



The *OBSERVER*

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, March 20
Shepard Garden and Arts Center
7pm General Meeting

Bay Checkerspot Butterfly

Tom Bonebrake

Tom Bonebrake is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Biological Sciences at Stanford University, working specifically in the labs of Dr. Carol Boggs and Dr. Paul Ehrlich. He received his B.S. in Environmental Sciences at UC Berkeley where his focus of study was the ecology of a Venezuelan parrot (*Forpus passerinus*). Prior to this, he volunteered for California Audubon for four years at the Debs Park Audubon Center.

Bonebrake's research focuses on the effects of climate change and habitat loss on the persistence of populations. Specifically, three checkerspot butterflies (*Chlosyne lacinia*, *Euphydryas gillettii*, and *Euphydryas editha*) serve as his model organisms for exploring these anthropogenic processes and their effects on populations.

In this presentation, Bonebrake will detail the decline of the federally listed Bay Checkerspot (*Euphydryas editha bayensis*) and focus specifically on the Jasper Ridge population, near Stanford University, which went locally extinct in 1998. Current research in the lab is exploring the feasibility of reintroducing individuals from an extant population back to Jasper Ridge. Facets of this research include historical patterns of habitat use, methods of restoring habitat, genetic considerations, and legal aspects.

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

Sally Riggs, Program Chair

Great Backyard Bird Count

CHECK THE RESULTS

Just because the counting is over for 2008 doesn't mean the GBBC is over. Now start by checking some of the results. At press time California was fourth in the number of checklists submitted but second in the number of species and the total number of birds reported. Lakeport, CA was fifth nationwide among localities reporting the most species. Sacramento ranked second in California for the most checklists submitted but areas such as Carmichael and Fair Oaks submitted their own results. Check all the results online at www.birdsource.org/gbbc. Then click on "Explore the Results" at the top of the page.

You can look for maps, Top 10 and state tally lists. Compare these results to previous years. Even though there are more checklists submitted so far, the individual bird count is hundreds of thousands less.

As of press time 66,037 checklists had been submitted. There was a total individual bird count of 7,461,396 and a species count of 619. Hope you participated but if not you can still join Project Feederwatch and contribute to ongoing research. Just click on the link to Project Feederwatch and get involved.

GO GREEN WITH SAS

Starting soon Sacramento Audubon will have canvas tote bags with the SAS logo, available for purchase at SAS general meetings for \$20.

The totes bags are 100% cotton canvas and have plenty of room to carry everything you need when you are on the go. They include a bottom gusset and extra long handles for easy carrying.

- 10 oz heavyweight natural canvas fabric
- Full side and bottom gusset
- 22" reinforced self-fabric handles
- Machine washable
- Measures 15" x 18" x 6"

Get yours, go green and join others as we try to do without that ever present question, "...paper or plastic?"

Field Trip Findings

Yolo Wildlife Area (2/13) — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “Because the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area was closed due to flooding, this field trip was rerouted to the farm lands north of Davis. Despite strong and chilly north winds, nine birders found it to be a pleasant morning in the field. We ended the half-day trip with a total of 51 species, including Burrowing Owl at Wildhorse Golf Course, and a Great Horned Owl on nest at the heron rookery on Road 103. We also observed a very large roost of Black-crowned Night Herons, and had good looks at Canvasback, Bufflehead, and American White Pelican.

Best Slough and Yuba County Wetlands (2/10) — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “Once we got out of the fog it was a beautiful day. Off of Pleasant Grove Road we found hundreds of Pintail ducks, Snow Geese and Tundra Swans, along with a Prairie Falcon. At our destination we saw many more varieties of waterfowl: Mallards, Green-winged and Cinnamon Teal, Northern Shovelers, Ruddy ducks, Buffleheads, Ringed-necked, and Wigeon. Also a pair of Mute Swan with four young. There were Song Sparrows, White-crowns, Lincoln’s and Savannah Sparrows, Marsh Wren, Say’s and Black Phoebe too. All in all we had about 65 species.”

Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley (2/9) Coordinator Mike Savino of Save Our Sandhill Cranes reported that on a clear, sunny day 50 participants had good looks at cranes, especially those flying overhead at the Cosumnes River Preserve boardwalk. “It was exciting to

hear the sounds of hundreds of cranes,” he said. Chris Conard reported other highlights included thousands of Greater White-fronted Geese, close views of many species of ducks, and great looks at a Peregrine Falcon perched atop the microwave tower on Bruceville Rd at Cosumnes. At Staten Island, we enjoyed a wonderful sunset, with Mt. Diablo in the distance, and hundreds of cranes, 2,500 Greater White-fronted Geese, and flyovers of Tundra Swans, Snow Geese and Cackling Geese.”



Stephen D'Amato

Jacob Lane, American River Parkway (2/6) — White-tailed Kite, California Quail, many American Robins and Western Meadowlarks were reported by leader Jack Hiehle. Also a River otter.

East Lawn Cemetery (2/30) — A Red-breasted Nuthatch was the favorite bird at this Folsom Boulevard site, leader Mary Beth Metcalf said, along with Ruby-crowned Kinglets, Cedar Waxwings, American Robins and Northern Flickers. Also, a dead Great Horned Owl, possibly a car victim, lay beside a roadway.

