



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, January 17, 2013
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room
7pm

Natural History of Ringtails in the Sutter Buttes

David Wyatt

Very few people have heard about, let alone seen, a ringtail in the wild. This elusive and charismatic relative of raccoons can be found in the southwestern portion of North America, including California. The Sutter Buttes is a small, volcanic mountain range about 45 miles north of Sacramento and has the unique characteristic of having the densest known population of ringtails.



Dave Wyatt
with Ringtail Cat

Come find out more about the natural history of this remarkable mammal as wildlife biologist David Wyatt presents results of three years of studies on ringtails in the Sutter Buttes.

David Wyatt is a professor of Biology at Sacramento City College and teaches in the Field Ecology program. His first face-to-face encounter with a ringtail was initiated by Dr. Gene Trapp from CSU Sacramento in 1985 and David has been hooked on them ever since! Most of his work has been here in California along the Feather River and at the Sutter Buttes. Recent studies have involved determinations of their home ranges and habi-

General Meeting continued on page 6

DON'T FORGET THE 2ND ANNUAL SAS KIDS AND YOUNG ADULTS CBC!!

January 12 is just a few days away and it's the date for the Second Annual Sacramento Area Kids/Young Adults' Christmas Bird Count. Last year's count was held at Cosumnes River Preserve—where the winds can howl a zillion miles an hour—so this year, the count will be held at Effie Yeaw Nature Center. There will be a little more room so we can have even more teams than last year's six. For more information and to volunteer to assist or to register the children in your life, contact Maureen Geiger at 444-0804 or mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net. This was a truly memorable event last year, and everyone is encouraged to join us in 2013!

ARNHA COUNT RESULTS

This year, 12 teams of intrepid birders gathered along the American River Parkway on Saturday, December 1 for the 28th Annual American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) Wildlife Count, established by Jack Hiehle in 1985. The count covers both sides of the American River, from Nimbus Dam to Discovery Park. Despite robust winds, intermittent showers, and the high output of water from the Nimbus Dam (5000 cubic feet per second), a decent 115 species of birds were seen this year. This compares favorably with the record-setting 123 species in 2010 and 115 species in 2009.

Over 50 counters and 12 Team Leaders scoured the water, land and air to find the usual suspects plus some mammal and bird species that are unusual in this area for this time of year. Unusual bird species included Red Crossbill and Great-tailed Grackle (first time on the list), Greater White-fronted and Cackling Geese, Lesser Scaup, Common Loon, Cattle Egret, Peregrine Falcon, Sora, Chipping and Rufous-crowned Sparrows, and Tricolored Blackbird. The sea lions sent a single representative this year. 5 coyotes were seen, compared with none found last year. The deer population appears to be moderate, with 67 seen, compared with 114 in 2009. The number of Wild Turkeys was way up with 131 seen, compared to only 28 in 2011. A new mammal visitor was the "House Rabbit" seen in area 10.

The Team which counted the most bird species in their area was, again, the Falcons (area 7) who surveyed the Gristmill area on the south side of the American River, lead by Jeri Langham. The Team with the greatest percentage of change in numbers was the Owls (area 8) who surveyed the North Side of the American River from Watt Avenue to the Capital City Freeway, led by the intrepid Cathie LaZier. The only other teams that had a positive change in bird species were Team 4, Andi Salmi's Eagles at Rossmoor Bar and River Bend Park; Team 12, Robert Sewell's Otters at Sutter's Landing; and Team 6, Keith Kwan's Bluebirds, who covered the North Area including William B Pond.

The results of the 2012 ARNHA Wildlife Count are on the Effie Yeaw Nature Center website at www.sacnaturecenter.net. Look under "Happening Now".

Lea Landry, Arnha Count Chair

Field Trip Findings

King Ranch/Lynch Canyon/American Canyon Wetlands (12/9) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “It truly was a fantastic trip; there were 16 of us, including Ed Harper, which is always nice. We saw an amazing number of raptors in Solano County, including two Ferruginous Hawks, two Rough-legged Hawks, upwards of 20 Red-tailed Hawks, one Merlin, several American Kestrels, one Prairie Falcon, two Golden Eagles, and one Burrowing Owl. We visited the King Ranch and Lynch Canyon for the raptors, then went into Napa County to the American Canyon Wetlands for shorebirds, ducks and two calling Swamp sparrows that Ed found for us. The weather was gorgeous, and we had a fabulous time.”

