



# The OBSERVER

## Sacramento Audubon Society

### General Meeting

**Thursday, March 15, 2012**

**Effie Yeaw Nature Center  
Assembly Room**

**7pm General Meeting**

**The 38th Parallel**

**Water-Environment-People,  
Around the World**

David Carle

Starting from their home at Mono Lake, where they worked for more than 20 years as park rangers, David and Janet Carle traveled around the world along the 38th Parallel latitude line, seeking water-related environmental and cultural connections. Through Asia, Europe, and the United States, they explored lake, rivers, wetlands, Silk Road oasis towns, ancient water tunnels and cisterns, and learned about dams, aqueducts, and overdrafted groundwater basins—the challenges of ecological and historical consequences of humanity's approach to water management along this temperate latitude. They encountered inspiring stories of dedicated scientists, activists, rangers and resource managers who are striving to address those challenges. They will share photographs and stories from Japan, Korea, China, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Greece, Sicily, Spain, Portugal (including the Azores Islands), and the states along the 38th parallel, from Chesapeake Bay, to San Francisco Bay.

David and Janet Carle are retired California State Park Rangers, who worked the final two decades of their careers at Mono Lake, participating in the long, successful



David and Janet Carle

### ECOS AND HABITAT 2020 REP NEEDED

Sacramento Audubon is seeking a volunteer to serve as the chapter's representative to the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) and Habitat 2020.

Originally founded in the 1970's, ECOS is a coalition of environmental organizations and individuals whose broad focus is protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of the Sacramento Region (including air quality, land use, planning, and open space). The ECOS Board of Directors meets from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on the third Monday of every other month.

Habitat 2020 is a coalition of Sacramento wildlife/habitat organizations, including Sacramento Audubon Society, California Native Plant Society, Sierra Club—Mother Lode Chapter, Friends of the Swainson's Hawk, Save Our Sandhill Cranes, Sacramento Area Creeks Council, and others, whose focus is specifically on protecting and enhancing the Sacramento region's wildlife populations and the habi-

tats upon which they depend. Habitat 2020 meets monthly, on the first Tuesday of every month. Habitat 2020 serves as ECOS' Habitat and Conservation subcommittee, and advises the full ECOS Board on regional wildlife and habitat conservation issues of import to the Sacramento region.

This position is an excellent opportunity for anybody interested in learning more about and getting involved in the local environmental community on a range of important issues that will shape the Sacramento region's future. Duties include attending and participating in ECOS and Habitat 2020 Board meetings, and reporting back to the SAS Board on any matters of import that may arise at those meetings.

Interested persons should contact SAS' Conservation Chair, Keith G. Wagner at 916-709-2308, or by e-mail at [conservation@sacramentoaudubon.org](mailto:conservation@sacramentoaudubon.org).

effort to protect the lake from stream diversions into the Los Angeles aqueduct. Janet still coordinates the volunteer program for the agencies at Mono Lake. David has authored 12 books, including several in the California Natural History Guide series published by the University of California Press. Their book about traveling around the world along the 38th Parallel, beginning from Mono Lake, should be published late in 2012. For more information see "Books by David Carle" webpage at <http://users.qnet.com/~carle>

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](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org) and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions.

*Sally Walters, Program Chair*

## Field Trip Findings

### **The Best of Both Sides! River Bend Park and William Pond Park (2/15)**

— Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Nine people joined me for this mid-week walk. Windy conditions limited the number of birds we saw, but on the William Pond side we did find the Hooded Merganser. Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead and Wood Ducks were on the water, and we managed a few looks at Oak Titmouse, Bushtits and American Pipits. The oak woodland area of River Bend was a little less windy, and we were able to see Yellow-rumped Warblers and White-breasted Nuthatches, as well as Acorn Woodpeckers. Over all we managed to total 45 species, but many were poor looks and several were heard only. John Huls pointed out early blooming Almonds and Acacias, as well as early filaree blossoms.”