Sun City, Lincoln (2/2) — Five birders started out with leader Dave Pearson on this bone-chilling morning. “I even wore long pants and a heavy coat,” Dave said. “One person was too cold to continue at about 10:15 and I was in much pain due to a lousy knee so I and one other person

quit with me. The other three walked Ferrari Pond.” No doubt they would add to the total of 38 we had at that time. A light sprinkle started as we left. Jerry Stoner and I got coffee and drove out Catlett road to find the Burrowing Owl reported in the area. Raining now, we stayed in the car, but did not find the owl. Jerry and I did see four Tricolored Blackbirds at a dairy. At Sun City, with the group, we saw a Cooper’s Hawk, several Red-tailed Hawks, a White-tailed Kite and many bluebirds in bright color. White-breasted Nuthatches and other migrants made the trip successful.”

Gray Lodge and Colusa Wildlife Area (1/29) — Colusa was closed by work that was underway at the refuge and the huge numbers of geese and ducks often seen at Gray Lodge were absent. But leader Sami LaRocca and her two companions nevertheless found birding rewards. They saw three Eurasian Wigeons, one of which Sami photographed sleeping under the tules. Then they spotted a gull chasing a Peregrine Falcon that was carrying unidentified prey in its talons. The falcon settled down on an island near the road and Sami’s group watched as it consumed its prize. Also observed were about 75 Sandhill Cranes along Pennington Road west of Live Oak, plus White-fronted Geese and many raptors. En route home they saw the missing geese, swans and Ibises in fields outside the refuge for a total of 53 species.

MORE 2007-2008 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS BY AREA

RIO COSUMNES

January 3 — Compiler Andy Engilis reported: “We squeezed the count in on the leading edge (figuratively and actually) of the major front that hit California on the 3rd and 4th of January. Over 60 observers recorded 163 species of birds and over 1 million individuals on count day. The species count is the highest on record, last year’s reached 160 for the first time. There were 4 additional count-week birds, including Yellow Warbler, Rusty Blackbird, Barn Swallow, and Bald Eagle.

“The count yielded a few firsts. Perhaps the best bird found on count day was a Hermit Warbler located by John Trochet (forests of the Cosumnes Preserve). This was not only a first for the Cosumnes Count, but is one of the first mid-winter records in the area. A Common Loon (Count First) was found on the Sacramento River across from Merritt Island and a male Eurasian Green-winged Teal (count first) was located, along with an American x Eurasian intergrade, both at the Cosumnes Preserve.

Other goodies included: Horned Grebe and Barrow’s Goldeneye, all of the other regular

waterfowl including several Blue-winged Teal at Cosumnes, up to 6 Rough-legged Hawks, a high count for Rio Cosumnes, owl “slam” (Barn, Great Horned, Western Screech (second record), Short-eared (several teams), Long-eared (2 at Orr Ranch), and Burrowing (several teams), warblers included high counts of Black-throated Gray, Townsend’s, and Orange-crowned, a single Grasshopper Sparrow and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

“Over 500 Tricolored Blackbirds, 200,000 Brewer’s Blackbirds, and the huge European Starling flock at the Sacramento

Salt Springs Valley (1/27) — Raptors are the usual highlight of this Calaveras County site, and the six birders who made the trip on a windy, rainy day were not disappointed. Leader Gary Fregien, subbing for Tim Fitzer and Sheila Martignetti, said the group saw Ferruginous Hawks, Rough-legged Hawk, Bald Eagles, a Merlin, Kestrels, and Red-tailed Hawks. Others: Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Rock Wren, Phainopepla, Western Bluebirds, Say's Phoebes, Ring-necked Duck, Canvasback, Horned Grebe, Bufflehead, and Common Moorhen. At a barnyard just as the birders turned onto Salt Springs Valley Road, they observed Tricolored and Brewer's Blackbirds. Total for the day: 57.

Rush Ranch and King Ranch, Solano County (1/25) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: "The Weather people had been predicting heavy rain and winds for the Rush Ranch day, so only 2 intrepid souls turned up. We had a great day though, touring Rush Ranch, and seeing lots and lots of raptors. Also watched an adult Golden Eagle at King Ranch and saw three Rock Wrens and more raptors. It was too bad more people couldn't have seen them all."

Sacramento Wildlife Area (1/19) Leader Tim Fitzer, subbing for Lisa Moraga, reported the group observed Bald Eagle, Perigrine Falcon, Rough-legged Hawk, Burrowing Owls, Ringed-necked Duck, Ross's Geese, and thousands of many species of ducks and geese. "Very nice day of birding," said Tim.