Gulls at Nimbus Dam (12/2) — Leader Ed Harper reported the trip was canceled due to heavy rains and strong winds.

ARNHA Wildlife Count (12/1) — Please see the write-up of results on page 1 or go to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center website at www.sacnaturecenter.net and look under ‘Happening Now’.

Isenberg Crane Preserve/Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk (11/28) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported the trip was rained out.

Beginning Birders at William B. Pond Recreation Area (11/25) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “We began this month’s beginners’ field trip with scope looks at Red-shouldered Hawks, Lark Sparrows and California Quail. John Huls, also birding in the William Pond area, located a Hooded Merganser and phoned us the location, and we also had good looks at Bufflehead, Common Mergansers and Goldeneye. We totaled 49 species for the morning walk.”

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (11/25) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Mark Martucci, reported: “We left Sacramento in fog and into clear sunshine with little wind and Mt. Lassen in full view to the north. Highlights of the day were 300,000 Snow Geese including Ross’s Geese and blue morph adults; Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Great Horned Owl, Clark’s Grebe, Eurasian Wigeon, Ring-necked Ducks and thousands of Northern Pintails. We totaled 60 species, a fun day for all.”

Pleasants Valley Rd./Putah Creek (11/24) — Leader Gary Friege reported: “On a mild and clear fall day, 14 birders sought wintering resident and migrant birds along Pleasants Valley Road, the shoreline of Lake Solano and the Monticello Dam overlook at Lake Berryessa in Solano and Yolo Counties. Many of the target species were located, including Wood Duck, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Common and Barrow’s Goldeneye, Golden Eagle, Merlin, Long-billed Curlew, Belted Kingfisher, Downy Woodpecker, Hutton’s Vireo, Yellow-billed Magpie, Western Bluebird, Phainopepla, Lark Sparrow, and Lesser and American Goldfinch. We searched for the reported Winter Wren on Hwy 128 along the east shore of Lake Solano. Although we heard the appropriate call, we did not view the bird. However, those who stayed through Sunday (two of us), were rewarded with several, albeit brief, looks at the Winter Wren. Friday and Sunday viewing also produced eight additional species to Saturday’s list of 72. The additional birds include Hooded Merganser, Osprey, Peregrine Falcon, a gull species, Northern Pygmy Owl in Cold Canyon, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Wrentit and Fox Sparrow. Eighty species is about the norm for this trip. The most unusual observation was that of a sleeping Gray Fox in a patch of cattails, seemingly without a care in the world.”

Sandhill Cranes and other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley; A Save Our Cranes-sponsored trip (11/24) — Coordinator Mike Savino reported: “More than 30 people showed up to do the tour. Paul Tebbel, executive director of the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, led the group across Franklin Blvd to the Lost Slough wetland after the presentation at the Visitor Center and talked about ducks, hawks, and cranes flying overhead, and other matters this lively group wanted to discuss. We went to Desmond Road about 4:30 and watched about 150 cranes land in wetlands north of the road and a long way from the road. Over the last few years, it appears that the cranes are roosting farther away from the road each year. Therefore, for a lot of visitors, especially first-timers, our spotting scopes made the tour a success. It was a beautiful, warm night, pretty sunset and impressive numbers of Greater White-fronted and Canada geese flying over.”

Sandhill Cranes and other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley; A Save Our Cranes-sponsored trip (11/25) — Coordinator Mike Savino reported: “About a dozen or so people from as far as San Francisco and Placer County gathered at the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) Visitor Center in mid-afternoon to hear Tina Suarez-Murias and Lon Yarborough of Save Our Sandhill Cranes talk about Sandhill Cranes. Tina reviewed various aspects of crane behavior, anatomy, life cycle, habitat, and migration, using the beautiful specimens of the Greater and Lesser Sandhill cranes on display at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center. Lon spoke about techniques and timing for making beautiful photographs of cranes in natural settings and explained what he had learned about their behavior around humans. Some of the tour attendees decided to stay at the wetlands and ponds across the street from the center to watch the evening fly-in of the cranes. Lon and Tina led others to the Isenberg Preserve observation area on Woodbridge Road where hundreds of cranes flew in, silhouetted against the sun setting over Mount Diablo in the distance. From the viewing area, with binoculars we were able to watch the cranes assembling, vocalizing, and resting on both sides of the berms around the ponds. For those who had never experienced the cranes’ calls and swooping landings of the evening fly-in, it was mesmerizing. Thanks go to the CRP Visitor Center volunteers who shared their aerial maps of the crane viewing areas in and near the Preserve.”

