

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 68 • NO. 1

JANUARY 2016

General Meeting

Thursday, January 21, 2016
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

Our Changing Oceans
Ron LeValley

In the past few years we have seen incredible concentrations of anchovies and krill along our coast at the same time that starfish have been dying. Now the ocean is very warm and the Humpback and Blue Whales are close to shore. What is going on? Our ocean is warming, there are increasing levels of carbon dioxide dissolved in the water and sea level is rising. There are increasing amounts of plastic in our ocean as well. These have far-reaching consequences to our marine animals and those of us living along the coast. While not everything is predictable, there are certainly some trends that are obvious. One of the aspects of our local region is an eddy in the California Current that changes our annual ocean conditions.

Ron will be discussing these trends and changes and how they are affecting our local climate and the local ocean. Part of the presentation will be the changes we are observing in the local marine life, especially changes in distribution and seasonal trends. He will also be discussing some ideas of what we can expect from El Nino, the Pacific Decadal Oscillation and other long term trends in oceanography; and what we can do to help the future of our local oceans.

Biologist Ron LeValley has an extensive understanding of natural history subjects. A lifelong interest in marine birds and mammals was enhanced by his involvement with Point Reyes Bird Observatory beginning in 1966, including serving as a biologist at the Farallon Island research station. Ron gathered a world-wide perspective on ecological issues when he founded, and for 15 years directed Biological Journeys, a pioneering ecotourism company.

Ron graduated from Sacramento State College in 1969 with a B.A. degree in Biology and received his M.A in Biology from Humboldt State University in 1980. He is affiliated with numerous professional ornithological organizations.

Ron also has been enamored with photography for the past 40 years and as a professional photographer, Ron has compiled an impressive collection (over 90,000 images!) of wildlife and nature photographs that he uses for presentations and publications. He is a founding member of the Mendocino Coast Photographer Guild and Gallery, in Fort Bragg CA, where his work can be seen.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Carmichael. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions. To keep up with current happenings follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/Sacramento Audubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

Sally Walters Schmoldt, Program Chair

Young Birders

5TH ANNUAL KIDS' CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

The Kids CBC is a great event with an exciting opportunity to get kids and young adults outside looking at birds and nature! Join the SAS Fifth Annual Kids' Christmas Bird Count, organized this year by Mara Weston. Families can join citizen scientists all over the world and practice finding, identifying and counting all the birds they see, followed by a companionable lunch with other birder families. **Mark your calendars for the morning of Saturday, January 9, 2016** (CORRECTED DATE!) at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Interested families and young adults can register online at the EYNC website, www.sacnaturecenter.net. You can reach Mara with any questions at 208-3222 or email at mara_weston@yahoo.com.

2015 ARHNA COUNT

Count coordinator Bill Avery reported: "Overall the results were fairly typical with a few possible exceptions, possibly due to the fact that it was once again the warmest year on record and the second year of an ongoing drought.

Canvasbacks were noted in great abundance again, 4500, on the Quarry Pond near Discovery Park but notable absences included: Northern Harrier, Common Gallinule, Mew Gull, Tree Swallow, Golden-crowned Kinglet and Savanna Sparrow. Possible declines in numbers included Common Mergansers, White-throated Swifts, Cedar Waxwings, Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-crowned Sparrows.

It is interesting to note that Tree Swallows were absent and White-throated Swifts declined suggesting that these species may be similarly affected by the high temperatures and drought conditions. Nobody spotted a Bald Eagle or a Common Loon this year."

Field Trip Findings

Humbug Creek, Folsom (12/16) — Leader Deb Weston reported: “Even though it was a chilly 30 degrees, six bundled-up birders had a great walk along Humbug Creek. It was a pleasure to have Alison with us on her first SAS field trip and hope to see her on future trips. Highlights included large numbers of Northern Mockingbirds, Ruby-crowned Kinglets that weren’t too shy, several Common Gallinules and a close fly-by Cooper’s Hawk on a mission. To top it off, a young Red-tailed Hawk landed not far from us with a fresh rat for breakfast so we could take our time watching him enjoy his meal through the scope. It was a really fun day with 36 species seen.”