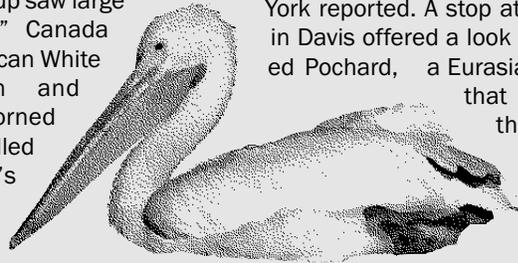
Tonzi Road (Amador County) (1/16) Leader Gary Fregien and his party of seven recorded 76 bird species on this Sierra foothills tour. Gary reported that scoping the ponds turned up a good variety of waterfowl, including American Wigeon, Ring-necked Duck, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded and Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck and Mallard. White-throated Swift and Tree Swallow were also seen at a pond. A lunch stop at the lone sewer ponds yielded Phainopepla, Northern Mockingbird and American Goldfinch. At Lake Camanche, the group saw large numbers of "wild" Canada Goose, a few American White Pelican, Western and Clark's Grebe, Horned Grebe and Pied-billed Grebe. A Cooper's Hawk that perched for a long time and

a Sharp-shinned Hawk seen later provided a good opportunity to study the differences between the two species. Most interesting non-bird creature was a mule deer with an all-white face, neck, chest and belly in the company of 3-4 "normal" deer. "I have pictures!" Gary said.

Point Reyes Birds and Mammals (1/15) Leader Jack Hiehle said Elephant Seals, California Sea Lions, Stellar Sea Lions, Harbor Seals, Tule Elk, and Black Tail Deer were among the 553 mammals recorded. Also, distinctive Axis Deer, all-white species from India. The ocean was too rough for whale sightings. A pair of Peregrine Falcons topped the bird list.

Robinson Road Area, Birds Landing, and Montezuma Hills (1/13) — Alas, the Mountain Plovers failed to appear but despite some fog the group saw Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk and Loggerhead Shrikes, leader John York reported. A stop at El Macero Lake in Davis offered a look at the Red-crested Pochard, a Eurasian duck escapee that has resided at the lake for 10 years.

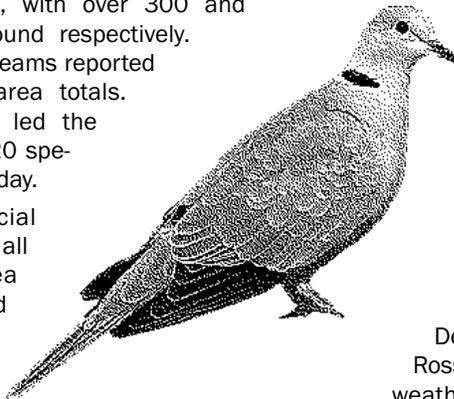
Pete Hayes



CBC CONTINUED

County Bufferlands (700,000 birds!) were counted. The latter species count of 1 million birds last year gave the Rio Cosumnes Count the dubious distinction of having the highest overall total for Starlings in the U.S. or Canada. The 700K this year may again give us this notoriety. Shorebird numbers were very low but species were well represented. Both Great-tailed Grackles and Eurasian Collared-Dove numbers continue to increase, with over 300 and 70 birds found respectively. In general, teams reported very high area totals. Bufferlands led the way with 120 species on the day.

"My special thanks to all the area leaders and all the participants who help make the



Rio Cosumnes Count one of the most diverse of any inland count in the United States."

BENICIA

December 17 — Compiler Robin Leong reported that on the 78th annual Benicia count, birders reported 166 species, including for the first time Eurasian Collared-Dove and Clay-colored Sparrow. Previous high species total was 171. With fair weather, participants registered record highs of Lesser Scaup, 4,809; Green Heron, 4; Peregrine Falcon, 8; Anna's Hummingbird, 321; Nuttall's Woodpecker, 70; American Crow, 579, and Great-tailed Grackle, 6.

AUBURN AREA

December 15 — Compiler Deren Ross reported: "Because of the good weather and the possible species that might show up as a result of the

recent storms, we were hoping for some uncommon visitors this year. While Stellar Jay, Hairy Woodpecker, Common Raven, Mountain Chickadee, and Red-breasted Nuthatch numbers were up, the only montane surprise was the nine Cassin's Finches in Meadow Vista. As for unusual species, the list included 30 Eurasian Collared-Dove, 1 Common Yellowthroat, 4 Cackling Goose, 4 Cattle Egret, and 1 Snow Goose. In addition, a fully Leucistic ('washed out' plumage) Black Phoebe was seen and photographed. A few high count species of note were: Golden Eagle, Lesser Goldfinch, and the Black Phoebe. Good to see the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society mascot, the Black Phoebe, is doing well. On the downside, we had low counts for only two species- Yellow-billed Magpie and Wrentit. On behalf of the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, I wish to thank all the participants for time and effort on this year's count. See you next year!"

Field Trips



Kirsten Munson

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Richard Barbieri, 966-4603, offleash56@yahoo.com for trips through March 9. From March 10th on call the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, matuchbirdman@yahoo.com. For Creek Week activities call Alta Tura, 916 454-4544, ucc@arcadecreekrecreation.com.

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

Saturday, March 1, 8am–Noon
Bushy Lake/Cal Expo Floodplain
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Join Maureen in enjoying some of the birds that live along this section of the American River Parkway. River Otters and beavers are a possibility as well. This will be about a 4 mile walk and will end near lunch time. Bring water and appropriate footwear as it may be muddy. Meet at the parking area at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo.