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (11/17) — Leader Andi Salmi reported: “Our small group of 5 enjoyed a break in the storms on our trip to the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. Highlights were an adult Peregrine Falcon and a distant view of a Golden Eagle. There were large flocks of Snow and Ross’s geese, including blue-phase Snow Geese, as well as greater White-fronted Geese. Ducks viewed included Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, American Wigeon, a Redhead, Gadwall and Mallard, Shoveler, many Ring-necked, and Pintail ducks. Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and Northern Harrier were also seen.”

Pete Hayes

Field Trips



Wren species
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, contact the scheduler Tim Fitzer, spskua2@comcast.net, 870-5207 for January trips. For February trips contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, 761-1124, offleash56@yahoo.com.

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

Wednesday, January 2, 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, January 5, 8am

Tonzi Road (Amador Co)

Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri@sbcglobal.net

Join Gary on a road trip to the Sierra foothills in Amador County, along Highway's 16, 124, 88 and 12. The focus of the trip will be the Tonzi Road and Ione areas. Tonzi Rd is a back-country road north of Ione. Travel along this route 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 have been a Red-naped Sapsucker, Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Lewis's Woodpeckers, Phainopeplas, Western Bluebirds, Hermit Thrushes, American, Lesser and Lawrence's Goldfinches, Ruby-crowned Kinglets, and a variety of flycatchers, sparrows and raptors observed here. This trip will also include stops for waterfowl and shorebirds at ponds near Sutter Creek and Ione. Time permitting, we will also visit the Mokelumne River Fish Hatchery for local birds, like Belted Kingfisher, Osprey and Hutton's Vireo. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along hand

held radios, food and water. Meet Gary at the College Greens/Raley's Shopping Center lot at 8391 Folsom Blvd. Park near the Starbuck's. This Folsom Blvd Raley's is between Howe Ave and Watt Ave.

Sunday, January 6, 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. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

Wednesday, January 9, 8am

Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk and Woodbridge Road

Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Our Sandhill Cranes will be leaving in a month or so; don't miss an opportunity to see them, as well as the Greater White-fronted Geese, Tundra Swans, and many species of duck wintering in the Delta wetlands. We'll walk the CRP boardwalk loop first; then drive along Desmond Road for more views of waterfowl. Then we'll drive

to Woodbridge Road, making a couple of birding stops. Meet Cathie at the Nugget Market at 8am. Going south on I-5, take the Florin Road West exit; go west to the first signal light, (Greenhaven Drive), and make a U-turn. The parking area for the market will be on the right. Secondary meeting place is the CRP Visitor Center parking lot about 8:30am. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. FRS radios and spotting scopes are helpful if you have them. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, January 12, 8am

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. Rock Wrens and Rufous-crowned Sparrows are possibilities. Meet Margaret at the Raley's shopping center parking lot on the northwest corner of Douglas and Auburn-Folsom roads, in the area near the Animal Hospital and Goodwill, for voluntary carpooling into the park. Or you can meet the group at the Beal's Point parking lot (fee required) about 8:30am. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, January 12

2nd Annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count

Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Contact: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Registration is limited, so contact Maureen for more information. See write-up and information on page 1.

Field Trips continued on page 4

Sunday, January 13, 8am

Salt Springs Valley

Leaders: Paul Cordero and Mark Martucci

Paul, pkcordero@gmail.com

Mark, 833-6722

matuchbirdman@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, warm clothing and FRS radios. 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.

