



The *OBSERVER*

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, January 15

Shepard Garden and Art Center
7pm General Meeting

Sandhill Crane Program

Gary Ivey of the International Crane Foundation will speak on "Sandhill Cranes in the Pacific Flyway." His presentation will include their biology, life history and what we know about their migrations between summer and winter areas. Recent and ongoing research projects will be discussed. Gary is the Foundation's Crane Conservation Manager for western North America and works on research, monitoring, environmental education and habitat conservation projects for the sake of crane conservation. For more information about cranes around the world, visit: www.savingcranes.org.

Mike Eaton, who is presently Executive Director of the Resources Legacy Fund, served for more than a decade as a Senior Project Director with The Nature Conservancy, overseeing the Conservancy's work in the Cosumnes River watershed and the North Delta. Mike will speak about crane habitat conservation in our area.

The presentation will begin with a short DVD of photographs of Sandhill cranes in their winter home here in Sacramento County. Both speakers will be available to answer questions following their presentations.

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

Lea Landry, Program Chair

SACRAMENTO GEARS UP FOR THE GBBC FEBRUARY 13-16!

The Great Backyard Bird Count is just around the corner and we have many events planned to get our Sacramento area checklist numbers up. Last year Redding just beat us by 28 checklists (181 to 153). I know we can outscore them and this is a perfect event to get newbies involved in birding and a great family activity!

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

Workshops

- Jan 10** 10am, Fair Oaks Library, 11601 Fair Oaks Blvd. Fair Oaks, 95628
1pm, Walnut Grove Library, 14177 Market St. Walnut Grove, 95690
- Jan 11** 1:30pm, Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael, 95608.
Bird Field Trip on the Parkway to follow presentation.
- Jan 24** 1pm, Del Paso Heights Library, 920 Grand Ave, Sacramento, 95838
- Jan 27** 6pm, South Natomas Library, 2901 Truxel Rd, Sacramento, 95833
- Jan 31** 10am, Belle Cooledge Library, 5600 South Land Park, Sacramento, 95822

Great Backyard Bird Count Field Trips

Thanks to the SAS Field Trip Committee we also have beginning birders Field Trips planned for the GBBC weekend. Come out and sharpen your bird watching skills.

Friday, February 13 8am till noon, Yolo Basin Wildlife Area
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 359-2829, dtankers@winfirst.com.

Friday, February 13 8am, Riverbend Park (formerly Goethe Park)
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882, empid@earthlink.net.
There is a \$5 entrance fee to the park

Saturday, February 14 9am, Sutter's Landing Park
Leaders: Julie Serences and Robert Sewell. Meet Julie and Robert at the parking lot nearest the skateboard building. Sutter's Landing Park is located at the end of 28th Street behind the B Street Theater and over the railroad tracks! This is a riparian stretch of river cherished by the local neighbors as a place for family nature outings. With luck, a peregrine falcon may be a visitor during our count. Children welcome. No fee.

Sunday, February 15 8:30am, Mather Regional Park,
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457, wayneblunk@att.net.
There is a \$5 entrance fee to the park.

Field Trip Findings

Discovery Park (12/14) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “The Discovery trip was rained out by 10am and so cold we decided we had more ‘Brrrrrrr’ than Birds. But we did see a few nice birds—an accipiter, goldeneyes, a Lincoln Sparrow, lots of Magpies, a Kingfisher, Wood Ducks and many, many flickers.”

River Walk Bird Count, Cosumnes River Preserve (12/13) — Leader John Schick reported: “We had a modest count of 48 species. Highlights were a huge flock of White-fronted Geese (over 2,000). Also at the beginning of the day there were 6 River Otters frolicking in the pond near the entrance to Lost Slough.