Sunday, March 2, 8am
Schollenberger Park and Petaluma Adobe State Park
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

We'll start the morning at Schollenberger, where it's possible to find Blue-winged Teal, a variety of shorebirds, Common Yellowthroat, and the occasional rail. Then we'll drive a short distance to Petaluma Adobe, where we'll bird the fields, bushes and trees for a variety of passerine birds. Possibilities are Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, and Hutton's Vireo, among others. Bring lunch and liquids and layered clothing. There is a minimal per person fee at Petaluma Adobe. Meet Mark at 8am at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. Take the West Capitol Avenue exit; turn left at the light, then left again into the Park and Ride lot. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

Thursday, March 6, 8am–noon
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Meet Jack in the nature center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park for a 4 hour walk on the trails winding through the oak

woodland and down to the river. This is an excellent birding area and Jack will be looking for nesting birds and early blooming plants.

Saturday, March 8, early morning
River Walk Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information, 684-2816

Meet at the Visitor Center on Franklin Blvd south of Twin Cities Road, for this monthly birding census trip. It's a great birding area, always full of surprises, and joining the group trip is a good way to find out what's happening at the Preserve. This walk covers about four miles, and, at a leisurely pace, should take approximately five hours, so be sure to bring a lunch and liquids. You must check the recorded information a day or two before to confirm the date (it's sometimes changed) and get the exact meeting time and any other updated details.

Sunday, March 9, 7am–Noon
Folsom Lake, Beek's Bight Area
Chris Conard, 362-5942
conardc@gmail.com

Be prepared for a four-mile walk along a rolling trail in the oak-covered hills and granite outcrops of Folsom Lake. Among the rocks near the lake shore we should find many Rock Wrens and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. We'll have a fair chance at California Thrasher and Canyon Wren. Purple Finches can be numerous. On the lake, we'll look for loons, grebes and other waterbirds. The woods should be alive with the songs of Bewick's Wrens and other resident breeders. Meet across from the Folsom Outlets in the parking lot behind Burger King near the Circle K on Iron Point Rd. From Hwy 50, exit at Folsom Blvd and go north. Make the first right on Iron Point, then a right into the parking lot. Steady rain cancels.

Saturday, March 15
Bird and Breakfast Fund Raiser
Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Join Sacramento Audubon leaders for a birding walk followed by a nice breakfast. This fund raiser is always fun and supports educational work by the American River Natural History Association. See sign-up information in the article on page 7 in this issue, or phone the Nature Center at 489-4918.

Sunday, March 16, 8am
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Leaders: Carla Barbaro, 486-1198
cbarbaro@comcast.net
Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

This area of the parkway is excellent for birding and Cathie and Carla will be looking for early nesting birds and returning migrants, as well as early blooming wildflowers, on this morning walk. The trip will end by noon. 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.

Sunday, March 16
Habitat Improvement Work Day
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

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

Tuesday, March 18, 8am–noon
Sailor Bar Area
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Meet Jack at the end of Emperor Street to explore the plants, birds and animals of this riparian corridor along the American River Parkway. From Winding Way, turn south

on Kenneth, then east on Emperor Street to the end.

Saturday, March 22, 7:30am
Lynch Canyon, Solano County
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

This newly-opened, 1,039-acre park off I-80 in Solano County, consists of rolling hills with stands of native oak, buckeye and bay trees, small riparian corridors and panoramic vistas. It's a great place to spend the morning. Join Maureen in looking for wintering raptors, sparrows and other passerines along the trail and ducks and shorebirds at the reservoir. Golden Eagles are regular visitors here. This trip, a new destination for Sacramento Audubon, will end mid-day with an optional picnic lunch at tables near the park entrance. Be prepared for muddy trails. Meet in the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. Take the West Capitol exit; turn left at the light, then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Sunday, March 23, 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 migrants. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee. Meet Mark at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, March 29, 8am
Yolo Basin Wildlife Area
Davis Wetlands
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 359-2829
dtankers@winfirst.com

Meet Dan in the first parking lot (on your left) at the beginning of the auto tour of the Yolo Wildlife Area. Depending on the extent of flooded fields, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl. Tricolored and Yellow-headed Blackbirds are also a good possibility. From Sacramento take I-80 west, take the first exit at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left onto the levee, then drop down into the wildlife area.

Sunday, March 30, 7:30am
Lincoln Grasslands
Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Raptors, waterfowl and shorebirds will be the main focus of this trip. Good numbers of sparrows, blackbirds and Horned Larks should also be present. Meet Mark at Brookfield's restaurant parking lot in Roseville. Take Eureka Road exit off I-80; go right on Eureka and first left at the stoplight (Taylor Road). The restaurant is located behind the Shell gas station. Bring lunch, water and FRS radios.

Wednesday, April 2, 8am-noon
Bannister Park
Leader: Jack Hiehle
967-0777

Explore another beautiful area along the American River with Jack. As always, you can share in his knowledge of the natural history of the parkway. Meet Jack in the parking lot at the end of Bannister Road, south off Fair Oaks Blvd, west of Sunrise Blvd.