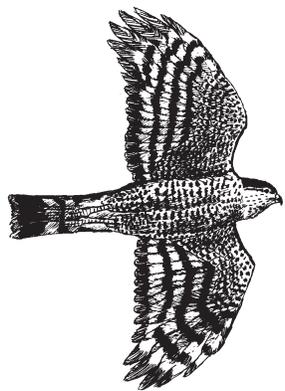
Monday, January 14, 8am

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 7:45am. 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



Sharpshinned Hawk
Stephen D'Amato

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 19, 8am

Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR

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

Join Pam and Dan for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, they'll take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes, looking for Sandhill Cranes, raptors and grassland birds, and then stop at the Colusa NWR viewing platform. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothing. FRS radios and scopes are helpful if you have them. Meet in 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. There is a \$4 per person charge at Gray Lodge.

Special Family Friendly Trip!!

Saturday, January 19, 9am – Noon

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area

Leaders: Ed Pandolfino and
Maureen Geiger, 444-0804

e-mail: mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

This is a great opportunity to bird with Ed who is not only a very good birder but is also a published author, president of the Western Field Ornithologists, and has many other credits to his name. In winter, California's Central Valley supports an amazing number and variety of waterfowl (ducks and geese) and the highest concentration of raptors (hawks and falcons) found anywhere in North America. This area is an ideal place to witness this winter spectacle. Join Ed and Maureen for a morning drive around this diverse area just minutes from downtown Sacramento where a dozen or more different species of waterfowl, herons, hawks, and more might be seen. This trip will end by noon. Spaces are limited and reservations are required; contact Maureen by phone or email.

Sunday, January 20, 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

Mark and Paul will be looking for wintering raptors such as Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks and Prairie Falcons, as well as grassland birds including Mountain Plovers. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet 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.

Tuesday, January 22, 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 26, 8am till
about noon

Nimbus Fish Hatchery

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

Sunday, January 27, 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 Brookfield's Restaurant parking lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road off-ramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfield's is behind Shell.

**Sunday, January 27, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored
trip**

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Come visit our Sandhill Cranes while they're still here in the delta. They, as well as a variety of ducks, swans, geese, and shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center deck at 3:30pm to hear a brief presentation of Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather and bring binoculars. Scopes are helpful. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners and for families.

**Saturday, February 2, 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. 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 3, 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 Brookfield's Restaurant parking lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfield's is behind Shell.

**Tuesday, February 5, 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 and though it's late in the season, there is

a chance the Falcated Duck will still be present. 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. 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, February 9, 8am
Sacramento Bar
American River Parkway
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com**

Join Darrell for this morning walk along the American River. You will see a nice variety of resident birds and maybe some surprises. This is a great trip for beginning and more experienced birders. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Sunday, February 10, 7:30am
Yuba County Wetlands
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com**

Streams and rivers draining from the foothills to the valley and farmers' irrigation help to create these wetlands and winter habitat on surrounding properties. Join Richard on a trip to one of his favorite places to bird while he looks for ducks, geese, shorebirds, and birds of prey. Meet Richard at the Brookfield's Restaurant parking lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road exit (105A) and follow straight through the first stop light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Brookfield's will be on your left behind the Shell gas station. Bring lunch, layered clothes, and scopes and FRS radios if you have them.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2013

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: (all Sundays), January 13, February 10, March 17

Each Trip: Limited to 10 adult 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.

General Meeting

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at use as well as food habits to get a better glimpse into ringtail life histories. "It seems like every time we get a piece of that ringtail puzzle put together, it brings up a whole new set of questions to answer...that process of discovery is thrilling and oh-so-very-much fun!"

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](http://facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

Sally Walters, Program Chair

BIRDS OF WINTER IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

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

Whereas some species of birds such as swallows, flycatchers, and warblers do

migrate south for the winter, many more 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: Thursdays, 7-8:30pm

Dates: January 24, February 28, and March 14

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.

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

More information at www.sacnaturecenter.net

Field Trips

Saturday January 26, 8am-noon, Linden Raptor Route, San Joaquin County

Saturday March 2, 8am-noon, Ancil Hoffman Park

Saturday March 16, 8am-noon, Yolo Basin Wetlands

Effie Yeaw Nature Center 916-489-4918

California Avenue and Tarshes Drive, Carmichael, CA 95608

SANDHILL CRANE NAMED AUDUBON CALIFORNIA'S BIRD OF THE YEAR

One of California's favorite bird species today was named the 2012 Audubon California Bird of the Year. The Sandhill Crane received the designation after winning 43 percent of votes cast during an online poll this fall. Although the bird was a nominee for the past three years, it experienced a surge in popularity this year, going from 234 votes in 2009 to 5053 in 2012. The Sandhill Crane is one of North America's largest waterbirds and certainly one of the most magnificent. It provides great viewing for even the most novice birder.