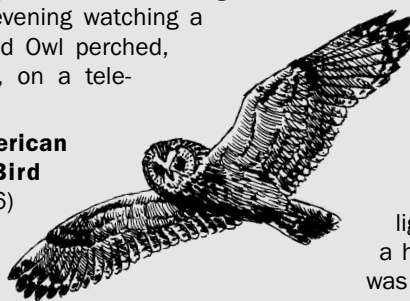
Nimbus Fish Hatchery, American River (12/10) — Leader Ed Harper reported: “The trip enjoyed clear, calm, sunny weather with cool morning temperatures warming to the upper 50’s by noon. The sparse salmon run this year was mirrored in the low numbers of gulls along the American River, still five species of gulls were recorded. The gulls present provided ample opportunities for careful study, allowing for side by side comparisons of species and their respective age classes. When not looking at gulls, other birding highlights included great looks at Barrow’s Goldeneye, repeated close up views of Osprey, a quick view of a Peregrine Falcon flying over, and a female Phainopepla that posed nicely for scope views. It was a fun trip with lots of activity.”

Sandhill Crane and other wintering birds of the Sacramento Valley (12/7) — Cathie LaZier reported on this “SOS Cranes” sponsored trip: “Our afternoon at Cosumnes Preserve began with a short talk by Gary Ivey, the biologist doing

crane research on the Preserve, and who will be a speaker at our January program. A Wetlands Walk at the Preserve provided great scope looks for first-time birders at Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Northern Pintails and Shovelers, and the elegant black-and-white, pink legged Black-necked Stilts. Moving on to Staten Island, we watched hundreds of Sandhill Cranes flying in to roost for the night, and ended the evening watching a Great Horned Owl perched, Red-tail like, on a telephone pole.”

Great American River Bird Count (12/6)

— Despite a foggy morning, a record 113 species were counted on the 24th annual tabulation sponsored by the American River Natural History Association. Cattle Egrets were found for the first time, coordinator Jack Hiehle reported. Cinnamon Teal and Western Sandpiper were seen for only the second time; Peregrine Falcon and Red-breasted Nuthatch for the third. Jeff Mangum and Harlin Perryman found the flock of 75-100 Cattle Egrets feeding in Glenbrook Park. Mammals also were recorded, including eight River Otters and three Coyotes. Jack Hiehle said “some darn good birders from Sacramento Audubon” among the record total of 64 observers helped set the new species mark in foggy conditions. “A lot of them could be blindfolded and if the birds make a sound they know what they are,” he said.



Stephen D'Amato

Mix and Gates Canyons on Vaca Mt. Ridge (12/4) — Leader Sami LaRocca reported: “Those who went on this trip to the NW portion of Solano County, south of Lake Solano, were in for a real treat. Right at the beginning, about half-mile up Gates Canyon Road, we saw a small raptor casually sitting at the top of a large cottonwood tree across a wide field. All nine birders were able to get great scope looks at this wonderful male Merlin. Once we were all satisfied with our sighting, he graciously gave us a demonstration of his rapid flight, going left across our field of view. Spectacular! Another highlight was the surrounding sound of a high-pitched, jingling bird call that was finally traced to Brown Creepers, 3 or 4 in one area! Although the target bird, Varied Thrush, was looked for but disappointingly not found; we had a good trip and saw 58 species. The bright winter sunny day confirmed why I love this locale and am its Area Leader for the Putah Creek Christmas Bird Count. Look for this trip next year.”

Tall Forest Bird Count (12/6) — This trip was listed for December 14 but since leader John Trochet was running his Zuni, New Mexico, Christmas Bird Count that day, he held his walk December 6. He reported: “We found a Brown Creeper, several Golden-crowned Kinglets, roughly 40 Varied Thrushs, five Western Tanagers, and a White-throated Sparrow.”

Nimbus Fish Hatchery (12/1) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported that his group saw Barrow’s Goldeneye, White-throated Swift, Thayer’s Gull, Glaucous-winged Gull, 2 Ospreys, Phainopepla, Spotted

Findings continued on page 6

Welcoming Native Bees to Our Backyards!