Saturday, April 5, 7am
Caswell Memorial State Park
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri@sbcglobal.net

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 and riparian vegetation. Although now merely a remnant, the park's 258 acres are mostly wild, in stark contrast to the surrounding agricultural lands, and present a pristine example of the once extensive riparian corridor along the river. The habitat is primarily mature riparian valley oak woodland. Its multi-level canopy provides lush cover, nesting and feeding grounds and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant species. This habitat also harbors the endemic riparian brush rabbit, not known to occur elsewhere. For more information about the park, go to 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. 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 primarily 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 at the Sheldon Rd exit.

Sunday, April 6, 7:30am
Mather Field Park
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
wayne.blunk@worldnet.att.net

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. The lake and its surrounding grasslands host a wide variety of birds. Meet Wayne in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Eagle's Nest Road for this half day trip. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

Saturday, April 12, 8am
Jepson Prairie and Yolo Bypass
Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216
andisalmi@yahoo.com

Jepson Prairie is an unusual area of bunch grass prairie and vernal pool habitats, harboring some fascinating native plant species. Wildflowers will be the main focus of the morning and we'll bird Yolo Bypass in the afternoon. Meet Andi at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take West Capitol exit; turn left and then left again into the lot. Bring a lunch and water. The trip will last into mid-afternoon.

Saturday, April 12, 6am
River Walk Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information, 684-2816

Meet at the Visitor Center on Franklin Blvd south of Twin Cities Road, for this monthly birding census trip. It's a great birding area, always full of surprises, and joining the group trip is a good way to find out what's happening at the preserve. This walk covers about four miles, and, at a leisurely pace, should take approximately five hours, so be sure to bring a lunch and liquids. You must check the recorded information a day or two before to confirm the exact meeting time and get any other updated details.

Sunday, April 13, 8am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146

Join Brian at this Nature Conservancy area 20 minutes south of Sacramento. He will

Field Trips continued on page 6



Kirsten Munson

Field Trips continued from page 5

search the ponds and fields on Desmond Rd and Franklin Rd for waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors. Walks along the boardwalk, bridge and trail areas should turn up other interesting species in this rich riparian area. Meet Brian at the visitor center on Franklin Blvd. Take Interstate 5 south to Twin Cities Road. Go east on Twin Cities Road until you reach Franklin Blvd. Go south on Franklin to reach the Visitor Center.

Tuesday, April 15, 9am–noon

Phoenix Field

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack at Phoenix Field (Jim David Park) for a walk around the beautiful vernal pools. This trip will feature rare plants and spring blooms in the vernal pools. Jack will lend his expertise in identifying these unusual plants. Phoenix Field is located on Sunset Blvd just east of Hazel Ave. Don't forget your binoculars to view the resident birds.

Saturday April 19, 10am-1pm

Surveying Laguna Creek's Riparian Ecosystem

Leader: Greg Suba, 772-3230

Creek Week Tour

Take a walk along Laguna Creek's trail system and stop by three trail stations to measure streamside trees, test water quality, and study changes along the Laguna Creek landscape. Volunteers from the Laguna Creek Watershed Council's Stream Stewards Program will be on hand at each station to lead you through the activities. Jack Hill Park (at Porto Rosa Drive and Monte Cresta Way), Elk Grove. Call or email gsuba@surewest.net for additional information.

Saturday April 19, 1:30pm–3:30pm

Bufferlands Birds and Blooms Tour

Leader: Roger Jones, 875-9174

Creek Week Tour

Thousands of waterfowl and other wetland birds winter at the Fishhead Lake wetlands, and many live year-round to nest and raise their young. California poppies, lupines, owl's clover, and baby blue-eyes grow around the uplands and wetland edges. Come enjoy the birds and flowers on a leisurely 1-mile walk with wildlife biologist Roger Jones. The meeting location is weather-dependent, so call Roger or email jonesro@saccounty.net the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

Wednesday, April 23, noon–2pm

Local Fish Fauna

Leader: Steve Scott, 875-9307

Creek Week Tour

What lurks in the murky depths of Sacramento's urban creeks? Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) Bufferlands staff will demonstrate fish sampling techniques, help with hands-on fish identification, and discuss the natural history of California's diverse fish communities.

This tour includes a ½ mile walk and an opportunity to see some of the Bufferlands riparian and wetland habitat restoration projects within the Morrison and Laguna Creek floodplains. The meeting location is weather dependent, call or email scotts@saccounty.net the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

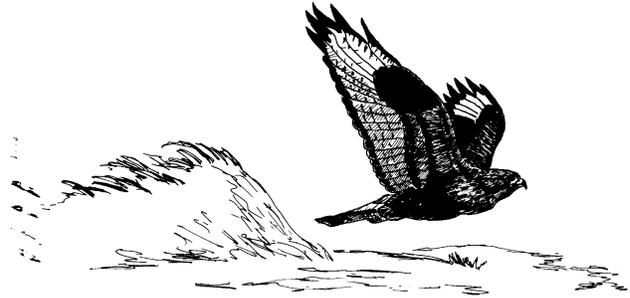
Wednesday, April 23, 6:30pm

Steelhead Creek Beaver Pond Walk

Leader: Mary Tappel, 925-1933

Creek Week Tour

Early evening is the best time to see beaver activity and lots of other local wildlife.