"Cranes are a great bird to get into," said Brigid McCormack, managing director of Audubon California. "They are easy to spot in the flooded fields of the Central Valley because of their large size and unique courtship dance."

Sandhill Cranes were once common throughout the west and especially in the California Central Valley. However their populations declined drastically as a result of unregulated hunting and habitat loss during settlement of the region. In California, the breeding population was reduced to fewer than five pairs by the 1940s. Fortunately, all populations of Sandhill Cranes have increased, and in 2000 an estimated 465 pairs were breeding in California. Nonetheless, much of their historic range remains vacant and the population remains far below historic numbers.

Audubon California is increasing the amount of Sandhill Crane habitat in California by partnering with private landowners. As part of the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership, Audubon (along with PRBO Conservation Science and The Nature Conservancy) has an opportunity to take specific action targeting conservation in the Central Valley. In 2008, the Partnership negotiated easements in Surprise Valley and the Modoc Plateau to increase the amount of farmland in the Central Valley that is managed specifically for Sandhill Cranes.

Nearly 12,000 votes were cast in this year's Bird of the Year poll. The Sandhill Crane took the title with a late surge after the second-place Burrowing Owl raced off to an early start. Coming in third for the second year in a row was the Western Snowy Plover.

While the Sandhill Crane wins the designation of 2012 Bird of the Year, McCormack emphasized that AudubonCalifornia's work on behalf of other California birds, nominated or not, will continue.

GULL IDENTIFICATION CLASS

John Sterling and Todd Easterla have scheduled a Gull Identification Workshop for January 12-13th, 2013. See the website www.sterlingbirds.com for details; click on the Birding Classes tab on John's homepage. Lots of salmon at Nimbus Fish Hatchery right now will provide great viewing of thousands of gulls for the class!

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDS YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

The Central Valley Bird Club is once again offering scholarships for young birders to attend birding camps or classes. Camp opportunities include the Sierra Nevada Field Campus near Yuba Pass sponsored by San Francisco State University, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours Camp Chiracahua in Southeast Arizona, Seattle Audubon Cascades Bird Banding Camp and many others.

For further information on this scholarship and the particular camps, please check the website: www.cvbirds.org/Scholarship.htm

- Application deadline is January 15, 2013
- Essay and recommendation are required
- Available to ages 10-18 (be sure to check specific camp age requirements)

In addition, Sacramento Audubon may contribute up to \$500 towards travel expenses for scholarship winners in need of financial assistance.

For questions, contact:

John Sterling, CV Birds 530-908-3836,
jsterling@wavecable.com

Maureen Geiger, Sacramento Audubon,
916-444-0804, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.com

Carolyn Woodruff, Sacramento Audubon,
916-484-1688, dewoodruff@comcast.net



2013 DATES FOR DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES AT CRP

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

- Tuesday, January 1st (New Year's Day)
- Sunday, January 6
- Saturday, January 12
- Sunday, January 20
- Saturday, January 26th (extended hours, 10am to 4pm)
- Sunday, February 3
- Saturday, February 9
- Sunday, February 17
- Saturday, February 24

RECENT SAS BOARD ACTIONS

The Sacramento Audubon Society Board has voted to make the following donations:

\$250 to an inner city elementary school class for fees and transportation to **Effie Yeaw Nature Center** for a field trip.

\$200 to Altacal Audubon in support of their **Northern Saw-whet Owl Research Project**.

Two books, *Birding in the Sacramento Region* with our Birding Checklist, and *Biking and Hiking the American River Parkway* were donated to the auction at the **Lodi Crane Festival**.

NEW PROGRAM FOR SAS THE SPEAKER'S BUREAU!

The Sacramento Audubon Society has set up a Speakers Bureau to help educate children and adults about birds. The speakers can make presentations to groups on topics such as:

Common Birds of Sacramento.