### **Buck's Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills (2/11)**

— Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “Buck's Creek was overcast, so light was not very good. But 21 of us still managed to see about 40 species of birds. Highlights included a Barn Owl in a nest box and a short trek to see a Great Horned Owl sitting on a nest near Hwy 50. A White-throated Sparrow was a nice find. Of interest were about a dozen Common Gallinules, all hanging onto the reeds in the marshes well above water level. There were river otters in the area, so we wondered if the gallinules were just staying high enough to be safe from the otters' sharp teeth. Nice to get such good looks at these guys which are often skulky.”

**Beginners Birding Trip (2/10)** — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Two enthusiastic beginning birders, Phil and Kathryn Tulga, joined Dan Tankersley and Cathie LaZier on this beginners' trip at William Pond Park. We started the morning with good scope looks at a singing Bewick's Wren, and then watched a covey of California Quail. Red-shouldered Hawks were cooperative, a Hooded Merganser among the Common Mergansers and Common Goldeneyes was a surprise, and the large Great Blue Heron rookery was active, reminding Kathryn of a condominium. We totaled 40 species for the 3+ hour walk.”

**Birding Yolo County (2/5)** — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “After scouting practically the entire county the day before,

I was very concerned about being able to provide a good birding experience for the trip. I can only attribute the almost complete lack of birds at many normally reliable locations to the strange weather this winter. So, I decided to concentrate on two dependable spots: Lake Solano and Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area. We started out at Lake Solano County Park, and while this is technically not in Yolo County (the county line runs down the middle of Putah Creek), none of the 7 participants seemed to mind at all. In fact, we had a very birdy morning there. Within about 5 minutes, we had a Brown Creeper, Phainopepla and a Black-throated Gray Warbler in the trees by the parking lot. The Black-throated Gray is a somewhat rare winter bird for Northern California, and it is presumed to be the same bird that was found here on the Putah Creek Christmas Bird Count. Within a short while, we had more Phainopepla, Hermit Thrush and other expected perching birds, as well as 10 to 12 Hooded Mergansers, several Common Mergansers and other waterfowl on the creek. Other notables in the Lake Solano area were Sharp-shinned Hawk and Osprey. For the afternoon, we drove east to the Yolo Bypass and enjoyed the usual birds there. Most notable were many Black-bellied Plover (I tallied nearly 250 the day before), another Sharp-shinned Hawk and a relatively tame American Bittern viewed from just a few feet away next to the road. We tallied 80 species for the day. Everyone had a great time, thus relieving my fears from the day before.”

**Pine Hill Preserve (2/4)** — Leader Chris Conard reported: “On a gorgeous clear morning we had excellent views of singing California Thrashers at the Cameron Park unit of Pine Hill Preserve. We proceeded to Pine Hill itself where there were flurries of bird activity on the climb through oak woodlands. Highlights included a Red-breasted Sapsucker that may have had some Red-naped genes, and good looks at a Hutton's Vireo and a female Purple Finch. We were rewarded for our climb with excellent views of the surrounding geography, including the Sierran peaks, Folsom Lake, Sacramento area landmarks, and the Sutter Buttes.”

**Birds of the Sacramento Valley (A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored Trip) (1/29)** — Jackie Delu reported: “Paul Tebbel and Sean Wirth of Save

Our Sandhill Cranes led a group of 25 to view wetland birds at the Cosumnes River Preserve. We saw a group of 20 Sandhill Cranes near the end of the River Walk and then went to Staten Island to view a magnificent sunset silhouetting cranes, Greater White-fronted Geese and Tundra Swans gliding into the flooded fields. We were also privileged to view two Great Horned Owls emerging from the old water tower and each settle on a nearby telephone pole. The cacophony of bird sounds was magical in a backdrop of a magenta sky with majestic Mt. Diablo in the background.”

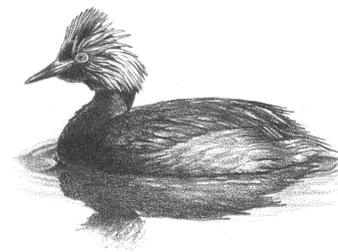
**Nimbus Fush Hatchery (1/28)** — Leader Dan Kopp reported: “On this clear, gorgeous day with little to no wind, I was joined by 25 people. Highlights included an adult Mew Gull along with the four other species of gull, many Phainopeplas, several Barrow's Goldeneye, a flyover male Northern Harrier (uncommon for the Parkway), Western Bluebirds, two Green Herons within the netted off hatchery, many White-throated Swifts, several Tree Swallows and the usual bunch of oak woodland residents and winter visitors. We tallied 59 species.”

