows coping with the cold, flew low over the American River, foraging for insects as we watched in awe. Many other species of birds were noted on the trip with Barrow’s Goldeneye and Phainopepla being welcome additions to the list.”

Beginning Birding Field Trip, William Pond Park (12/8) — Canceled because California International Marathon blocked access to William Pond Park.

Lincoln Grasslands (Trip 1) (12/1) — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “Our trip started with a real treat at our first

stop at the Starbucks in Lincoln. We were treated to meeting a local Falconer who introduced us to his Finnish hybrid Goshawk. Spectacular! Our highlights for the day included great looks at a Cooper’s and Red-shouldered hawks, Anna’s Hummingbird, and Lewis’s woodpeckers. We also saw Phainopepla, Say’s Phoebe, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Hooded Merganser, Long-billed Curlew, and Bald Eagle. We also heard a Virginia Rail and a Sora. Total day’s count was 77 species.”

Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (11/24) — Leader Andi Salmi reported: “Our group of 10 enjoyed a beautiful day at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, viewing about 50 species of birds. Many duck species were seen, including Gadwall, American Wigeon, Cinnamon and Green-winged teals, Northern Pintail, Ring-necked Duck and more. Ross’s, Snow and Greater White-fronted geese were plentiful. We enjoyed viewing 2 Bald Eagles, one feasting on waterfowl. Other raptors seen were Northern Harrier, Cooper’s, Red-shouldered and Red-tailed hawks and American Kestrel.”

Sandhill Cranes and other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley (11/23,24,30) — Coordinator Mike Savino of Save Our Sandhill Cranes reported: “The three crane tours/birding trips we did in November (28, 29 and 30) had much in common. Each was notable for the large number of visitors—more than 50 people on each tour. At Staten Island we observed two separate groups of cranes and a group of tundra swans. We were not disappointed with our field viewing and had to push on to be in position by the old water tower for the fly-in. Many visitors took great pleasure in a Great Horned Owl’s “hoo” serenading us from the tower as several hundred cranes came to roost in the shallow water west of the water tower. At Cosumnes River Preserve we walked the Wetlands Walk trail ending at sunset at the observation platform across Franklin Blvd from the Visitor Center. On all three evenings the sunset fly-in was good but not especially large. The numbers of cranes decreased each successive evening so that the Nov.30 fly-in was down to under 100. On the 28th there were some cranes so close by that we had a really good look with the scope. This view made the trip for some of our visitors. On the 29th and

30th we got a good look at cranes half way on our hike, by the railroad tracks.

General birding was sparse, with a fair variety of ducks, but a lot of Greater White-fronted Geese. We stopped at Lost Slough to point out some of the waterfowl via viewing scopes. The group seemed most interested in viewing cranes, so we moved on to the platform at the south end, to view the fly-in. While we craniacs lust for a massive fly-in, our typical visitor is totally pleased if they get a good look at even one crane. It will be interesting to see if such large crowds persist. Perhaps, if we had enough volunteers, a Friday evening tour might be feasible to help serve this apparent increase in visitors viewing our Sandhill cranes.”

Granite Regional Park, Sacramento (11/23) (This is a new venue for SAS, off Power Inn Road at Cucamonga Road) — Leader Ben Graber reported: “The trip was awesome! About 4 people showed up and we saw 43 species of birds. The most exciting was a Red-breasted x Red-naped Sapsucker hybrid, which was seen well by the whole group. Other highlights included a Cattle Egret, a Marsh Wren, a Phainopepla, and 6 species of raptors.”

Sacramento Parks and Cemeteries (11/17) — Leader Cliff Hawley reported: “Our trip was great. We had 10 participants. We visited East Lawn Cemetery, Old City Cemetery and the WPA Rock Garden at William Land Park.

At East Lawn, we found amazing numbers of Golden-crowned Kinglets including a flock of about 20 birds. We also had great scope views of a Great Horned Owl that the mobbing crows found for us.

A work crew at Old City Cemetery was a little noisy but once we got away from them we found some good stuff in the great plantings around the older section. We had great looks of at least 2 Red-breasted Sapsuckers and 2 Slate-colored Fox Sparrows feeding with lots of other sparrows.