Robinson Road (12/12) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Ann Burris, reported: “Twelve people adventured to Robinson, Flannery and MacCormack Roads for a day of birding. Highlights were 6 Ferruginous Hawks, 9 Loggerhead Shrikes, 4 Burrowing, 1 Great Horned, and 1 Barn owl and the best for last, 5 Mountain Plovers! It was a beautiful day, lots of laughs with really fun people.”

Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River (12/6) — Leader Ed Harper reported: “The rainy weather cleared in time for a perfect mid-morning trip for a determined group of birders that wanted to learn more about gull identification. The gull study was upstaged at its start by the Peregrine Falcon that has staked out the area for the past 6 or 7 winters. To our amazement, it quickly snatched a White-throated Swift. Through our scopes we watched openmouthed as it devoured its hapless prey from its favorite perch, the cable wire crossing the American River. It had hardly finished its meal when another Peregrine came into view and the resident bird took chase resulting in an aerial dog fight before our awestruck eyes. Our victorious Peregrine returned to its perch and we finally got to our gull-watching. The gulls performed beautifully, lining up perfectly, with different age classes added to the mix. The highlight was a 2nd cycle Mew Gull that perched on a cable wire for comparison with nearby Ring-billed and California gulls. Herring Gulls and Glaucous-winged Gulls added to the show while multitudes of salmon rolled and smashed in the river. Both Common and Barrow’s goldeneyes provided a good study in addition to a number of passerines that included scope views of

Phainopepla. The trip ended shortly after noon with 42 species of birds on the list and a greater understanding and appreciation of gulls.”

Bay Area Birding (12/6) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Technically, the trip was cancelled due to bad weather, but, I went to the meeting site just to be sure. I would have felt bad if someone showed up and I wasn’t there. One person did show up and we decided, because of the forecast of possible rain and windy conditions in the Bay Area, that we would just spend the morning at Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. Being local, it wouldn’t be too bad if we folded early. Turned out we had a great time, tallying around 60 species. The highlight of the morning was a Pacific Golden-Plover. There were also thousands of geese and other waterfowl. And the weather wasn’t all that bad.”

American River Natural History Association Wildlife Count (12/5) — See the report on the first page.

Lincoln Grasslands, Trip 1 (11/28) — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “We were first up to tally the most species with 6 people joining us for the day. Some of the highlights for the day were 2 Bald and Golden Eagles, Burrowing Owl, Lewis’s Woodpeckers, Eared and Horned Grebes, Wilson’s Snipe, Rock Wren, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Common Yellowthroat, and Peregrine Falcon. Total for the day was 102 species.”

Lincoln Grasslands, Trip 2 (11/29) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “We had a good day with 11 birders. We tallied 102 species, which tied with trip #1 on Saturday. Highlights included: Cattle Egret (which is fairly rare for Placer County), Bald Eagle, Virginia Rail, Sora and Burrowing Owl.”

King Ranch/Lynch Canyon in Solano County (11/22) — Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Ken Poerner, reported: “As usual in these open areas of rolling hills, it was raptor heaven, with kestrels and

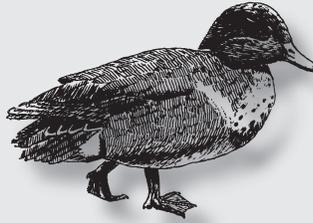
a Prairie Falcon; a variety of red-tails including juveniles, dark-morph and very light birds; a dark morph rough-leg (pretty sure, this was a very complicated bird to ID!); a pair of Golden Eagles that just kept popping up; and Northern Harriers and White-tailed Kites. In addition, there were the other usual suspects for this area such as a high number of Rock Wrens and Say’s Phoebes and several Loggerhead Shrikes. These are truly amazing places to bird, and next year we will offer this trip on a non-Symposium weekend so more birders can enjoy it!

William Pond Park (11/21) — Leader Cathie, LaZier reported: “Eight birders joined me for this sunny morning walk. After a slow start we had great scope views of a covey of California Quail. Red-shouldered Hawks were noisy and we had the usual flocks of crowned sparrows and goldfinches. Large flocks of Bufflehead and several Hooded Mergansers were on the water. E-bird says 44 species for the morning.”