Our home landscapes can become important habitat for many fascinating creatures in this overdeveloped world of ours and learning how to attract them is the first step. Join other local gardeners and nature lovers in a presentation on attracting and planting for native bees of the Sacramento region. This Smart Gardening workshop will feature Byron Love, a CSUS doctoral candidate who studies local native bee ecology, Jessa Guisse, the Pollinator Outreach Coordinator for XERCES Society, a non-profit dedicated to protection of wildlife through conservation of invertebrates and their habitat, and Miles Daprato, a Restoration Specialist with Audubon California. Together they will tell you what bees live in this area, how to manage your landscape

to attract them, which plants most benefit bees, and how to restore vegetation to attract native bees, insects, and birds. Smart Gardening, based on National Audubon’s Audubon at Home program, is a joint project of the Sacramento Audubon Society and the Sacramento Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

The workshop is scheduled for Saturday, March 21, 2009 from 1-3pm in the Conference Room at the South Natomas Community Center at 2921 Truxel Road, Sacramento, near the intersection of I-5 and I-80. For more information, contact Julie Serences at 548-0618 or go to sacramentoaudubon.org for details.

Field Trips



Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net, for trips through February 1st. For trips from February 7th on call the scheduler Richard Barbieri, 966-4603, offleash6@yahoo.com

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

Thursday, January 1, 8am Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146

A New Year's Day fresh morning walk rather than sitting around watching television! Join Brian for a stroll through this great riparian habitat. Herons, egrets, cormorants and grebes should be on the water. Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet and a variety of sparrows will be seen. Take Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City and about 2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. Bring liquids and snacks.

Thursday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

Compiler: Floyd Hayes
e-mail: floyd_hayes@yahoo.com

Friday, January 2 Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

Compilers: Tom Rusert and Derren Peteric
707-939-8007, SonomaBirding.org

Sunday, January 4 Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 362-5942
e-mail: conardc@gmail.com

Monday, January 5, 8am - noon River Bend Park (formerly known as Goethe Park) Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack at the end of Arden Way to walk across the bridge into River Bend Park. Jack will be looking for mammals and birds along the river and in the park. This is a good trip for beginners. Bring liquids and a snack if you wish.

Saturday, January 10, 8am Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266 Email: jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Join Dan to bird this refuge, which is a magnet for the thousands of ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley. Various hawks, falcons, and occasionally an owl or eagle are also seen on the refuge. There is a 3.7 mile driving loop, and a great viewing platform as well. The trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids, layered clothes, and scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Take 1-5 north toward Woodland; exit at Road 102 and turn right into the Jack in the Box parking lot to meet Dan.

Sunday, January 11, 8am Salt Springs Valley Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207 Email: Spskua2@comcast.net

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. This is a unique area you will not want to miss. The trip will last into the afternoon so bring lunch, liquids, warm clothing and FRS radios. Meet in the parking lot in front of the Wal-Mart located on the west side of Hwy 99 at the Elk Grove Boulevard exit.

Wednesday, January 14, 7am Point Reyes Birds and Mammals Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

This is Jack's annual trip to Point Reyes to see elephant seals, other mammals, birds and fauna. Be prepared for a full day; bring lunch, liquids, warm clothes and FRS radios. Meet Jack on Fulton Avenue just before Fair Oaks Boulevard. Call for details.

Saturday, January 17, 8am Gray Lodge Wildlife Area Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791 Email: rey_ality@hotmail.com

Dan is a great birder who knows this area well. He will take you to Gray Lodge, one of the state's prime wintering areas for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, he will take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes. This area is great for raptors and grassland birds including wintering sparrows. Bring lunch, liquids, warm clothing and FRS radios. Meet at the Park and Ride on the southwest corner of Hwy 99 and Elkhorn Blvd.