Stephen D'Amato

Take a stroll with Mary through Wolf Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary. Meet at the Ueda Parkway Staging area parking lot on Elkhorn Blvd and Sorrento Rd east of Steelhead Creek. Call or email marye.tappel@jps.net before April 23 for further information or directions. NOTE: this event will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain.

EDUCATION OUTREACH EVENTS AND NEWS

Last Child in the Woods

Nationally acclaimed futurist author, Richard Louv, was in Sacramento February 7th to discuss the ideas in his book, *Last Child in the Woods*. The book has stimulated a national conversation about the future relationship between children and nature. He contends that today's children suffer from a profound disconnect with nature. At lunch, Louv met with some of the big name developers to discuss what they could do to insure that families have neighborhood access to appropriate natural spaces. In the early afternoon, Mayor Heather Fargo sponsored a special meeting in Council Chambers with Louv and community groups interested in connecting children and nature; I represented SAS at this event. After discussing some of the dire effects on children of growing up without access or experience in the natural world, Louv focused on the complex issue of how we can build communities that support more outdoor activities and opportunities. Later that night at the Crest Theater, Mr. Louv repeated these themes at a public event attended by over 300 people, sponsored by the Sacramento Tree Foundation. The Education Committee of the Sacramento Audubon Society hosted a table at the event and we generated much interest in our efforts to provide programs that get families and kids outside and looking around! SAS also contributed to program printing costs. The meetings through the day generated a great deal of energy and hopefully will lead to some positive outcomes throughout the community.

Thanks to Gail Janke, Sheila Green, Matthew for helping out at the event.

Bluebird Boxes - Help Wanted

We will be participating in two box building workshops for youth and we need someone with woodworking skills to help pre-cut the lumber. This is very straight forward and would be an great way to get involved with our education programs. We would supply the wood and transportation (drop off and pick up). E-mail Julie Serences at education@sacramentoaudubon.org or call 548-0618 if you can help.

Julie Serences, Education Chair

ANNUAL MAY BOOK SALE

Mark your calendar for our May General Meeting. We will begin early and hold our annual Book Sale. Please go through your bookshelves and consider donating items to the sale. Anything with a natural history theme is welcome, including of course, birding books, CDs, and videos. Look for information in future issues of *The Observer* about where to bring your books prior to the sale. This is a great fundraiser for SAS and lots of fun as there are always great finds and bargains. See you there!

SACRAMENTO SPLASH

presents a

Nature in the Neighborhood Family Event

Stargazing at Mather Field

When: Saturday, March 15th, 7- 10pm

Where: Splash Education Center

4426 Excelsior Road, Mather, CA 95655

Prices: \$10/adult, \$5/child (8-18)

Come to Mather and see the stars! Join us for this very special program as members of the Sacramento Valley Astronomical Society share their cosmic knowledge with us.

The first part of the program will take place in the Splash Education Center, where the astronomers will lead us on a brief slide show tour of the night sky.

Following the indoor portion, we'll head out into Mather Regional Park and look at the night sky through several giant telescopes. Each telescope will be focused on a different object, so you can go from scope to scope and see a variety of amazing celestial treats. Some of the highlights will include stunning views of the moon, the rings around the planet Saturn, the Orion Nebula, and maybe even an iridium flare or a comet!

Wear some warm layers for the outdoor portion of the program, as it may get chilly. Space for this program is limited, so be sure to reserve your spot early. Since this program depends on clear skies, it will be cancelled in the event of rain or heavy clouds.

For more information visit www.sac-splash.org and click on "Nature in the Neighborhood." You must reserve a spot for this program on our website or by calling Splash at 364-2437. The Splash Education Center is located at 4426 Excelsior Rd., Mather, CA 95655. For directions, click on "Find Us." Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Birding and Local Events

THANKS FOR COUNTING!

The GBBC is over and the results are usually posted by April. Thanks to everyone who helped promote the count this year. The presentations at public libraries, scouting groups and classrooms went well and we look forward to even more library presentations next year! A special thanks to the *Sacramento Bee* for reminding folks about the count. Don't forget to check on-line for data collected in our area and look at the small summary on page 1 of this *Observer*. Julie Serences, Education Chair

BIRD AND BREAKFAST AT EFFIE YEAW

The Bird and Breakfast, Saturday, March 15th, is an Annual Spring Classic at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Explore the miracles of spring in the beautiful oak woodland and meadows of the Effie Yeaw Nature Area, in small groups guided by Audubon experts. Return to a hot, hearty breakfast (vegetarian option available) served in the new Assembly Building at the Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park, Carmichael. On this walk one can expect to see some 30 bird species among more than 100 that populate the lower American River's environs. Reservations are always necessary for the space-limited, \$30 per person fundraiser for educational programs on the American River Parkway. Call the Center at 489-4918 for details.

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL SPRING SALE

On March 29-30, from 10am to 4pm, the Shepard Garden and Arts Center will hold its annual Spring Sale. This event provides funding for community services such as shows and programs for the general public, as well as the maintenance for the wonderful building where we hold all our meetings. Come out and support the Sale.