At the WPA Rock Garden at Land Park, we had a Hermit Thrush and a House Wren that responded well to pishing. This spot is best in migration but several of the participants had never been to any of these spots. It was a lot of fun showing people some new places to bird and seeing some spectacular birds with great views.

Findings continued on page 7

Field Trips



Peregrine Falcon
Daniel Kilby

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, contact the scheduler Maureen Geiger, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net, 444-0804 for trips through December 20. From December 21 through January 31 contact the scheduler Tim Fitzer, spskua2@comcast.net, 870-5207. From February 1 contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, offleash56@yahoo.com, 761-1124.

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.

Saturday, January 4, 8am

Western Amador Co.

Leader: Gary Fregien 708-0636
calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Join Gary on a road trip to the Sierra foothills in Amador County. The focus of the trip will be the rivers, ponds, reservoirs and back-country roads in western Amador County. Travel along these routes will include some stops and walking short distances. There are an interesting and surprising variety and number of passerines and raptors in this area. There is a possibility of Lewis's Woodpecker and Red-breasted Sapsucker, Western Bluebird, Hermit and Varied Thrush, American, Lesser and Lawrence's Goldfinch, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Hutton's Vireo and a variety of flycatchers, sparrows and raptors. This trip also includes stops for waterfowl and shorebirds at ponds near Sutter Creek and Ione. We may also stop at Lake Comanche (W Calaveras Co), where a day-use fee is charged. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along hand held radios, food and water. Meet Gary at the Chevron station in Rancho Murieta, at the junction of Hwy 16 (Jackson Rd) and Murieta Parkway.

Sunday, January 5, 8am

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: John York, 409-9276
sunofyork@att.net

John will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley. Peregrine Falcons and Bald Eagles are sometimes seen, as well as herons, egrets and bitterns. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks and warm clothes. Please note there is a fee for each vehicle

at the refuge: either \$6 for a day pass or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1.

Tuesday, January 7, 8:30am

Beal's Point, Folsom Lake

Leader: Margaret Martin, 599-0181
margaret.martin6@me.com

Join Margaret for a 1 to 2 mile morning walk at Beal's Point. A variety of oak woodland birds and wintering sparrows should be seen, and grebes, goldeneyes and mergansers will be on the lake. Phainopeplas, Rock Wrens, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows are possibilities. The trip will end by noon. Meet Margaret in the parking lot of the Beal's 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 Beal's 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.

Saturday, January 11

Kids' Christmas Bird Count

Contact: Maureen Geiger,
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Saturday, January 11, 8am

American River Parkway, **Spanos Ct. Access**

Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
rey_ality@hotmail.com

Join Dan for a leisurely walk on the north side of the river across from the Paradise Beach area. The area is fairly typical of most Parkway locations but does have an overabundance of grapes with slightly less blackberry and elderberry which helps in attracting possible overwintering fruit lovers such as Western Tanager. We may encounter common winter birds such as Fox and Lincoln sparrow, Hermit Thrush, Common Goldeneye, crowned sparrows and hopefully a Merlin as well as residents such as Bewick's Wren, Spotted Towhee and California Quail. There are elevated views of the river and well-worn trails. Trip will probably end around 11am. Meet Dan in the parking area at the end of the Spanos Court cul-de-sac along the levee. Spanos Court runs west off Howe Ave between Northrup and Sierra Blvd.

Sunday, January 12, 8am until about noon

Nimbus Fish Hatchery

Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Sharpen your gull 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. Scopes are helpful on this trip.

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

Monday, January 13, 8am

Colusa NWR

**Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1290
dtankers@winfirst.com**

The Colusa NWR is another great location in the Central Valley to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be many duck species and plenty of Snow, Ross's, Greater White-fronted and possibly a few Cackling Geese as well as other wetland birds. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well, and we can expect many raptors with the possibility of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We will spend a good amount of time on the main viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through riparian habitat next to the main viewing pond. We will then take the short auto tour and finish our outing with a return visit to the platform. 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 at 8am. From Sacramento, take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance a short distance beyond 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. Bring snacks and liquids as the trip will end in the very late morning to very early afternoon.