Sunday, January 18, 2pm Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes" sponsored trip Co-coordinator: Mike Savino 446-1392, yogoombah@yahoo.com Birding Guides from Sacramento Audubon

We will gather together at the Cosumnes River Preserve parking lot off Franklin Blvd at 2pm. We'll walk the short, one mile, universally accessible Lost Slough Wetlands Walk trail to look for cranes and other exciting winter visitors such as Tundra Swans, White-faced Ibis, and migratory ducks and geese. There should be a wide variety of waterfowl, shore birds and perhaps a surprise visitor or two. We will then drive to Staten Island in the hope of seeing hundreds of cranes fly in to their roosting sites with the sun setting behind them. After the sun sets we will go to Wimpy's for dinner and every one is invited. Call Mike Savino, 916-446-1392, for details or last minute changes. No RSVP's are required for the tour, but they would be appreciated. No RSVP's are necessary for the dinner; you can decide at the last minute. To RSVP for the trip (or send questions) call Mike Savino at 916-446-1392, or email to yogoombah@yahoo.com. Dress

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3 for changeable weather; bring binoculars, scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners.

Sunday, January 18
Habitat Improvement Work Day
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

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

Monday, January 19, 8am
Davis Wetlands
Leader: Sami LaRocca
530-908-0288
Email: sami182@wavecable.com

This joint Yolo and Sacramento Audubon trip is planned to take advantage of the weekday opening of the Davis Wetlands at Davis Waste Water Treatment Plant during duck season. Many species of ducks and other shore birds will have taken up winter residence at this very special wetland habitat. Come with me and together we'll identify as many as possible. Driving to and from the wetlands we will check the surrounding county roads for special sightings. The fields often have wintering curlews, hawks, and owls; we'll see if we can spot some.

Meet at the Park and Ride off Mace Boulevard (northeast corner of Hwy 80 and Mace, behind Ikeda's) in Yolo County at 8am. Bring water, snacks and hiking shoes. We'll plan on returning to the Park and Ride by noon.

Thursday, January 22, 8am – Noon
Yolo Basin Wildlife Area
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 359-2829
Email: dtankers@winfirst.com

Meet Dan in the first parking lot (Lot A, on your left) at the beginning of the auto tour. Waterfowl and shorebirds should be plentiful. Marsh Wrens, American Bitterns and White-faced Ibis are also possible. From Sacramento take I-80 west, and 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 onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Rain or high wind cancels. This is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders.

Saturday, January 24, 8am
Pleasants Valley Rd./
Putah Creek (Solano Co.)
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri@sbcglobal.net

This outing entails driving to the Vacaville area to pick up Pleasants Valley Road, and birding our way up to Hwy 128, then Putah Creek, Solano Lake and the Monticello Dam Overlook. Gary will make several stops along Pleasants Valley Rd, looking for winter passerines, including Phainopepla, Western Bluebird and Say's Phoebe. Along Putah Creek and Solano Lake, we should see Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, American Dipper, and Osprey. At the Monticello Dam Overlook, we'll be watching for Canyon and Rock Wrens, and possibly Peregrine Falcon. Plan to spend 3-4 hours birding, plus driving time there and back. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along FRS radios, food and water. Our lunch spot will be at Solano Lake County Park, where there is a day-use fee. We'll also look for Pileated Woodpecker and owls there. Meet Gary 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. Car pooling is strongly advised, due to limited access at stops and the distance traveled.

Sunday, January 25, 8am
Hansen Ranch Park Preserve
Leader: Jonilynn Okano, 397-1295
jonilynn@rcip.com

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

for beginners and will end before noon. Please bring scopes if you have one. Meet at the Starbucks at 4110 Norwood Avenue and I-80 (North Side) at 8am.