Sacramento Bar (11/19) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Nine birders saw 56 species on a very pleasant mid November morning. Highlights included Spotted Sandpiper, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Bufflehead, Barrow’s Goldeneye and Bald Eagle.”

Ponds Near Cal Expo and Costco. American River Parkway (11/14) — Leader Jane Taylor reported: “A nano-group of just three met at the appointed time and place, and since it was a beautiful morning, we decided to continue despite a dearth of participants. We were glad we persevered, because we had good morning light and sufficient pond water to showcase Wood Ducks and Mallards paired up in colorful plumage; a posing Green Heron; a close-up Bewick’s Wren; and numerous crowned sparrows, towhees and blackbirds, and a deer. Despite being overtaken by marathoners on a Saturday morning run, we tallied 35 bird species as we walked about 3 miles, and we marveled at the relative diversity of wildlife in this urban, intensely-used setting.”

Pete Hayes



Green-winged Teal
Stephen D’Amato

Field Trips



Northern Harrier
Stephen D'Amato

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, for trips through January 24, contact the scheduler Tim Fitzer, spskua2@comcast.net, 870-5207. From January 25th on, contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, offleash56@yahoo.com, 761-1124.

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

Friday, January 1, 9am New Year's Day at the Cosumnes River Preserve

Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
Spskua2@comcast.net

Start the New Year off right; go birding! Wintering Sandhill Cranes, Greater White-fronted Geese and a wide variety of duck species frequent the preserve. Yellowlegs and Wilson's Snipe will be in the shallower water, and other shorebirds are possible. Tim will walk along the wetland ponds, stopping at the "Ducks In Scopes" activity and then going out to the renovated boardwalk viewing area. Meet at the CRP Visitor Center parking lot. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. This is an enjoyable trip for everyone, and beginners and families are welcome. See directions for the December 26th trip.

Saturday, January 2, 8am Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR Leaders: Daniel and Pam Thompson 359-3777, keiran@surewest.net

Join Pam and Daniel 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 \$4.32 per person charge at Gray

Lodge, and it's wise to bring the exact amount for the Iron Ranger.

Sunday, January 3 FOLSOM CHRISTMAS COUNT Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610 conardc@gmail.com

Monday, January 4, 8am Mather Lake Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661 MarkSawyer3383@yahoo.com

Mather Lake is one of our most popular birding locations, with quite a list of bird species. Join Mark to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, American Bittern, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe and Common Yellowthroat. If you bring your camera Mark may give you some photography tips as well. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Wednesday, January 6, 8am Colusa National Wildlife Refuge Leader: Dan Tankersley, 662-1290 dtankers@winfirst.com

The Colusa NWR is a great location 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 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 to finish our outing to this wonderful NWR. 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, January 9, 8am Tonzi Road and Western Amador County Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636 calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Join Gary on a trip featuring the waters and back-country roads of the Sierra foothills in western Amador County. There is a surprising variety and number of passerines and raptors in this area, with a possibility of Lewis's Woodpeckers, Hermit and Varied Thrushes, sparrows, Prairie Falcons and Ferruginous Hawks. This trip also includes stops for waterfowl and shorebirds at ponds near Sutter Creek and Ione. We may also stop at Lake Comanche, where a day-use fee is charged. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along hand held radios if you have them, food and water. Meet Gary at the Local Bean Cafe in the Rancho Murieta shop-

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Field Trips continued from page 3

ping center. Turn right at the 1st traffic light; junction of Hwy 16 (Jackson Rd) and Murieta Drive, and right again just past the fire station.

Saturday, January 9
Sacramento Kids' Christmas Bird Count
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Compiler: Mara Weston, 208-3222
mara_weston@yahoo.com

See page 1 for full details.

Sunday, January 10, 8am
Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley
Leader: Craig Swolgaard,
530-334-3023, cswol@sbcglobal.net

This day will focus on wintering raptors. A published study found that California's Central Valley is one of the richest wintering areas for raptors in the country. The trip will begin at Meiss and Dillard Roads and end at Clay Station and Dillard Roads following a 33 mile loop used as a survey route in a past study. Many species of raptors have been found along this productive drive during the winter months, including Golden Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, White-tailed Kite, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and Burrowing Owl.