Cool things that birds do.

Why do birds do that?

Bird Courtship Behavior.

Variety of Bird Habitats in Sacramento.

Each presentation is supported by a slide show. If you know of a group that would like such a presentation, please contact Subhash Chand at (916) 966-0747 or at subhashc@aol.com. We are also looking for volunteers who would like to share their love of birds with others by making such presentations. You will be provided training on how to make the presentations and can go along with an experienced presenter to see how it is done. If you can help, please contact Subhash as listed above.

THE 16TH ANNUAL GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT! FEBRUARY 15-18, 2013!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is coming up next month from February 15-18. It's one of the best opportunities for citizen science to contribute to our knowledge of bird species' survival and population. Plus, it's a great opportunity for some healthy competition in compiling those checklists.

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. Also Birdlogs for mobile devices.

Birding and Nature Events

17TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 17th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held January 18-21, 2013. 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! This year's keynote speaker will be Alvaro Jaramillo giving a talk on *Birding Outside the Box: How Our Brain Identifies Birds* on Saturday evening, January 19, 2013. Jaramillo is well known for his *Identify Yourself* column in *Bird Watchers Digest* and for his many contributions to authoritative birding books around the world. His intriguing keynote address will show how expert birders' brains work to make fast, accurate bird identifications, and how the rest of us can train our own brains to do the same. 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. Sacramento's own Ed Harper is leading a field trip on shorebirds. To register and for more information about the Festival, check their website at morrobaybirdfestival.org or call 866-464-5105 for more information.

6TH 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 6th Annual Winter Bird Festival, Saturday, January 26, 2013. 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: ZenOptic Wetlands Dawn Photo Tour and a Cosumnes River Preserve Photo Blind Tour, sponsored by Canon Camera. Google Galt Birding Festival for more detailed information. Registration for the 6th annual festival is now open. For any questions or to register in person, please call 209-366-7115.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL OF THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

The 14th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in Chico on January 24-27, 2013. "Chico's Own" husband and wife team, Roger Lederer and Carol Burr, who have birded throughout the world, will present *The Amazing in the Familiar: Surprising Facts about Common Birds* at the "Gathering of Wings" Banquet on Saturday night. Their keynote presentation will give you some insight into the individual stories of common birds, such as how Cedar Waxwings tell each other apart, why birds migrate with one eye, what Shakespeare had to do with our avian fauna, and why Ravens talk to wolves. There are currently 65 different field trips and presentations planned.

Registration has begun now. 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, register soon and then follow on their facebook page at [facebook.com/SnowGooseFestival](https://www.facebook.com/SnowGooseFestival) to keep abreast of festival events.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Jean Alford, Joellen Arnold, Monte Ikemire, Maria Nicholas Kelly, Fred Klass, Ann Kohl, Lachlan McClenahan and Colene Rauh to the **General Fund**.

Joellen Arnold, Grant Boice, Carole Elzey, Nancy Gilbert, Christine Homstrom, Monte Ikemire, Judith LaMare and Jane Taylor to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

TABLES FOR BOBELAINE

Wanted: 2 sturdy picnic tables for Audubon's Bobelaine Preserve. This would be a great project for a scout, a class or group to earn the money to buy tables or get donated wood and build them, and deliver them.

Contact: Bajaowl@gmail.com

Subject: PICNIC TABLES for BOBELAINE PRESERVE (all caps)"

Birding and Nature Events

2013 KLAMATH FALLS WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL EXPANDS TO FOUR DAYS! FEBRUARY 14-17

The 34th Annual Winter Wings Festival will be held in Klamath Falls, Oregon. With the stellar lineup of keynote participants at Winter Wings each of the last few years — Pete Dunne, Scott Weidensaul, Art Morris, Jeff Gordon, Kenn Kaufman, Darrell Gulin — you could imagine they'd get a bit complacent. But you'd be wrong! The 2013 festival, their 34th, is once again loaded with birding and nature photography talent. With the program expanded to include four full days, they've lined up three topnotch keynote speakers. One is George Lepp, world renowned photographer. The second is our west coast phenom and ID author, Alvaro Jaramillo and the third is shorebird expert Kevin Karlson.