**Western Placer County (1/29)** — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Twenty one participants enjoyed a great day of birding this wonderful and diverse area. We traveled from low rolling foothills to flat valley farmlands and grasslands, and while some locations were dry due to the lack of rains, there were enough flooded fields to provide a great diversity of birds. Highlights included Cackling Goose, 4 Ferruginous Hawks, 3 to 4 Bald Eagles, Peregrine Falcon, 3 Great Horned Owls, White-throated Swift and Lewis's Woodpecker. Also of interest was a flock of close to 200 Great-tailed Grackles at the dairy farm on East Catlett Rd. I don't think any of us had seen that many in one flock. Shortly after we stopped to view them, they all flushed and completely disappeared, with not one remaining. We tallied about 98 species overall.”

**Sacramento National Wildlife Area (1/22)** — Leader Andi Salmi reported: “Our tiny group of 3 enjoyed a sometimes-rainy trip to the Colusa and Sacramento Wildlife Refuges. The Falcated Duck at Colusa was a repeat treat for each of us. Both refuges had a nice vari-

*Findings* continued on page 5

# Field Trips



Eared Grebe  
Daniel Kilby

## Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Richard Barbieri, 761-1124, [offleash56@yahoo.com](mailto:offleash56@yahoo.com), for trips through March 4th. For trips from March 5th through April 8th, call the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, [matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@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.

### **Saturday, March 3, 8am** **North Fork Pleasant Grove Creek** **(Roseville area)** **Leader: Scott Dietrich, 208-4976** **sed25@csus.edu**

The North Fork Pleasant Grove open space area is a river flood plain area scattered with old growth Valley Oaks, riparian habitat and a small wetlands area. It's usually a great place to see raptors such as Barn Owl, American Kestrel, Red-tailed Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Red-shouldered Hawk and Cooper's Hawk. Also present are some waterfowl including Wood Duck, Mallard, and often Hooded and Common Merganser. Also seen here are Great Egret, Great Blue Heron and Green Heron. Of course there will still be many winter birds, Northern Flicker, sparrows and finches as well as the resident oak habitat birds, Acorn and Nuttall's Woodpecker, White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse and Western Bluebird. Meet Scott at Paul Dugan Park in the northeast part of Roseville. In Roseville drive north on Woodcreek Oaks Blvd past Blue Oaks Blvd; then turn right onto Diamond Woods Circle and drive a short distance; Paul Dugan Park will be on your right. Or, coming from Sacramento, take I-80 east to Hwy 65; take 65 north to Blue Oaks Blvd; take Blue Oaks Blvd west to Woodcreek Oaks Blvd, and go north on Woodcreek Oaks to Diamond Woods, then right to Paul Dugan Park. (Thomas Bros Map 219 D1, for those without Internet!) This newer area for Sacramento Audubon trips will be of interest to beginning and more experienced birders.

### **Sunday, March 4, 7am** **Highway 37 and Ellis Creek, Petaluma** **Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722** **matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

From the West Sacramento Park and Ride, Mark will lead the group towards Petaluma, with various birding stops along Hwy 37. Moving on to Ellis Creek (near Schollenberger Park), he'll look for Blue-winged Teal and a variety of other waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, Common Yellowthroat and the occasional rail and possibly a Peregrine Falcon. Bring lunch and liquids and layered clothing. Meet Mark at 7am 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. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

### **Saturday, March 10** **ARNHA Bird and Breakfast** **Fund Raiser** **Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 489-4918**

Join Sacramento Audubon leaders for a birding walk followed by a delicious breakfast. This fund raiser for the American River Natural History Association is an annual event, and the leaders usually find nesting Anna's Hummingbirds and Bushtits. Various woodpeckers and other small woodland birds, as well as herons, egrets and waterfowl on the river, will also be seen. Red-shouldered Hawks are frequently found in the oak woodland. This fund raiser supports ARNHA's educational work. For sign-up information and price phone the Nature Center at 489-4918.