This is also a good area to find Mountain Bluebirds in winter and has potential for other vagrants. Meet Craig at the small public parking lot on Highway 16 and Sunrise Blvd at 8am. We will car pool to try and keep the car numbers down, as some of the route uses pullouts on a busy highway. Bring a spotting scope if possible. Trip may go into early afternoon so water and food may be a good idea.

Wednesday, January 13, 8am
Sweetwater Creek
Leader: Craig DeMartini, 599-3300
Cloudwalk7@icloud.com

The variety of habitats in this area; lake, riparian forest, and chaparral, are good for wintering birds, and those that have moved down-slope. Some possibilities are Steller's Jay, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Mountain Quail, Golden-crowned Kinglet, California Thrasher, Mountain Bluebird, Band-tailed Pigeon, eagles and Osprey. The wildcard will be the weather. A lot of rain will make the creek a raging torrent, and the walk down to the lake could be muddy, so dress accordingly. Meet Craig at the Bella Bru in the El Dorado Hills shopping center. From Hwy 50 east take Exit #30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north

under the freeway to the shopping center on your right. Rain on the trip day cancels.

Saturday, January 16, 8am
Sacramento National Wild Life Refuge
Leader: John York, 409-9276
Johnyork157@yahoo.com

First stop will be Colusa Wildlife Refuge, checking out the viewing platform, (restrooms available), and then on to SNWR. 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. Note there is a fee for each vehicle at the SNWR refuge: either \$6 for a day pass or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass, or buy a Duck Stamp and support all our national refuges. 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.

Saturday, January 16, 10:30am
Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

This family friendly nature walk will be at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Reservations are not needed, families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists/birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net.

Sunday, January 17, 8am
Robinson Road, Road 113 and Bird's Landing
Leaders: Mark Martucci,
833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com
Paul Cordero: pkcordero@gmail.com

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

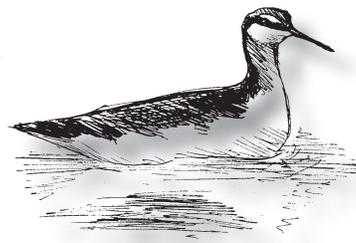
entrance a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip.

Wednesday, January 20, 9am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Mara Weston, 208-3222
Mara_weston@yahoo.com

Sandhill Cranes, Northern Harriers, Wilson's Snipe and Ring-necked Ducks are just a few of the birds Mara will be looking for as she walks the trails of this wetland and riparian preserve. Meet her at the Visitor Center parking lot for an enjoyable morning of birding. This is a great trip for all levels of birders. 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.

Saturday, January 23, 8am
Salt Springs Valley
Leader: Linda Pittman, 715-1876
pittmanl@frontiernet.net
(email preferred)

This area in western Calaveras County is about an hour and a half drive from Sacramento. The open valley and its lake are home to many wintering ducks, hawks,



Phalarope sp.
Kirsten Munson

eagles, owls and grassland birds. The trip will last into the late afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. Bring FRS radios and scopes if you have them. Meet at the Galt Park and Ride.

From Sacramento, take Hwy 99 south to the Twin Cities Rd/Hwy 104 exit (#277); turn left (east) on Twin Cities Rd, cross the freeway and turn right (south) on Stockton Blvd. The Park and Ride is just south of Twin Cities Road.

Sunday, January 24, 8am
Lincoln Grasslands/West Placer Co.
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
Shoppe01@surewest.net

The Lincoln area 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, and Lewis's Woodpecker are all possible. Join Scott for a full day of exploring this diverse area and bring liquids, lunch and FRS radios if you have them. Meet at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue past the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Sunday, January 24, 3:45pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Sandhill Cranes, and 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, January 30, 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 have had as many as 121 species on this trip. 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; then to the Yolo Bypass, 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.

Saturday, January 30, 3:45pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

This is the prime time to see our Sandhill Cranes, as well as a variety of ducks, swans, geese, and shorebirds feeding in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, with hawks patrolling overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center deck at 3:30pm to hear a brief talk about Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll follow



Bald Eagle
 Photo Illustration

the trail at Lost Slough Wetlands, for views of the cranes, waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather and bring binoculars. Scopes are helpful. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners and for families

Sunday, January 31
Birding the Best Places
Leader: Tim Manolis, 485-9009
ylightfoot@aol.com

Tim is going to take you birding where the best birds are. He'll choose the best birding spot shortly before the trip, so contact him about a week before to find the meeting time and place. Don't miss this trip; it's good for beginners and experienced birders.