There are numerous photography workshops and field trips including some especially for youth; many raptor and owling trips, an eBird workshop; drawing workshop and Bald Eagle flyouts. Registration is required for all activities with an associated fee, including field trips, workshops, mini-sessions, receptions, and keynotes. Some free events also require registration. Register early to ensure your place; the field trips and photography workshops fill rapidly. Registrations will be processed in the order in which they are received and can be done online or by mail. The website with the complete schedule and registration information and forms is at: winterwingsfest.org

Further information is available at 877-541-BIRD (2473)

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Beatrice Kay Ericson
Casey and Lewis Ingram
Hope Leja
Linda Parker

NEW Email Address—Please NOTE

Lea Landry, our membership chair has a new email address. Please change it in your address book.

llandry46@comcast.net

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 26, 2013 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON 2013 PROGRAMS

February 21 Brian Sullivan, *eBird*
March 21 Ed Harper, *Birding
Montana*

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 (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

Observations continued from page 10

the UCD Arboretum on 11/7 along with four **Red Crossbills** in the same area, widespread **Pine Siskin** reports, including an impressive 200+ at the Old Sacramento City Cemetery on 11/24, and continuing **Evening Grosbeak** reports from Davis on 11/18 and 11/27, Granite Bay on 11/22, and Sacramento on 11/22-23.

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 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:

Brent Campos, Daryl Coldren, Farley Cross, Scott Dietrich, Chris Dunford, Jon Dunn, Andy Engilis, Jr., Rob Fowler, Claire Gallagher, Cory Gregory, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Dan Kopp, Gordon Lane, Jeri Langham, Eric LoPresti, Joseph Morlan, Michael Perrone, Jim Rowoth, John Sterling, Dan Tankersley, John Trochet, and Bruce Webb.

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

Chris Conard

**SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION
ON FACEBOOK**

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon



Seasonal Observations

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

This year has seen by far the most **Long-eared Owl** reports of any in the 2000s and this month added its share of records. Three to four were found on a roost in the Tall Forest of Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 11/22 and one was calling near CRP's Orr Forest on 11/25. Another was found during the Central Valley Birding Symposium at the Stockton Rural Cemetery on 11/17. A **Northern Saw-whet Owl** was at the same location on 11/12. Both species are very hard to find in winter, and many more certainly escape detection.

On 11/6, a "**Brewer's Duck**" (**Gadwall X Mallard**) was found at the Woodland WTP (WWTP) along with the **Surf Scoter** continuing from 10/30. A female **White-winged Scoter** was at Beals Point, Folsom Lake, on 11/13; the **Red-throated Loon** continued nearby in Sacramento County waters on 11/14. A hatch-year **Brown Pelican** was seen and photographed at Riverlake in the Pocket Area of South Sacramento on 11/22. Two **Semipalmated Plovers** were found mid-month at the Farmers Central Pond in Woodland, a **Marbled Godwit**, perhaps continuing from last month, was found at Yolo Wildlife Area on 11/18-25, and a very late **Baird's Sandpiper** was at the WWTP on 11/1. A **Franklin's Gull** was at WWTP on 11/15 and an adult **Glaucous Gull** was at the Yolo County Landfill on 11/25.

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

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A **Greater Roadrunner** was on the Valley floor, seen in both Yolo and Colusa

Counties as it crossed County Line Rd near John's School Rd, on 11/10. Songbird highlights included juvenile **Northern Shrikes** on private property along Nicolas Rd near Lincoln on 11/2 and at the Fremont Weir on 11/3. A **Cassin's Vireo** at CRP along the River Walk on 11/10 was a nice find for late in the season as was a **Nashville Warbler** at the Orr Forest on 11/25; a **Green-tailed Towhee** was found north of the Tall Forest on 11/3. An (eastern) **Winter Wren** was found, photographed, and recorded on the Yolo County side of Lake Solano near Positas Rd from 11/20-27. **Vesper Sparrows** continue along Hwy 128 west of Winters, with two at "Vesper Sparrow Corner" on 11/22. The **Harris's Sparrow** returning from last winter to North Davis continued through the month. Excellent diversity and numbers of finches were reported, with a male **Cassin's Finch** at

Observations continued on page 9

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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.

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