MATHER VERNAL POOL FLOWER WALKS

Sundays, April 13, 20 and 27, 10am and 1pm

Join the Mather vernal pool docents of the Sacramento Chapter of the California Native Plant Society for a 2 hour tour to explore this magic carpet of flowers. These unique wildflowers bloom only for a brief period in the spring. Meet at the Splash Center at 4426 Excelsior Road. See www.sacvalleycnps.org for directions. For more information and to sign up, call 737-WILD. Reservations are required. The tour is provided free of charge by trained CNPS docents, donations are greatly appreciated.

KERN RIVER VALLEY SPRING NATURE FESTIVAL

The 14th Annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival will take place the weekend of April 30-May 6, 2008. Audubon California's Kern River Preserve in Weldon, hosts numerous free events including bird walks, bird banding with the Southern Sierra Research Station, and information booths and exhibits. All day, fee, birding and natural history field trips with expert leaders are offered Wednesday-Tuesday, April 30-May 6. The Kern River Valley is one of nature's most diverse homes: 350 bird species (over 200 nesting species!), Spring bird migration creates an exciting time for birders visiting the Kern Valley Spring Nature Festival. The last five festivals have averaged 233 bird species! For further information including activities, trip descriptions, accommodations, and a list of the birds seen last year visit <http://kern.audubon.org/bioregion.htm>.

Western Birding

OLYMPIC BIRD FESTIVAL, WASHINGTON

Grab your binoculars and join the Olympic BirdFest 2008 celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, Sequim, Washington from April 4-6. Get program information and registration forms online at www.olympicbirdfest.org or contact them by phone, at (360) 681-4076. Their email is info@olympicbirdfest.org and their address is Dungeness River Audubon Center, P.O. Box 2450, Sequim, WA 98382.

13TH ANNUAL GODWIT DAYS IN ARCATA

The 13th annual Godwit Days spring migration bird festival is being held next month, April 17-23. Godwit Days is a three-day spring migration bird festival celebrating the Marbled Godwit and all the birds of the coastal redwoods, bays, marshes, and mudflats of California's Redwood Coast. Choose from over 100 field trips, lectures, workshops, and boat excursions. Pre- and post-festival trips are available for an extended stay and opportunity to explore all the birds of the North Coast and Klamath Bioregion.

At the Opening Reception and Art Exhibition you can meet celebrated wildlife and nature artists, talk to the expert field trip leaders, and hear the keynote speaker. Included with the registration are two days of compelling videos, beginning birding seminars, and breath-taking live birds of prey to see. You can view the beautiful selection of art by top North Coast artists and browse the Bird Fair to see the products and information you can't be without. For further information and registration visit www.godwitdays.com.

PARADISE WEEKEND AT MORRISON'S LODGE

Morrison's Lodge in Merlin, Oregon is offering a birding package in collaboration with the Siskiyou Audubon Society April 25 through 27. The weekend will be filled with bird-watching alongside wildlife experts, spectacular gourmet dining, and nightly accommodation in spacious quiet cabins with spectacular views of the Rogue River.

Dennis Vroman will meet the guests Friday evening and answer questions about local birds. Dennis has spent thousands of hours in the field and is a respected bird bander and author, whose books include *Guide to Birds of the Rogue Valley*.

Cory Laughlin and Scott Drieschman, longtime Siskiyou Audubon members, will join the group on Saturday for bird hikes and a nest-box building workshop. Saturday night Scott will give a lecture on Oregon birds and an added feature on Antarctica, where he and Cory study penguins.

Participants can expect to see over 50 species of birds on the nature hikes including five species of Warblers, Pileated Woodpeckers, Ospreys and Bald Eagles. For more information contact Morrison's Lodge Event Manager, Mai-Lani Kaililaau at 800-826-1963, or go to www.morrisonsslodge.com.



Photo courtesy of
Cory Laughlin

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 March 25, 2008 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

MAKE IT A BIG GREEN BIG YEAR

If you enjoyed counting birds for the GBBC here's another chance to have some fun.

"The Big Green Big Year has the acronym BGBY and is therefore pronounced Bigby and it is simply a Big Year in which you only count those species seen within walking or cycling distance of your home or principle place of work. As simple as that, no dashing off to the far corners of the planet burning fossil fuels as you go."

There are three categories: the Walking Bigby, the Self-Propelled Bigby and the Public Transport Bigby.

Sound like fun? For more information go to www.sparrowworks.ca/bigby.html

LEND US A HAND

Program Chair

We are still looking for a Program Chair to begin with the May 2008 program. The next program would not be until September, 2008. Just call Tim Fitzer if you have even a little interest so he can explain that the chair gets lots of help and we all work together planning programs with lots of ideas to make it fun and interesting.

We have notes on good, available programs already. The program speaker frequently has their own write-up prepared so you don't even have to write the program notes for every month. There are only 7 programs that need to be arranged each year because of months where we either have no meeting or have a previously arranged program.