Wednesday, January 28, 8am
Yolo Basin Wildlife Area
Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
IshiM2000@comcast.net

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

Saturday, January 31, 8am
Lincoln Grand Canyon
Leader: Dave Pearson, 408-4273
Firesparkbird@yahoo.com

Explore the varied habitat of Lincoln Hills with Dave who knows this area well. He will be checking the ponds and other nearby sites for ducks and shorebirds, as well as the Grand Canyon of Lincoln Hills, otherwise known as the Canyon Oaks Trail, for sparrows and other winter residents and raptors. From I-80 in Roseville, take Hwy 65 north to the Twelve Bridges Rd exit (#313); turn right on Twelve Bridges Road; left on East Lincoln Pkwy; right on Del Webb Boulevard, and follow to the Meridians Restaurant. Meet Dave in front of the lodge in the parking lot. This trip will end late morning.

Sunday, February 1, 7:30am
Rush and King Ranches,
Solano County
Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net
Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277
ken@solanolandtrust.org

This trip to Solano County will begin with Rush Ranch, an operating cattle ranch on beautiful Suisun Marsh. Maureen and Ken will introduce us to the birds of Rush Ranch and then head to the King Ranch, another Solano Land Trust property high above Hwy 680. This site has a spectacular view of the surrounding area and is good for Golden Eagles and other raptors as

well as Burrowing Owls and Say's Phoebes. Bring lunch and liquids, and be prepared for possible muddy conditions. Meet at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From I-80, take the West Sacramento Exit; turn left at the light; then left again into the lot. This trip will last to mid-afternoon. If interested, there will be an optional hike up a short, steep slope to see endangered Red-legged Frogs at the King Ranch.

**Saturday, February 7, Sunset Trip
2pm – dark
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes"
sponsored trip**

**Co-coordinator: Mike Savino
446-1392, yogombah@yahoo.com**

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip, but the experienced birding leaders will also help you identify the waterfowl and shorebirds that winter here. Ducks, swans and geese, as well as shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center parking lot, at 2pm, where we will stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, looking at ducks and shorebirds, then drive out to areas such as Desmond Road, Woodbridge Road or Staten Island for cranes, swans and geese. Watching the cranes congregate in a roosting area for the evening is always a wonderful sight. Dress for changeable weather; bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road, (exit 498); 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.

**Sunday, February 8, 7:30am
Yuba County Wetlands
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com**

Streams and sloughs draining from the foothills to the valley rivers make this wetland and the surrounding properties one of Richard's favorite places to bird. He'll be looking for ducks, geese, shorebirds, and small passerines. 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.

**Wednesday, February 11, 8am – noon
Jacob Lane area,
American River Parkway
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

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

**February, 14, 15 and 16
President's Day Weekend
Eureka/Arcata area
Leaders, Dan Brown 362-2458
naturestoc@aol.com
Joe Ceriani, joeceriani@usmessage.net**

Please mark your calendars and join Dan and Joe for 3 days of birding along California's North coast. We will be birding some of the traditional spots in the Eureka and Arcata areas and possibly some of Joe's new favorite spots. Please contact Dan or Joe for further details.

**GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT
FIELD TRIPS**

**Friday, February 13, 8am – noon
Yolo Basin Wildlife Area
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 359-2829
dtankers@winfirst.com**

**Friday, February 13, 8am
Riverbend Park (formerly Goethe Park)
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net**

**Sunday, February 15, 8:30am
Mather Regional Park
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
wayneblunk@att.net**



Daniel Kilby

**2009 DEER CREEK HILLS
HIKE, BIKE, AND RIDE**

Please join Sacramento Valley Conservancy for the 2009 Hike Season at Deer Creek Hills. Here's their schedule through March, 2009.

**Saturday, January 24, 9am – 1pm
Deer Creek Overlook Hike**

**Saturday, February 28, 9am – 1pm
Geology Hike**

**Sunday, March 1, 9am – 1pm
Equestrian Ride**

**Saturday, March 28, 8am
Wildflower Hike**

**Sunday, March 29, 9am – 1pm
Equestrian Ride**

Hikers/Cyclists/Riders should meet at Latrobe and Stone House Roads (north of Highway 16 or Jackson Rd. and west of Rancho Murieta). Both roads can be accessed off of Jackson Rd. Carpooling is strongly encouraged since parking is limited, and all vehicles should park on the dirt portion of Latrobe Rd.