Sunday, January 31, 3:45pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
Save Our Sandhill Cranes and Sacramento Audubon
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

See information for January 30th trip.

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

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

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

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations, and he usually turns up quite a list of bird species. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron and Common Yellowthroat. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd, take the first left into the

Field Trips continued on page 6

Field Trips continued from page 5

park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

**Sunday, February 7, 8am
Beals Point**

**Leader: Deb Weston, 337-2818
notsewbed@mac.com**

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

Monday, February 8, 8:30

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

**Leader: Mark Sawyer, 968-1661
MarkSawyer3383@yahoo.com**

Join Mark in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl as well as raptors. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A) on your left, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS radios and scopes are helpful on this trip, which is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Trip will end before noon. If the bypass is closed due to flooding, the trip is canceled.

February, 13, 14 and 15

Presidents' Day Weekend

Fort Bragg/Mendocino area

**Leader: Linda Pittman
pittmanl@frontiernet.net
(email preferred)**

715-1876

Join Linda for three days of birding in Mendocino County. This year we will be

birding on the north coast in the Fort Bragg and Mendocino area and possibly an inland site or two. Please contact Linda for details, a list of accommodations and to RSVP.

**February 12 through 15
Great Backyard Bird Count
www.birdsource.org/gbbc**

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

February 13, 8am

**Buck's Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway,
El Dorado Hills**

A GBBC trip

**Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804,
281-6652**

mkggeiger@comcast.net

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

Sunday, February 14, 8am

River Bend Park

A GBBC trip

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

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

Wednesday, February 17, 8am

William Pond Park

**Leader: Larry Hickey, 962-0387
Larryhickey1@gmail.com**

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

**SCHEDULE THE GREAT
BACKYARD BIRD COUNT**

FOR FEBRUARY 12-15, 2016

Greetings from the Great Backyard Bird Count team at Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada! We want to remind you to mark your calendars for the 19th GBBC, coming up February 12 through 15, 2016. Because the GBBC is integrated with the eBird program you can start practicing now at ebird.org. Count statistics from all over the world generate much needed information for scientists about bird populations and movements. Last year a total of 18,726,079 birds were counted worldwide. The birdcount.org site also contains a gallery of participants' bird photography including contest winners and category itemization by criteria such as behavior and habitat.

Now there are dedicated GBBC apps for android and iOS platforms. The BirdLog app from BirdsEye is the exclusive mobile data entry app for the Great Backyard Bird Count that allows you to:

- Plot the exact location of your sightings using your phone's GPS
- Easy 1 tap to increment species counts
- Create new personal locations or choose an existing hotspot or personal location for your checklist
- Create checklists even when there is no cell coverage for later submission
- Enter birds quickly and easily as you see them using bird codes or full names
- Scroll and review your checklist before submitting it

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

2015-2016 DUCK STAMPS

Duck Stamps Are for Bird Watchers, Too.

One of the easiest ways that anyone can support bird habitat conservation is by buying Federal Duck Stamps—among the most successful conservation tools ever created to protect habitat for birds and other wildlife. A current Federal Duck Stamp is also a free pass into any national wildlife refuge that charges an entry fee. Because nearly all of the proceeds are used to conserve habitat for birds and other wildlife, birders, nature photographers and other outdoor enthusiasts buy Duck Stamps to help ensure that they can always see wildlife at their favorite outdoor spots.

Federal Duck Stamps are conservation revenue stamps; 98% of the purchase price goes directly to help acquire and protect wetland habitat and purchase conservation easements for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Wetlands acquired with Duck Stamp dollars help purify water, aid in flood control, reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, and enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.