Tim's number is 870-5207 or email: spskua2@comcast.net. Don't miss this opportunity to get involved and have fun too.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Jane Adams
Robert Gjestland
Steve Mair
Wendy Money

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.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Karen Brookhyser, Chris Conard, Steven Coughran, Peggy Cranston, Colleen Dempsey, Carole Anne Elzey, Tim Fitzer, Thomas Graham, Kathleen Knight, Robert Meagher, Wayne Monson, Andrea Salmi, Carol Sughrue, Bruce Swinehart, J.G. Tracy, Nancy Weagly and John Winchell, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.
Karen Brookhyser, Robert Burns, Steven Coughran, Peggy Cranston, Carole Anne Elzey, Sara Gillespie, Thomas Graham, Kathleen Knight, Robert Meagher, Wayne Monson, Bruce Swinehart, Peter Stoddard, J.G. Tracy, Nancy Weagly and John Winchell, to the **Bobelaine Sanctuary**.
William Venables to the **General Fund**.

Kayleen Hartman made a donation to the **General Fund** in her sister, Amber Hartman's name, as a Christmas Gift.

Tim Fitzer made a donation to the new **Purple Martin Fund** in memory of Bill Grenfell and Dan and Jan Tankersly made a donation to the **Education Fund** in Bill's memory.

JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

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

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair
11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224
llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Donation for maintenance Bobelaine Sanctuary \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

Observations continued from page 10

YWA on 1/19, a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** in Fairfield continuing from 11/18, a dead **Long-eared Owl** at West Pond in Davis on 1/20, a **Pacific-slope Flycatcher** at Lake Solano on 1/22, a **Black-headed Grosbeak** northeast of Davis on 1/21, and up to four **Lapland Longspurs** continuing near the corner of Brewer and Nicolaus Rds in Placer County. A male **Cassin's Finch** was found near Slide Hill Park in Davis on 1/29 and continued through at least 1/31. This species also staged a minor invasion into the foothills just above the area typically treated in this column.

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit www.cvbirds.org and click "Listserv" for details. With over 150 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want to

thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Roger Adamson, Dan Brown, Todd Easterla, Leo Edson, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Maureen Geiger, Jeff Gilligan, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Cliff Hawley, Scott Hoppe, David Johnson, Alison Kent, Jeri Langham, Laura Look, John Luther, Ed Pandolfino, Deren Ross, Mike San Miguel, Jr., Mary Schiedt, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, Gene Trapp, John Trochet, and Bruce Webb. Special thanks to Steve Hampton for a summary of Yolo County birds and 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

Several of the month's highlights were found on the 1/3 Rio Cosumnes CBC, including a **Eurasian Green-winged Teal**, a locally impressive five **Eurasian Wigeon**, 70 **Eurasian Collared-Doves**, two **Long-eared Owls**, a **Hermit Warbler**, and a **Grasshopper Sparrow**. Over 300 **Great-tailed Grackles** were reported around Elk Grove—one of the area hotspots for this expanding species. Scouting trips prior to the count produced a **Bald Eagle**, a **Barn Swallow**, and a **Yellow Warbler**. A **Rusty Blackbird** was reported from an Arno Rd dairy on 1/1. Documentation of this and other state review species should be submitted to the California Bird Records Committee.

Suburban Sacramento County produced a few excellent reports. A **Plumbeous Vireo** was found in Elk Grove Park from 1/16 to at least 1/21. The Land Park neighborhood in Sacramento hosted a **Townsend's Solitaire** from 1/19 to 1/23 and a **Mountain Chickadee** from 1/28 to at least 1/30—**Brown Creepers**, a **Townsend's Warbler**, and a **Western Tanager** were also found by those looking for the locally rarer species. An unidentified **Empidonax flycatcher** was found near the Sacramento Zoo on 1/1 (continuing from 12/24). The **Green-tailed Towhee** found in a Rancho Cordova backyard on 11/25 continued through January. The gull extravaganza continued at the

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11054 Autumnwind Lane
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

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Davis Landfill and Davis WTP. There were impressive reports throughout the month, exemplified by a 1/10 report of an adult **"Kumlien's" Iceland Gull** (a state review species), two **Glaucous Gulls**, and six **Western Gulls**. 200-300 **Thayer's Gulls** were reported, adding to the site's reputa-

tion as one of the premiere gull watching locations in the state. The high numbers of **Western Gulls** (9 were reported on 1/19) may be attributed to storms driving this typically coastal species inland. An adult **Western Gull** was also reported from Lower Sunrise on the American River Parkway on 1/15.

There was a spectacular report of an **Emperor Goose** (a state review species) at the Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA) on 1/13 flying with a large flock of **Snow Geese**. Presumably the same bird was seen again on 2/12. There is one previous record for the county: 1907! There was a most intriguing report of a **Leach's Storm-Petrel** flying along Hwy 99 near Stockton on 1/7 after a heavy storm. A very productive trip to Lake Solano on 1/13 produced reports of a **Hairy Woodpecker**, a **Pileated Woodpecker**, five **Brown Creepers**, a **White-throated Sparrow**, and 10 **Purple Finches**. Other good finds included a **Red-throated Loon** from Comanche Reservoir on 1/5, a **Ruff** at

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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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Observations continued on page 9