Weather is unpredictable, so please bring layers of clothing for all weather types. Water, light snacks and a hat for warmth and shade are also suggested.

There is active cattle grazing at Deer Creek Hills, and the conditions of hiking routes vary and may include stream or fence crossings and uneven terrain. Heavy rain and/or wind cancel hike/ride.

Please RSVP with Gina Silvernale at 731-8798 or ginasilvernale@hotmail.com. Tour size is limited for your enjoyment. For more information please contact Sacramento Valley Conservancy at their website, www.sacramentovalleyconservancy.org or 731-8798.

**FUTURE SPEAKERS
AND PROGRAMS**

February 19 – Debbie DuVall, Linda Davidson, Doug Forbes, Wildlife Care

March 19 – Chris Conard, *Birding Alaska*

April 16 – John (Jack) Muir Laws, *Exploring the Sierra Nevada as a Naturalist and an Artist*. Julie Serences has coordinated a drawing class with Jack on the 16th, prior to the General Meeting. See page 6 for more details.

May 21 – Mike Bradbury, Friends of the Swainson's Hawk (SAS/FOSH Field Trip in June)

Findings continued from page 2

Sandpiper, Cedar Waxwing, Greater Yellowlegs, Song Sparrow, and Bewick's Wren.

Sandhill Cranes of the Sacramento Valley and other wintering birds (11/30) – Maureen Geiger reported on this “SOS Cranes”-sponsored trip: “About 35 people showed up at Cosumnes Preserve on a beautiful, fairly warm day and enjoyed good looks at ducks, shorebirds and hawks. The caravan down to Staten Island in the late afternoon was in increasingly dense fog, but this did not stop the group from enjoying the magical spectacle of hundreds of Sandhill Cranes flying into flooded fields to roost for the night, many of them calling as they flew. After sunset, as the fog settled in more thickly, many of the group adjourned to Wimpy's for dinner.”

Road 113, Robinson Road and Birds Landing Area (11/29) – Leader Tim Fitzer reported: “We had 60-65 Mountain Plovers close to the road, 3 Rough-legged and 2 Ferruginous hawks, 1 Prairie Falcon, 100s of Long-billed Curlews, 2 Burrowing Owls, 2 Barn Owls, 1 Great Horned Owl. Weather was foggy early, before clearing for 12 participants.”

Central Valley Birding Symposium, Stockton (11/20-23) – More than 325 birders from California and beyond enjoyed field trips. A first for the symposium was a

Brown Pelican that had wandered from its usual coastal haunts and was recorded at the O'Neill Forebay of San Luis Reservoir in Merced County. Other noteworthy bird finds included a White-winged Scoter, another coastal bird that was seen at O'Neill Forebay; Yellow-bellied Sapsucker at Lodi Lake, a Western Kingbird near the Lodi Sewer ponds, extremely rare for the season, and three Brown Creepers at the Bufferlands of the Sacramento County Regional Sanitation District. John Trochet and Jeri Langham found 125 species at Cosumnes Preserve on their full day tour.

Lake Solano (11/19) – Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Seven birders tallied 56 species on this outing to this great birding location. Highlights included a few of our most beautiful ducks -Wood Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Barrow's Goldeneye and Hooded Merganser. Among other birds of note were Loggerhead Shrike, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Purple Finch. The “Most Wanted” on our wish-list was the Pileated Woodpecker. Thanks to Lea Landry, everyone in the group got wonderful looks at a female Pileated. It was one of five woodpecker species seen by the group. The others were Acorn, Downy, Nuttall's and Northern Flicker. The trip ended with great looks at a male

Phainopepla. A fun day in the field for all.”