Ruddy Duck
2015-2016 Duck Stamp
Artist: Joseph Hautman

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

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

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

January 2016: Friday, New Year's Day,
Saturdays, 1/2, 1/16, and 1/23
Sundays, 1/10 and 1/31

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

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2016

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Saturday, January 30
Sunday, February 28

Registration: Required and limited to 10 participants

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

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

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

Birding and Nature Events

20TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 20th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 15-18, 2016**. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the Pacific Flyway. The area offers pristine beaches, beautiful state parks, an excellent natural history museum, panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and, best of all, thousands of birds. Over 200 species are usually sighted during the Festival weekend—204 species in 2014. Registration will remain open until January 5th at morrobaybirdfestival.org or call 805-234-1170.

9TH 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 9th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, January 23, 2016**. 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! Tours also include a sunrise photo tour, Howard Ranch vernal pools, and sunset tours to Woodbridge Road and Staten Island.

Google 'Galt Birding Festival' for more detailed information. Registration for the 9th annual festival is already open so check online or call so you don't miss any of your favorite tours. If you have any questions please call 209-366-7115.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL OF THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

Registration is open for the 17th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 27-31, 2016**. There are currently over 60 different field trips, workshops and presentations planned. There are also lots of free activities and exciting events planned for youth and families. Something for everyone! There's also something new this year with specialty tours. They include: Eagle Creek Ranch Ecotour: Safaristyle birding tours; Gage's Ecotour: Bird-viewing Drift Boat down the mighty Sac and Feather Rivers; and Forebay Aquatic Center of Lake Oroville,

Registration has begun and many of their field trips fill up fast. Further information can be found at snowgoosefestival.org or by email at info@snowgoosefestival.org and phone 530-345-1865.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON FUTURE PROGRAMS

2016

- February 18** Maya Khosla, *Black-backed Woodpeckers*
- March 17** Eric C Hansen, *Giant Gartersnake*
- April 21** Ed Harper, *Birding Alaska*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Jean Alford, Richard Begley, Diana Benner, Wayne Blunk, Gregory Crandall, Fred Klass, Judith Lamare, Eric Liskay, Lachlan McClenahen, Muriel Parker, and Harry White made donations to the **General Fund**.

Jean Alford, Marilyn Armbruster, Judith Bell, Elliot Chasin, Betty Cooper, Mark Eiden, Nancy Gilbert, JM Langham, Eric Liskay, Patricia Moses, Muriel Parker, Marie Putnam, Louis Regenmorter, Craig Swolgaard, Jan Tankersley, Harry White, and Dee Warencia made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

The Board of Directors would like your help in raising \$15,000 for Education and Conservation projects in 2015-16. Please donate generously.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CBC DATES FOR 2016

Sunday, January 3, 2016, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610, e-mail: conardc@gmail.com

**Saturday, January 9, 2016, 4th Annual
Sacramento Kids' Christmas Count**

Compiler: Mara Weston, 208-3222, mara_weston@yahoo.com

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit natureali.org/cbcs.html.

ONLINE DONATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP NOW AVAILABLE

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

THE CENTRAL VALLEY BIRD CLUB'S YOUTH BIRDING CAMP AND SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The David Yee Scholarship Fund will provide annual scholarships to birding camps for young club members. Camps include the ABA camps but also camps closer to home in the Sierras, Seattle and Arizona.

Both the selection criteria and award process will include elements directly related to birding. For all camps, the scholarship will pay for the cost of the registration for the youth participant while transportation will be the responsibility of the participant. Application deadline is February 15, 2016 but remember camp registration may be much sooner. Information can be found at cvbirds.org/youth-scholarship-fund.html.

American Birding association Youth Camp registration is open and scholarships are available at their site also. Their 2016 ABA Young Birder Camps, are held in Colorado and Delaware. They expect all programs to fill quickly, so if you are thinking of attending, reserve your spot now at events.aba.org/aba-young-birder-camps/.

Seasonal Observations

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

As fall turned toward winter, most of the regular winter birds were established in their usual haunts. Each minor storm was watched with anticipation to see if it might help end the drought, but at the time of this writing, rainfall has been occasional and too modest to make much of a dent in the deficit of recent years. A gynandromorph **Gadwall**, left side male and right side female, was an intriguing find at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 11/1 at the Lost Slough Wetlands. A **Greater Scaup**, rare regionally away from the Delta, was found with a **Lesser Scaup** along the American River Parkway near Sailor Bar on 11/30. On 11/3, seven female **Red-breasted Mergansers** were spotted on Folsom Lake near Mormon Island, and another female was at the Lodi Sewage Ponds on 11/21.