### **Saturday, March 10** **Beginning Birding Field Trip for adults** **William Pond Park** **Limited to 10 people; registration** **required**

This field trip is for 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. A brief parking lot talk will focus on choice and use of binoculars and a brief overview of birding etiquette and ethics. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the costs of hand-out materials. The field trip will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats and will be led by two or more experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Each trip is limited to 10 participants. Register via email to Cathie at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net), (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), giving your name, phone number and email address, 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.

### **Sunday, March 11, 8am** **(Note: Daylight Savings Time begins today.)** **Effie Yeaw Nature Center** **Cathie LaZier, 457-6882** **empid@earthlink.net**

This area of the parkway is excellent for birding and Cathie will be looking for early nesting birds and returning migrants, as well as blooming wildflowers. This is a very good trip for beginners, as well as more experienced birders. Meet in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park in Fair Oaks. The trip will end by noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

### **Saturday, March 17** **Family Friendly Trip**

*Field Trips* continued on page 4

*Field Trips* continued from page 3

**Leader: Sheila Green**

**Mather Lake, Rancho Cordova**

These family trips require pre-registration and fill up quickly. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at [mkgieger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgieger@sbcglobal.net), or 444-0804.

**Thursday, March 15, 8am**

**Mather Field Park**

**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722**  
**[matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com)**

Mather Lake is a great area for sparrows, waterfowl and raptors. American Bittern, Great-tailed Grackle and Black-crowned Night Herons are also fairly common here. Meet Mark in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Eagle's Nest Road for this morning trip. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Saturday, March 17, 8am – noon**  
**American River between Watt and Howe**

**Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791**  
**[rey\\_ality@hotmail.com](mailto:rey_ality@hotmail.com)**

Note that Dan is starting from the Watt Avenue access this time. Join him at one of his favorite spots along the Parkway in search of resident and wintering birds. There are well worn trails and some that require a little more work, so depending on everyone's ability, he will decide how strenuous the walk will be. Meet Dan at the Watt Avenue entrance to the Parkway in the first parking lot on the left as you drive in. Park access is off LaRiviera just east of Watt Avenue. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Family Friendly Trip**

**Saturday, March 17**

**Mather Lake, Rancho Cordova**

**Leader: Sheila Green**

These monthly birding and nature walks are specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. There is a trip limit to ensure a quality experience for all. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at [mkgieger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgieger@sbcglobal.net), or 444-0804.

**Sunday, March 18, 7:30am to ~1pm**

**Humbug and Willow Creeks plus**

**Folsom Lake**

**Leader: Chris Conard, 203-1610,**  
**[conardc@gmail.com](mailto:conardc@gmail.com)**

Development in Folsom over the past 25 years covered most of the habitat between

Folsom's city core, Hwy 50 and El Dorado Hills, but small pockets of marshland, oaks and riparian forest remain along Humbug and Willow Creeks, including an impressive array of trails. We'll look for marsh birds, including rails, sparrows and other species on a 3.75-mile loop. If energy and interest persist, we'll continue by checking Folsom Lake and the oak woodlands near Mormon Island (another two miles of walking). We'll meet at the McDonald's (170 Iron Point Rd) by the Folsom Outlets. From Sacramento, take Hwy 50 exit 23 at Folsom Blvd and turn left. Turn right on Iron Point Rd, make a U-turn at the first light and turn into McDonald's.

**Wednesday, March 21, 8am**

**Yolo Wildlife Area**

**Leader: Darrell Mohr, 225-3999**  
**[mohrdd@gmail.com](mailto:mohrdd@gmail.com)**

Join Darrell for this auto-tour route in a wetland area just minutes from Sacramento. Depending on the extent of the flooded fields there should be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl. Swallows, raptors and blackbirds should be well represented also. This is a great trip for both beginning and experienced birders. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. 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 and FRS radios are helpful on this trip which is good for both beginners and more experienced birders. Note: trip will be canceled if bypass is closed due to flooding.