Saturday, January 18, 8am

Salt Springs Valley

Leader: Dan Williams

714-943-1266

jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

This area is located in western Calaveras County about an hour and a half drive from Sacramento. The open valley and its lake are home to many wintering ducks, hawks, eagles, owls and grassland birds. The trip will last into the late afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. Meet in the parking lot immediately west of the Union 76 gas station in the Wal-Mart shopping center located on the west side of Hwy 99 at the Elk Grove Blvd exit.

Saturday, January 18, 10:30am

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

This family friendly nature walk will be at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. 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, January 19, 8am

Road 113, Robinson Road and

Bird's Landing

Leaders: Paul Cordero and

Mark Martucci

Paul, pkcordero@gmail.com

Mark, 833-6722,

matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes, and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet Paul 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. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip.

Tuesday, January 21, 8:30am

Yolo Bypass 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 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.

Saturday, January 25, 7:30am sharp!

Flood and Waverly Roads

Leader: Jane Taylor, 444-0429

jg.taylor@att.net

The Flood/Waverly rolling grasslands in eastern San Joaquin County are excellent for wintering raptors. We'll be looking for eagles, Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, falcons and other open country birds. Meet at the Galt Park and Ride. From Sacramento, take Hwy 99 south to the Twin Cities Rd/Hwy 104 exit (#277); turn left (east) on Twin Cities Rd, cross the

freeway and turn right (south) on Stockton Blvd. The Park and Ride is just south of Twin Cities Rd. Bring snacks and liquids. FRS Radios and scopes are helpful if you have them.

Sunday, January 26, 8am

Western Placer County

Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471

shoppe01@surewest.net

Western Placer County can often rival the great Wildlife Refuges in numbers and diversity of waterfowl, and it is also known for large concentrations of raptors. Besides the expected species, Eurasian Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Lewis's Woodpecker and Lapland Longspur are all possible. Join Scott for a full day of exploring this diverse area and bring liquids, lunch and FRS radios. Meet at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 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, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Saturday, February 1, 7am

Yolo/Solano Big Day

Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471

shoppe01@surewest.net

Get set for a full day of birding "hot spots" of Yolo and Solano Counties to see how many species we can tally. Last year's trip totaled 107 species. We will begin at Lake Solano Park and Putah Creek for unique passerines and waterfowl, then head down Highway 113 to the Robinson Road area for raptors and possibly Mountain Plover. From there, we will proceed to the Yolo Bypass and the Davis Landfill and WWTP for more waterfowl, shorebirds and gulls. The itinerary can change depending on conditions and reports. For those interested, Scott would like to have a casual dinner nearby to tally up species and talk about what was seen. Scopes and FRS radios are helpful. Bring lunch, snacks, and dress for changeable weather. Meet Scott at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 7am. From Sacramento, take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right at the light, then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance, a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. Rain cancels.

Sunday, February 2, 7:30am

Lincoln Grasslands

Leaders: Tim Fitzer and Mark Martucci

Tim, 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net
Mark, 833-6722,
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

We will search the back roads of western Placer County for raptors, waterfowl, Tricolored 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. We'll also look for winter rarities that flock with Horned Larks and sparrows in the Brewer Road area. Lunch at the Chamberlain Cemetery will be followed by more birding along the rural roads on the way to Camp Far West Reservoir. Bring lunch, liquids and scopes and FRS radios if you have them, and be prepared for a full day of birding. Meet at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 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, and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Sunday, February 2
Beginning Birding Field Trip
William Pond Park

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 people per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

Monday, February 3, 12 noon
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1290
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. The outing will consist of time spent on the viewing platform, a drive around the tour route, and an easy walk along the riparian trail. 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 8, 8am
Yolo Bypass

Leaders: Dan and Pam Thompson
359-3777, keiran@surewest.net

Join Dan and Pam for a morning of birding this wetland area just minutes from Sacramento. Dan and Pam are gearing this trip for beginners, although birders of any ability are welcome. Some of the birds you may expect are waterfowl, raptors, sparrows, Horned Larks and pipits. FRS radios and spotting scopes are helpful if you have them. Meet Dan and Pam in the first parking lot (Lot A) on your left at the beginning of the auto tour. To get to the area 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.