The few **Rough-legged Hawk** reports included singles at the Conaway Ranch on 11/2, the Davis WTP on 11/9, Sacramento International Airport on 11/11, and one obviously in transit over upper Lake Natoma on 11/14. **Ferruginous Hawk** reports were widespread, but four, including a dark morph, along with 22 **Red-tailed Hawks** near Rds 97 and 25A in Yolo County on 11/18 were notable. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA) was reported on 11/5, with one to two continuing throughout the month. Another **Pacific Golden-Plover** was found on 11/16 along Abel Road on the south side of Colusa NWR. A **Marbled Godwit** was found along the entrance road to YBWA on 11/18, but more surprising were 11 reported along Cherokee Ln near Galt on 11/30. A **Western Sandpiper** was a nice find for the season among a large flock of **Dunlin** and **Least Sandpipers** in flooded rice fields near the intersection of Kempton

Rd and Brewer Rd in eastern Sutter County. A **Red-necked Phalarope** was a surprising find in a large puddle near Mormon Island at Folsom Lake on 11/3, while the latest report for the season was one continuing at the Woodland WTP on 11/4. An adult **Western Gull** was found at Touchstone Lake in West Sacramento on 11/25.

Band-tailed Pigeon reports included two at Upper Sunrise along the ARP on 11/6, seven at Sailor Bar on 11/7, one at Garcia Bend Park in the Pocket Area of Sacramento on 11/26, one at the SRWTP Bufferlands on 11/22, and 27 at Michigan Bar on 11/28. A **Common Poorwill** on Michigan Bar Rd, north of the Cosumnes River on 11/14, was quite late in the season. A **Long-eared Owl** was a nice find at a closed portion of CRP on 11/29; one or two have been recorded from this portion of CRP in most recent fall/winter seasons. Two **Steller's Jays** were reported north of the Michigan Bar Bridge on 11/26-30, and

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Dianna Benner Marie Putnam
Erick Cooke Luis Regenmorter
Margaret Keys Colleen Valentine
Mary and Phil
Laing

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on January 26, 2016 at 7pm. The new address for the Board meetings is Lemon Grass Cafe Meeting Room, 601 Munroe St, Sacramento, 95825.

Minutes of Board Meetings through April 2015 can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to Board Minutes.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

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

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

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two **Mountain Bluebirds** were found on 11/14 near the Manzanita Cemetery north of Lincoln. A **MacGillivray's Warbler** found on 11/29 at CRP was an excellent report this late in the season. Late **Wilson's Warblers** were found at CRP on 11/8 and at Delta Meadow's State Park near Walnut Grove on a 11/20 Central Valley Birding Symposium trip. A **Red Crossbill** invasion continued to build with reports along Putah Creek near Pedrick Rd on 11/1, three in Natomas on 11/17 near West El Camino Ave and Capitol Oaks Dr, and 10 in downtown Winters on 11/21—check back in December. And lastly, four **Evening Grosbeaks** were reported flying over Slide Hill Park in east Davis on 11/12.

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 in eBird. It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Roger Adamson, Keith Bailey, Terry Colborn, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Gil Ewing, Michael Gertz, Ted Gilliland, Ben Graber, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Scott Hoppe, Afton Kern, Dan Kopp, Mark Martucci, Gary Mele, Michael Perrone, Jim Rowth, Mark Sawyer, Susan Steele, John Sterling, Michele Swarthout, Craig Swolgaard, Kevin Thomas, Daniel Thomson, John Trochet, Bruce Webb, and Rick Williams.

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.

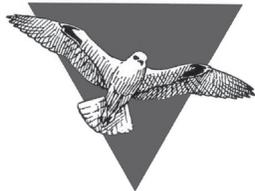
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Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, sawise7@sbcglobal.net

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

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

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

January 21, 2016

Ron LeValley: *Our Changing Oceans*
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 7pm



Brown Booby
Ron LeValley

Brown Boobies are occurring farther north and in greater numbers annually now.