Sacramento County Delta (11/16) – Leader Chris Conard reported: “At our first stop, Korth's Marina on Brannan Island Road, there were tremendous numbers of geese flying over. Among them were Greater White-fronted, Snow, and Ross's Goose. Two subspecies of Cackling Goose were represented (Aleutian, ssp. leucopareia, and “Cackling,” ssp. minima). The only regular Valley species of goose not recorded was Canada! Rounding out the sightings were flyover Sandhill Cranes and numerous Tree Swallows over the San Joaquin River. The rest of the day was a little slow by comparison, perhaps because a cold snap hadn't yet sent large numbers of raptors and sparrows to the Delta. At Brannan Island State Recreation Area, we had great views of a Sharp-shinned Hawk and a Red-breasted Sapsucker (and the trees the sapsucker and its brethren had riddled with holes). At Sherman Island, we had numerous Common Ravens, pretty rare elsewhere in Sacramento County, several Bonaparte's Gulls, a Mew Gull, and a few Glaucous-winged Gulls. While a few places were pretty slow birdwise, we had beautiful weather and great views of the open country.”

Pete Hayes

GALT, 2ND ANNUAL WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The City of Galt is hosting its 2nd Annual Winter Bird Festival, Saturday, January 17, at the McCaffrey Middle School facility located in Galt. The purpose of this event is to advance public awareness and conservation of the regions wildlife. Sandhill Cranes, Canadian Geese, Tundra Swans, pintails, and hundreds of other birds call Galt and its surrounding cities home. The Winter Bird Festival will offer the community a chance to spend time discovering, learning, and educating themselves on the importance of these feathered creatures as well as the wetlands, agriculture, and open space which are all crucial to their survival. See page 4 for a field trip to view Sandhill Cranes on Sunday, January 18.

The festival's events will include a variety of specialized tours to the Cosumnes River Preserve, a youth Art Gallery showcasing Galt Elementary School children's drawings of migratory and resident winter birds, performances and live entertainment, workshops, guest speakers, local food vendors and much more. For more information see their website at www.ci.galt.ca.us, or call their 24 hour recorded information line at 209-366-7220.

JACK LAW DRAWING CLASS SIGN-UPS

Effie Yeaw Nature Center -what a perfect place to learn how to draw from nature! Don't forget to mark your calendars for an all day drawing class with Jack Muir Laws at the Center on April 16. The cost will be \$125 (for SAS members) and will be quick to fill. So if you are interested please contact Julie Serences at education@sacramentoaudubon.org for further information and pre-registration sign-ups. Jack will be also be giving a presentation at our General Meeting the evening of the 16th.

DON'T FORGET THESE BIRDING CLASSES!

Join local birder and SAS field trip leader Maureen Geiger, in a class for new enthusiasts that covers all the basics of how to be a birdwatcher. The class is offered at the **Learning Exchange** on Howe Avenue, February 25 and March 4 from 7-8:30pm followed by a field trip on Saturday, March 7th. Contact Maureen at 444-0804 or the Learning Exchange at 929-9200 for more information. The Learning Exchange web address is www.learningexchange.com.

Introduction to Ornithology, will be offered this coming Spring Semester at Sacramento City College. This course covers the ecology, behavior, and identification of birds, and will meet on Fridays beginning on January 23, 2009. Lecture will be from 11:30am - 12:50pm, and lab from 1:30 - 4:35pm, in Lillard Hall, Room 109. Please contact Professor Alexis Ackerman if you have questions (ackerma@scc.losrios.edu).

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Grant Boice
Joel H Hornstein
Ann L Meckfessel
Cat Scrima
Nancy Sweeney
Larry A Thurmond

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

John Davidson, Don Lee, Jane Taylor and Jim Waddell to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Don Lee to the **General Fund**.

Lachlan McClenahan and Sara Gillespie to **Bobelaine**.

Marlene Ishihara made a donation to the **Conservation and Education Fund** in memory of Sheila Martignetti Deaner.