Sunday, February 9, 8am
William Pond Park
Leader: Craig DeMartini, 418-4263
cloudwalk7@aol.com

Meet Craig along the first parking area just past the entrance kiosk, for this morning walk looking for returning migrants and resident birds. Along the river mergansers and goldeneye can be found in the backwaters and wrens and towhees call from the bushes. California Quail, Western Bluebirds and Lark Sparrows may be found in the park area. 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

Tuesday, February 11, 8:30am
Yolo Bypass 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 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 14 through 17
Great Backyard Bird Count
www.birdsource.org/gbbc

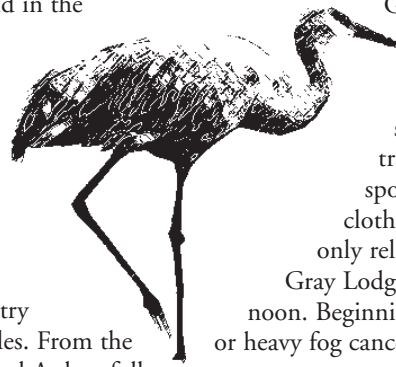
Count birds for 15 minutes or more in your backyard or other favorite birding locale; then post your results online and see what's happening in your area and across the country. It's fun for all ages and skill levels. Check the website for more information.

Saturday, February 15, 8am
Sutter Buttes and Gray Lodge WLR
Leaders: Don Schmoltdt and
Sally Walters
739-6465, cell 710-1077
bajaowl@gmail.com

We will drive around the edge of Sutter Buttes, along Pass Road, and West and North Buttes Roads; then to Gray Lodge State WLR. We will focus on wintering raptors in the Sutter Buttes area (hopefully Mountain Bluebird and Rock Wren, among other species); and wintering waterfowl at Gray Lodge (and hopefully Bald Eagle). We will have lunch at Gray Lodge and then walk some of the visitor access trails. Bring lunch, water, spotting scope, and warm clothes. Please note that the only reliable restrooms will be at Gray Lodge. Trip will end late afternoon. Beginning birders welcome! Rain or heavy fog cancels.

Meet at 8am at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride for voluntary car-pooling. From Sacramento drive west towards Davis on I-80, then right (north) onto Mace Blvd; then right again at first signal light, to the Park and Ride, a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. Meet on the south side of lot, in the row nearest the large round tanks. From the Park and Ride we will drive north on Hwy 113 past Woodland and

Field Trips continued: on page 6



BIRDS OF WINTER IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

Field Trips continued from page 5

Knight's Landing; and then left (north) onto George Washington Blvd and continue about 10 miles to Hwy 20. Then left (west) on Hwy 20 about 3 miles to Acacia Road, then right (north) on Acacia. There is a small store/gas station at the corner of Acacia and Hwy 20, where we will regroup before starting the trip around the Buttes. There is a Port-a-potty here, but not always clean, so beware. DFG (now CA Department of Fish and Wildlife) requires a Land Pass for Gray Lodge (\$4.32/person). It may or may not be available at Gray Lodge. Land Passes should also be available at Walmart or CVS stores. Check DFG's web site at www.dfg.ca.gov/licensing/land-pass for Land Pass information.

Saturday, February 15, 10:30am Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

Counting birds for the Great Backyard Bird Count will be easy in this area. Join Maureen Geiger of Sac Audubon and a Nature Center docent for a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. 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.

Again in 2014, **Ed Harper**, long time educator, tour guide, and noted birder of the Sacramento area, will help you learn the finer points of identification, natural history, and calls of the many species of birds resident in winter throughout the Sacramento region. By way of a series of lectures with beautiful photography and field trips, both beginning and experienced birders can improve their knowledge and skills.

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

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

Lectures

Time: Wednesdays, 7-8:30pm

Dates: January 22, February 5, and February 26

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

Fee: \$100 for all lectures and field trips. \$10 discount for ARNHA members. Pre-registration is required.

Field Trips

Saturday January 25, 8am-noon, Ancil Hoffman Park, Carmichael

Saturday February 8, 8am-1:30pm, Linden Raptor Route in San Joaquin County

Saturday March 1, 8am-noon, Yolo Basin Wetlands off I-80, Yolo Bypass

Call Effie Yeaw Nature Center at 489-4918 to register or register online at www.sacnaturecenter.net/edharper.html

More information can be found at www.sacnaturecenter.net

Effie Yeaw Nature Center, California Avenue and Tarshes Drive, Carmichael, CA 95608

JULIE SERENCES-A REMARKABLE VOLUNTEER

From the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

As Thanksgiving approaches, many of us spend time reflecting on the things we are thankful for. We at Xerces are no different. We are especially grateful for the individuals who collaborate in our work. In particular, we would like to focus our thanks on one remarkable volunteer.