**Saturday, March 24, 7am in West Sac**  
**Golden Gate Park**

**Leader: Ron Story, (707) 762-5276**  
**[ronstorey@ronstorey.com](mailto:ronstorey@ronstorey.com)**

**Co-ordinators: Mark Martucci and**  
**Tim Fitzer**

**Mark: 833-6722**

**[matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com)**

**Tim: 870-5207, [spskua2@comcast.net](mailto:spskua2@comcast.net)**

Meet Tim and Mark at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento to LEAVE at 7am, or meet Ron at 9am at the boat house at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. Ron will lead us to the top of the hill on the island in the middle of Stow Lake. Pigmy Nuthatch, Townsend's Warbler, Allen's Hummingbird and Brown Creeper are common here. In the past this area has produced Tufted Duck. We

will then bird around Middle Lake (Mew Gulls) in the park; then venture to the Sutro Baths area near Ocean Beach and Cliff House. Here we usually see both Turnstones (Ruddy and Black), Surfbirds, and Wandering Tattler. This is an excellent trip for beginners who want to birdwatch outside of their normal areas. Bring a lunch and plan on spending the day birdwatching in San Francisco. For the West Sac Park and Ride take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

**Sunday, March 25, 7:30am**

**Mather Field Park**

**Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457**  
**[wayne.blunk@gmail.com](mailto:wayne.blunk@gmail.com)**

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. The lake and its surrounding grasslands host a wide variety of birds. Great-tailed Grackle and Yellow-headed Blackbirds both nest at the lake. Meet Wayne in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Eagle's Nest Road for this morning trip. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

**Saturday, March 31, 7am**

**Sand Creek Road**

**Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207**  
**[spkua2@comcast.net](mailto:spkua2@comcast.net)**

Join Tim on this early spring morning for a trip to Arbuckle and then up Sand Creek Road. Target birds include California Thrasher, Mountain Quail, Lawrence's Goldfinch and Pileated Woodpecker. The road can be rough and all wheel drive is recommended. Bring a lunch and liquids and be prepared for an afternoon return. 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.

**Sunday, April 1, 8am**

**Sacramento Bar**

**American River Parkway**

**Leader: Paul Cordero, email preferred**  
**[pkcodero@gmail.com](mailto:pkcodero@gmail.com), 454-4061**

Paul will lead you on a morning walk along the American River. You will see a nice variety of resident birds and maybe a few early spring migrants. 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.

**Saturday, April 7, 7am**  
**Caswell Memorial State Park**  
**Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636**  
**calaveri.gary@gmail.com**

Caswell Memorial State Park is located in the Central Valley near the town of Ripon, about an hour south of Sacramento. The park's position along the meandering Stanislaus River affords a combination of water, mature cottonwood riparian and valley oak woodland vegetation. Its multi-level tall tree canopy, low scrubs and vines provide lush cover, nesting and foraging habitat, and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant bird species. For more information about the park, go to [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov), click on "Find A Park" and use the drop-down menu to find Caswell. Passerines, including several species of swallows, sparrows, woodpeckers and warblers are park specialties in spring and summer, and resident Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks, and Great Horned Owls nest here. The park is surrounded by ag lands, so Swainson's Hawks are seen regularly here this time of year. California Thrasher and Wrentit, not that common on the valley floor except in riparian areas, are also here. There is a day-use fee per vehicle to enter the park. We plan to spend several hours in the park along some of the numerous nature trails, so bring food and water. The trails are generally level, but these paths and the vegetation along them may be damp. Dress appropriately. We will meet at the Park and Ride on the east side of Hwy 99 near the Sheldon Rd exit. Take Hwy 99 south from Sacramento to the Sheldon Road exit. The new off ramp here clover-leaf's and then crosses over the freeway. After crossing, proceed to the second signal light; turn right on East Stockton Blvd and proceed about a 1/4 mile to the lot.