In Memoriam

Sheila Martignetti Deaner

Sheila was a SAS Board Member, Field Trip Leader, advocate for habitat protection and organic farming and one of Sacramento Audubon's most enthusiastic birders. She was always ready to go birding and had traveled all 7 continents and 40 countries in search of her passion. Sheila was an educator at CSUS for 33 years. Memorials may be made in her name to the SAS Education Fund. Her friendly manorism and smile will be missed by all.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be held next year on January 27, 2009, at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

Observations continued from page 8 to thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Steve Abbott, Roger Adamson, Terry Colborn, Andy Engilis, Tim Fitzer, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Doug Herr, Scott Hoppe, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Jim Laughlin, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino, Phil Robertson, Jim Rowth, Mary Schiedt, John Sterling, John Trochet, Bobby Walsh, Ed Whisler, Dan Williams, and David Yee.

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

Chris Conard

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.

Seasonal Observations

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

While there were no major standout reports this month, there were a lot of good birds seen. **Pine Siskins** continued to be reported in good numbers (and were downright common in Davis), though fewer were seen in some areas toward the end of the month. As is appropriate for the time of year, waterfowl were well represented among the reports.

On 11/2, there were an impressive 22 **Blue-winged Teal** at the Davis Wetlands. A **Greater Scaup** was reported at Sutter NWR on 11/11, a female **Surf Scoter** was found at the Lincoln WTP on 11/4 through 11/7, and a **Red-breasted Merganser** was on the American River near Gristmill on 11/18, while two were on the Yolo County Rd 103 pond on 11/19. On 11/28, a hybrid **Bufflehead X Common Goldeneye** was reported at Lake Solano.

A **Yellow-shafted Northern Flicker** was found at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 11/2. It was well studied to rule out an intergrade with a **Red-shafted Northern Flicker**. These intergrades account for nearly all of the flickers in our area showing yellow-shafted characteristics. **"Western" Flycatchers** (probably **Pacific-slope Flycatchers**) were reported at CRP on 11/1 and 11/14, with two on 11/29. Also at CRP on 11/29, a **"Solitary" Vireo** was found, but was not seen well enough to identify to species, and a grosbeak was found (likely a **Black-headed Grosbeak**).

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

Return Service Requested

Dated Material: Please Expedite Delivery

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit #2310
Sacramento, CA

Most astonishing that day at CRP were 11 **White-throated Sparrows**—perhaps the single-day record for one location in the Sacramento area. Rounding out the Cosumnes reports were a **Swamp Sparrow** on 11/28 and two **Cassin's Finches** on 11/9. A **Long-eared Owl** and a **Canyon Wren** were found on private land in southeastern Sacramento County that is part of the CRP Project. For the lat-

ter species, this is only the second record for the county since 1967.

A bedraggled **Western Kingbird** found near the Lodi Sewer Ponds during the Central Valley Birding Symposium (11/22-23) was extremely rare for the season. Other interesting reports include a male **Costa's Hummingbird** at UC Davis on 11/20, a **Red-naped Sapsucker** in Galt throughout the month, a **Townsend's Solitaire** at Lake Solano on 11/2, a mini-invasion of **Steller's Jays** on 11/8 and 11/9 (near Gristmill, in Orangevale, Newcastle, and near Lincoln), and a **Cassin's Finch** in Davis on 11/18. A Swainson's Hawk was seen at the Yolo WA on 11/15, over 50 **Cattle Egrets** were regularly reported at Glenbrook Park adjacent to the American River, an adult **Western Gull** was at Sherman Island on 11/11, two **Pacific Golden-Plovers** were on Flannery Rd south of Dixon on 11/8, and 60-65 **Mountain Plovers** were there on 11/29.

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit www.cvbirds.org and click "Listserv" for details. With over 100 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want

Observations continued on page 7

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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

Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

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

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

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

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

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