Julie Serences describes her introduction to the world of native bees as "humbling." A naturalist from Sacramento, California, and a very active member of the Sacramento Audubon Society, Julie had worked on her own backyard habitat restoration project for years. During this time, she came to realize how insects were critical to the health of her garden. Soon after, she met a native bee expert at a local California Native Plant Society event. His collection of over 80 different native bees from the Sacramento area astounded her. In all the time she'd spent studying the wildlife around her, how had she missed the incredibly diverse and intriguing world of native bees?

As Julie's interest in native pollinators grew, she worked with Sacramento Audubon to set up a workshop on native bee conservation in spring 2009, featuring speakers from the Xerces Society and local experts. From then on, Julie was hooked—and she wanted to do more! At ease in front of crowds and with a talent for engaging people of all ages, no surprise for a retired school teacher, Julie's connections with garden clubs and schools allowed her to

reach these underserved audiences, educating them and encouraging backyard and schoolyard habitats. It wasn't long before Xerces (always overwhelmed with requests to speak at outreach events) asked Julie if she might be willing to take on some of these talks. Thus was born "Julie Serences, Xerces Partner in Conservation."

Since 2010, Julie has given 35 'Bring Back the Pollinators' talks to over 5,600 people at schools, garden clubs, and even pesticide applicator trainings, sharing Xerces' pollinator conservation message including the four important steps people can take to help pollinators: plant bee gardens, provide nesting areas, avoid pesticide use, and spread the word. She has reached many more people by passing out Xerces' informative, free publications, and through the sale of books, signs, and other Xerces merchandise. Most importantly, through her knowledge, dedication, and enthusiasm, Julie has inspired countless people into action, creating lasting change. Thank you, Julie! And thanks to all of you for your efforts to bring back the pollinators.

**Editor's note: For more information on this subject so important to birds and humans alike see:

The Xerces Society website at Xerces.org

and the California Native Plant Society website at CNPS.org

As Julie says "Bees are not optional."

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2014

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sundays, January 12, February 2, February 23, March 30

Time: 8am

Each Trip: Limited to 10 participants

Registration required.

These outings are geared toward people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders.

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, email address and the field trip date of your choice, or by calling Cathie at (916) 457-6882 and leaving your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

During the waterfowl season the Cosumnes River Preserve hosts a wide variety of birds, including some of the most colorful ducks such as Cinnamon Teal, Green-winged Teal, and Bufflehead, as well as geese, swans, herons and egrets, and Sandhill Cranes. On various dates docents from the preserve will have a row of scopes set up near the boardwalk, some set lower to accommodate children, and they'll focus on giving you good views of these birds. In addition there are often hawks overhead, and some of the more interesting shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts and Common Snipe are often seen. On one recent day there was a Bald Eagle, on another a Sora. A table display features "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. A microscope and hand lens provide close-up looks.

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.

The time is 11am to 2pm, and it's a great day trip for families. Scheduled dates are:

Wednesday, January 1	Saturday, February 1
Sunday, January 5	Sunday, February 9
Saturday, January 11	Saturday, February 15
Sunday, January 19	Sunday, February 23
Saturday, January 25	Saturday, March 1

29TH ANNUAL ARNHA COUNT RESULTS

ARNHA Wildlife Count, December 7, 2013

Coordinator Bill Avery reported: "I am happy to report that the annual wildlife count on the American River Parkway was a great success. With rain and temperatures below freezing the night before, most of us began our counts with temperatures in the low 30s, breezy, but skies clearing and warming throughout the day. We had 12 teams participating but teams 1, 2, 8, 11 and 12 were in serious need of recruitment of new birders for next year. We had 53 observers this year compared with 65 last year.

This year we counted 19,166 birds in 111 species compared with 115 species last year. Two new species were added to our species list this year: a hybrid Western x Glaucous-winged Gull and a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. This brings the total number of species reported by the ARNHA wildlife count over 29 years to 181.

Findings continued from page 2

The Golden-crowned Kinglets really made the day for a lot of folks."

Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk and Woodbridge Road (11/16)

— Leader Dan Tankersley reported: "Ten of us enjoyed a beautiful fall morning at this wonderful nature preserve. Observing how dabbling and diving ducks differ in their feeding strategies and various duck species already performing courtship displays provided much discussion. In addition to many duck species, Sandhill Cranes, shorebirds, various raptors, sparrows, and Greater White-fronted Geese were well represented. In all, we had great views of 52 species, the highlight of which were two close Golden-crowned Kinglets at eye-level. A perfect exclamation point to a fine morning of birding."

Pete Hayes

FAMILY-FRIENDLY TRIP DATES FOR 2014

Sacramento Audubon is merging education activities with Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael as a way of maximizing efforts to serve families with children who would like to be out of doors and enjoy nature walks. The next date is **Saturday, January 18**. Following dates are February 15, March 15 and April 12. January's walk begins at 8:30am.

Reservations are not needed. Simply show up at Effie Yeaw Nature Center at the appropriate day and time and walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge.

Birding and Nature Events

18TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 18th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 17-20, 2014**. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an area recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds, and at last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified!

Special Events 2014: Kimball Garrett will be our Keynote speaker on Saturday, January 18! His lighthearted but educational presentation we'll explore the reasons why birds are so variable, why bird guides can range from indispensable to useless, and why the real world throws us curves all the time when we're in the field. Jon Young will follow him on Sunday evening. Field trips cover a multitude of habitats found in the Morro Bay area. Included are the Carrizo Plains, area ranches and state parks, valleys, creeks and canyons and the great Morro Bay, coast and wetlands. Bay cruises for birding and photography are offered as is owling, pelagic trips and wildlife care. Registration is already open so hurry to the Festival site at morrobaybirdfestival.org.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL OF THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

The 15th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 22-26, 2014**. Special Guest and Keynote Speaker at Saturday night's Gathering of Wings Banquet and Silent Auction will be Debi Shearwater. From field guides to national marine sanctuaries to seabirds saved and seabirds on the brink, Debi Shearwater will take you on a journey covering her experiences and insights gained from nearly 40 years and thousands of days at sea off the central coast of California to ends of the Earth—the High Arctic and Antarctica.

There are currently over 60 different field trips, workshops and presentations planned. There are also lots of free activities and exciting events planned for youth and families. Something for everyone!

Registration is now open and further information can be found at snowgoosefestival.org or by email at info@snowgoosefestival.org and phone (530) 345-1865. Since many of the trips fill up fast, it is best to register as soon as possible. You can stay in touch on their facebook page at facebook.com/SnowGooseFestival.

7TH ANNUAL WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The City of **Galt** in Collaboration with the Cosumnes River Preserve and Galt Joint Union Elementary School District are pleased to bring you the 7th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, February 1, 2014**. Many migratory and resident birds call Galt their winter home. Guided tours offer an exciting opportunity to see the birds that spend their winters in the Central Valley! Wetlands, songbird and sandhill crane tours, led by Cosumnes River Preserve managers and biologists are included so sign up and have your binoculars ready! There will be two tours for photographers and one tour especially for children. There is also a birding tour at Heritage Oak Winery led by David Yee. Wine tasting and lunch are available—that one might be popular!

Google Galt Birding Festival for more detailed information. Registration for the 7th annual festival is already open so check online or call so you don't miss any of your favorite tours. If you have any questions please call (209) 366-7115.

WHAT TO DO WITH THAT INJURED BIRD

Ill or injured birds (as well as other wild animals) in Sacramento should be taken to Sacramento Wildlife Care Association. Details are below:

- They are located at 5211 Patrol Road, McClellan, CA 95652 (on the former McClellan Air Force Base.) They are just a few minutes off Hwy 80.
- Their phone is (916) 965-WILD (9453) - leave a voicemail and a volunteer will return your call within two hours.
- The facility is open 7 days a week/365 days a year, from 10am to 6pm
- All ill/injured animals must be taken to the facility. Volunteers are not able to pick up animals.
- www.wildlifecareassociation.com

AUDUBON CALIFORNIA BIRD OF THE YEAR

One of California's most beloved owls was named the 2013 Audubon California Bird of the Year. The Burrowing Owl—which nests in underground burrows rather than trees—received the designation after receiving more than 48 percent of votes cast. For a cute (no other word) video of the Burrowing Owl in his habitat go to ca.audubon.org/ and scroll down to the featured video of the Bird of the Year.