**Sunday, April 8, 8am**  
**Sailor Bar, American River Parkway**  
**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722**  
**matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Join Mark for a morning walk checking out the resident birds, and looking for early nesters and spring migrants. Meet Mark at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. This is a good trip for beginners. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

## FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2012

**Location: William Pond Park on the American River**

**Dates, (all Saturdays): March 10 and April 14**

**Time: 8am, ending by noon**  
**Each Trip Limited to 10 participants: Registration required.**

These outings are geared toward people who aren't entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. A brief parking lot talk will focus on choice and use of binoculars and a brief overview of birding etiquette and ethics. A \$5 donation is requested to cover the costs of hand-out materials. (If you're a repeat participant and already have the materials no donation is requested.) You do not need to be a member of Audubon to participate.

The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats and will be led by two or more experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. Register via email to Cathie at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto: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.

## FAMILY FRIENDLY TRIPS

**Saturday, March 17, Mather Lake, Rancho Cordova, Sheila Green**

**Saturday, April 21, Maidu Park, Roseville, Scott Dietrich**

These monthly birding and nature walks are specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. There is a trip limit to ensure a quality experience for all. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at [mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net), or 444-0804.

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ety of the usual duck species, including pintail, shovelors, Green-winged and Cinnamon teals, Eurasian and American wigeon, a good number of Ring-necked Ducks and many others. Snow Geese were plentiful at Colusa, Greater White-fronted Geese at both locations, and a variety of raptors were seen, including Great Horned Owl, Red-tailed and Red-shouldered hawks. Sacramento Wildlife Refuge provided the added highlights of a Blue-winged Teal and 1 adult and 2 juvenile Bald eagles, one feasting on a coot."

**Colusa National Wildlife Area (1/21)** — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: "Valerie Phillips, Terry Atkinson and Harlan Perryman joined me on this beautiful winter morning to bird the Colusa National Wildlife Refuge. Among the 56 species seen by our group, we enjoyed the continuing drake Falcated Duck at the viewing platform. Later, we took the refuge's short, but very enjoyable auto tour route. Highlight birds on that route included American Bittern, Wilson's Snipe, Long-billed Curlew and a very good look at a group of the elgasi race of the Greater White-fronted Goose. Huge numbers of ducks, geese and blackbirds added to the enjoyable experience always found at this wonderful refuge."

**Discovery Park 1/18)** — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: "After a slow start, 8 of us had a really wonderful morning. All the songbirds seemed to be on the ground, right in front of us, including Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Orange-crowned Warbler, and Fox, Lincoln's, Song and the crowned sparrows along with many Spotted Towhees and more Hermit Thrushes than I have ever seen there before at one time—at least a dozen. Common Goldeneyes on the American River were in beautiful light. To finish it off, we watched a very close River Otter lying on a sand bank in the slough, slowly consuming a HUGE fish. Nice trip."

*Pete Hayes*

## WANTED

Donate your old laptop with both DVD and USB port for SAS Education Program and Outreach. Needs to be in perfect working condition. We want to use it on a tabletop to display local bird photos. We are a non-profit association so a donation may be eligible for a tax deduction.

Email: Sally at [bajaowl@gmail.com](mailto:bajaowl@gmail.com)

## Birding and Nature Events

### GODWIT DAYS, ARCATA

The 17th annual Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival is being held **April 19-25** in Arcata, CA. Godwit Days this year is a week long, spring migration bird festival celebrating California's North Coast. Most of the tours are held Thursday through Sunday and then wind down through Wednesday. The northern coast of California offers towering redwoods, rocky ocean coasts, wild river valleys, expansive mudflats on Humboldt Bay, and the world-renowned Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, where 271 species of birds have been sighted. Held at the peak of spring migration, shorebirds abound and special opportunities are planned to see many other species, including Marbled Murrelet, Spotted Owl, and Snowy Plover and even whale watching. The selection of over 100 small group field trips, lectures, workshops, boating excursions, and community activities are led by experienced local guides. For further information and registration visit [www.godwitdays.com](http://www.godwitdays.com) or call 1-800-908-WING.