This year, voters were encouraged to vote in two other categories. The Swainson's Hawk was named the Comeback Kid on the strength of its recovery in certain areas of the state, while the Western Snowy Plover took Cutest Fluffy Fluff.

SALES PERSON NEEDED WINGS NOT NECESSARY

Sacramento Audubon is looking for a volunteer to oversee sales of our Birding Book, Checklists and Calendars (seasonal) to a few local nature themed stores. These stores already carry our merchandise, and would re-order materials through you, either by email via our website or by phone. The volunteer would contact the store representatives monthly to check on their needs and coordinate with others to ensure the materials are delivered and invoiced in a timely manner. This volunteer position does not require too much time and can be scheduled at your convenience. If interested, contact Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net, or 457-6882.

SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Ross Campbell Chris Schultz
Dennis Cherpack Sammy Wurgler
Marcia Ferkovich

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 January 28, 2014 at 7pm, at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

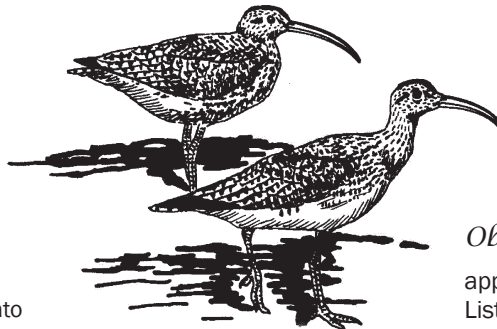
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Fred Klass, Lachlan McClenahan and Carolyn Woodruff to the **General Fund**.

John Davidson, Truman and Sandra Holzclaw, Fred Klass, Sandra Lane, Jim Middleton, Don and Sally Schmoltd, Jane Taylor and Debra Wurgler to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Whimbrel
Stephen D'Amato



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
llandry46@comcast.net

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 appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve (cvbirds.org) and eBird. It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Dan Airola, Chris Dunford, Ken Ealy, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Claire Gallagher, Steve Hampton, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, John Luther, William Rockey, Jim Rowth, Dale Rubach, John Sterling, Michael Strom, John Trochet, Dan Williams, and Sylvia Wright.

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

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

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

Despite an exceedingly dry fall, in terms of precipitation, waterfowl reports led the way. **Blue morph Ross's Geese** appear to have increased in recent years, but they are still rare. On 11/19, individuals were reported at both Sutter and Colusa National Wildlife Refuges. An immature/female **Surf Scoter** was an excellent find at the William B. Pond access to the American River Parkway on 11/30, while the bird of the month was Yolo County's first **Black Scoter**, a female, at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area on 11/25-27.

The few shorebird and gull highlights this month included a long-staying **Pacific Golden-Plover** at the Woodland WTP (11/12-27) and a late **Semipalmated Plover** at the same location on 11/12-16. A hatch-year **Western Gull** found along Lone Star Rd east of Williams on 11/19 was a very good find for Colusa County, and an adult **Western Gull** was found at Nimbus Hatchery on 11/21. Rounding out the gull reports, a hatch-year **Glaucous Gull** was seen at the Yolo County Landfill Pond, viewed from Rd 28H, on 11/14.

A hatch-year male **Costa's Hummingbird** was a nice find in Esparto on 11/3-4, and 39 **Band-tailed Pigeons** were reported along Putah Creek west of Winters on 11/17. A **Yellow Warbler** along Putah Creek downstream of Pedrick Rd on 11/2 and a **Wilson's Warbler** along the River Walk at Cosumnes River Preserve on

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Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Send all copy to the Editor. Observations must reach the Seasonal Observations Editor by the 8th of the month.

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

11/9 were reported much later in the year than expected. Other nice finds included a **Vesper Sparrow** at the traditional large bend west of Winters along Hwy 128 on 11/17-23, a **Red Fox Sparrow** at Willowbank Ditch in Davis on 11/7, the continuing **Harris's Sparrow** in N Davis, and another **Harris's Sparrow** found in Amador County north of Lake Camanche from at least 11/19-29.

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 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

Observations continued on page 9