### POINT REYES BIRDING AND NATURE FESTIVAL

This year's Point Reyes Birding and Nature Festival is being held **April 27-30**. The Point Reyes region, endowed with unique geography and extensive wildlands and ranches, is home base for some of the nation's top birders and naturalists, and offers the ideal setting for a spring festival for bird and nature enthusiasts of all levels. Last year, Festival participants took part in over 70 fabulous bird walks guided by top birders. As a whole, Festival outings tallied a cumulative total of 200 species of birds (not to mention dozens of mammals, butterflies, marine mammals, and other wildlife!) in Western Marin and Sonoma Counties.

This year the Festival will again offer a lineup of over 70 outings and presentations, including events for beginners and kids. This year's roster also includes Rich Stallcup, Allen Fish and John Muir Laws, who will give the keynote address at the Saturday evening banquet.

At *Observer* press time registration was still not available online, but last year, nearly every walk and outing sold out well before the Festival weekend, so, if you'd like to be notified when registration opens, send an email to [prbnfestival@gmail.com](mailto:prbnfestival@gmail.com)! The Festival website is [www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org](http://www.pointreyesbirdingfestival.org)

The Festival benefits the habitat conservation work of the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin (EAC). You can read about some of EAC's conservation work at [www.eacmarin.org](http://www.eacmarin.org). See you in April!

### HERON FESTIVAL

Held in Kelseyville, CA on May 5th, the Heron Festival is a celebration of the Great Blue Herons return to their nesting sites around Clear Lake. Clear Lake is the largest natural lake entirely within California's borders. It is one of the oldest lakes in North America. Scientists say it is at least 2.5 million years old.

This year's festival will be held in Redbud Park in Clear Lake. The festival activities are from 8am to 4pm on Saturday, May 5th. During this time there are pontoon boat rides to heron roosts, speakers, exhibit booths, and children's activities. The keynote speaker for 2012 is highly acclaimed photographer Philip Greene. His slides and talk will feature mating behaviors, nesting, and fledging of the beautiful herons and egrets he has studied for over 20 years. More information, including event information, schedule and registration, can be found at [www.heronfestival.org](http://www.heronfestival.org) or call (707) 263-8030.

### SAS OUTREACH

Tim Fitzer, Cathie LaZier, Darrell Mohr and Jonilynn Okano represented Audubon at the Galt Winter Bird Festival in January. Upcoming events include the Animal House Art Show at the Sac Fine Arts Center on March 10th, Earth Day at Southside Park on April 22nd, Earth Day at Cosumnes River College on April 24th, and Walk On The Wildside at Beach Lake in May. We need some new people to help at these events. You'd work a 4 hour shift with an experienced Audubon member, talking to people who stop by, about birds in their yard, and our field trips. If you'd like to come and help us, contact Cathie LaZier at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net).

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Jon Beck, Dan Foley, Martha Lennihan, Wayne Monson, Peter Stoddard and Judith Tracy, to the **General Fund**.

Martin Bailey, Carla Barbaro, Karen Brookhyser, Dennis Bryerton, Michael Corlew, Peggy Cranston, Loraine Holden, Truman Holtzclaw, Marti Ikehara, Margaret Martin, Wayne Monson, Sandra Serpa, Jeanne Swinehart, Judith Tracy, Patricia Wagner and Nancy Weagly to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Tim Fitzer made a donation to the **Education Fund** in memory of George Waldie.

### YOUR DUES AND DONATIONS AT WORK!

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

- \$2000 towards publication of *Birds of the Sierra Nevada: Their Natural History, Status and Distribution*, by Ed Pandolfino, Edward Beedy and Keith Hansen
- \$1000 to the Urban Nature Project at Effie Yeaw Nature Center, a program to fund field trips for underserved schools
- \$500 to Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society towards legal costs in their fight to Save Panoche Valley
- \$60 to Altacal Audubon towards their Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding Program
- \$50 as a prize for California Fish and Game Nature Bowl Program

## SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these  
new members:

Lyla Burnor            Laura Quezada  
Joan L Clark           Marguerite Roth  
Maria Geyer            Jane A Ryan  
Kenneth K Lee        Susan Solarz  
Randy T Meyer

### 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 March 27, 2012 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

### SACRAMENTO AUDUBON 2012 PROGRAMS

**April 19**        David Lukas, *The Mystery of Bird Song*  
**May 17**         Julie Serences, *Native Bees in Our Yards*  
**June-August**   Summer Break  
**Sept. 20**        Glen Holstein, *Sacramento's Unique Ecosystems*

#### 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@earthlink.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Observations* continued from page 8

generally a poor winter for montane invaders like **Golden-crowned Kinglets**, two **Brown Creepers** were found at CRP on 1/3, and a single was found on 1/15. Out of range **Harris's Sparrows** have been widely reported, and locally the north Davis bird continued through the month, and another was found along Desmond Rd at CRP on 1/23, also continuing into February. Other notables include three **Northern Rough-winged Swallows** at CRP on 1/13, with four on 1/14, twenty **Mountain Bluebirds** at Stone Lakes NWR on 1/4, an astounding flock of over two million **European Starlings** flying over CRP on 1/17, a **Chipping Sparrow** at CRP on 1/3, and a **Western Tanager** at East Lawn Cemetery (along with the continuing (possibly hybrid) **Red-naped Sapsucker**) on 1/8.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site ([sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html](http://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 are included.

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

Chad Aakre, Roger Adamson, Dan Airola, Matt Brady, Terry Colborn, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Cory Gregory, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, James Holmes, Scott Hoppe, Joanne Katanic, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Jim Laughlin, Don Marsh, Mark Martucci, William Rockey, Dale Rubach, Zach Smith, Maryanne Steurer, John Sterling, Dan Tankersley, Beatrix Treiterer, John Trochet, and the local CBC counters and compilers.

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

Chris Conard

# Seasonal Observations

January 1 to January 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

[www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

While January brought a bit more rain than December, the season continued to be remarkably dry, and numbers and diversity of wintering songbirds were lower than normal. The male **Falcated Duck** found at the Colusa NWR on 12/8 continued into February. Up to six **Eurasian Wigeon** were seen in the same pond. Four **Eurasian Wigeon** was a nice total on the 1/3 Rio Cosumnes CBC, and other notable reports were from the Lincoln WTP on 1/25 and the Lone WTP on 1/21, along with a female **Barrow's Goldeneye**. An apparent male **Gadwall x Mallard** ("**Brewer's Duck**") was at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 1/3. Reports continued of the **Brown Pelican** first found in West Sacramento on 8/24.

Rare "**Prairie**" **Merlins** were reported more than usual, with the bird from Nader Ln north of Lincoln found again on 1/2, another photographed at Paradise Beach along the American River Parkway (ARP) on 1/5, and a well-described male at the Orr portion of CRP on 1/13. Two **Long-eared Owls** were a nice surprise at CRP on 1/3-5. It has been a fairly good winter for **Short-eared Owls** locally, and spectacular in portions of the Bay Area. Near Vacaville, 15+ were seen in late January and closer to Sacramento, there was one at CRP on 1/12, three east of Yolo Grasslands Park on 1/23, and two at Stone Lakes NWR on 1/29 in the field

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south of Elk Grove Blvd between Franklin Blvd and I-5.

Three **Semipalmated Plovers** at the Woodland WTP on 1/26 were unexpected

for January. The **Mountain Plovers** first found along Progress Rd north of Oswald Rd (west of the Sutter NWR) on 12/17 continued with 12 present on 1/7 and at least two remaining on 1/27. They have been scarce in Yolo County in recent years, so 14 near Rds 17 and 101 outside of Woodland on 1/7-9 were most welcome. A **Ruff** found on 1/3 and again on 1/12 was only the second for CRP. Notable gull reports include a first cycle **Vega Gull (Siberian Herring Gull)** at the Yolo Landfill on 1/9, single adult **Western Gulls** at Ancil Hoffman (ARP) on 1/9 and the Davis Wetlands on 1/16, and first cycle **Glaucous Gulls** at the Yolo Landfill pond on 1/16 and east of Sutter NWR on 1/22; it was likely the same bird present at Sutter NWR on 1/27.

**Single Pacific-slope/"Western" Flycatchers** were reported from Mather Lake on 1/1 and CRP on 1/15, and single **Cassin's Vireos** at different sites of CRP were found on 1/15 and 1/16. While

## Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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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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