



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, November 17
Shepard Garden and Art Center
7:30pm General Meeting

Painting a New Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada

John (Jack) Muir Laws

You will want to be present this evening for speaker, distinguished author, and writer, John (Jack) Muir Laws as he presents an illustrated lecture about the natural history of the Sierra Nevada, and the process of creating a field guide. He will also bring original works of art that have been painted in the field and studio.

Naturalist and artist Jack Laws is creating an illustrated field guide to more than 1,200 species of plants and animals of the Sierra Nevada. This comprehensive and easy to use guide will allow botanists to identify the insects that come to their flowers, birders to identify the trees in which the birds perch, or hikers to identify the stars overhead at night.

Jack has studied the natural history of the Sierra for many years. He is trained as a wildlife biologist and is an associate of the California Academy of Sciences and has spent the last four summers painting Sierra wildflowers from life. During 2005 wildflower season alone, Jack spent more than 70 days in the field working on illustrations for his book. These illustrations capture the feeling of the living plant or animal, while also incorporating details critical for identification.

In the summer of 2004, Laws published *Sierra Birds: a Hiker's Guide*. He is also a regular contributor to *Bay Nature* magazine with his "Naturalists Notebook" column.

Friends and family are always welcome and invited to attend the general meetings which are held on the 3rd Thursday of every month at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center, 3330 McKinley Blvd., in McKinley Park. Visit our website at www.sacramentoaudubon.org for further information and updates. Also a map detail can be found on the web site under general meetings. Looking forward to seeing you.

Sally Riggs, Program Chair

CHRISTMAS COUNT SCHEDULE December-January, 2005-2006

Saturday, December 3

American River Natural History Association, Annual Animal Count

Compiler: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Saturday, December 17, Woodfords

Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, (916) 961-5871

e-mail: spskua@aol.com; or

Compiler: Andi Salmi, (916) 691-7216

e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Saturday, December 17, Auburn

Compiler: Deren Ross, (530) 885-9740

e-mail: derenross@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, December 18, Stockton

Compiler: Jim Rowoth, (209) 956-2648

e-mail: rowoth@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, December 18, Putah Creek

Compiler: Steve Hampton, e-mail: shampton@ospr.dfg.ca.gov

Monday, December 19, Benecia

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island), (916) 961-5871

Compiler: Robin Leong, (707) 643-1287

e-mail: robin_leong@netzero.net

Monday, December 26, Sacramento

Compiler: Cliff Hawley, (916) 300-2495

e-mail: yellowhammerca@gmail.com

Wednesday, December 28, Lincoln

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, (916) 486-9174

e-mail: ERPfromCA@aol.com

Sunday, January 1, Folsom

Compiler: Chris Conard, (916) 362-5942

e-mail: chris.conard@comcast.net

Sunday, January 1, Angwin

Compiler: Wendy Cole, (707) 963-2331, e-mail: beehaven@jps.net

Sunday, January 1, Grass Valley

Contact: Rudy Darling, (530) 272-6504

e-mail: darling@stardustweb.net

Tuesday January 3, Rio Cosumnes Christmas Count

Compiler: Andrew Engilis, Jr., (530) 752-0364

e-mail: aengilisjr@ucdavis.edu

To find locations and dates for additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit <http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm>

ADDITIONS

Field Trip Findings

Goethe Park (10/16) – Woodpeckers were the birds of the day with good views of Downy, Nuttalls, Northern Flickers and a Red-breasted Sapsucker, leader Cathie LaZier reported. “We also had good looks at a Cooper’s Hawk and a large group of White-tailed Kites.”

Effie Yeaw Nature Center (10/13) Sightings included Phainopepla, Hutton’s Vireo, Osprey, California Quail, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Red-shouldered and Red-tailed hawks, leader Jack Hiehle said.

Bodega Bay (10/8) – Wind and a high tide made finding shorebirds difficult. Dan Brown, co-leader with Tim Fitzer, said the highlight was the Common, Pacific and Red-throated loons at close range for all to study. “With birds in short supply we resorted to the identification of subadult gulls and terns, a challenge to all.” En route home, the group stopped at Shollenberger Park in Petaluma and saw four male Blue-winged Teals.

Yolo Wildlife Area (10/2) – Water was finally back on south areas of the bypass after the summer drought, and leader Maureen Geiger’s group found good numbers of shore birds, raptors and some arriving winter residents, totaling 55 species. High points were great looks at soaring American Pelicans, sitting Swainson’s Hawks in a variety of plumages, Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs, Common Yellowthroat, Fox Sparrows and Savannah Sparrows.

Point Reyes for Vagrants (10/1) – An otherwise slow day featured a couple of nice birds: a Tropical Kingbird at Pierce Point Ranch and a first-year Chestnut-sided Warbler at Drake’s Beach, leader Chris Conard reported. A late afternoon walk at Abbott’s Lagoon produced a dozen

Pectoral Sandpipers, a California Red-sided Garter Snake and Coast Garter Snakes, plus a Red-legged Frog.

Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park, Northeastern Shasta County (10/1-2) – “We had excellent looks at an adult pair of Bald Eagles, an Osprey, many Townsend’s Warblers and lots of waterfowl and grebes,” leader Gary Fregien reported. “There were also several American Pelicans. Lewis’s Woodpeckers, normally seen in abundance here, were absent, but there were plenty of Acorn Woodpeckers, Northern Red Flickers, Red-breasted Sapsuckers and a female Williamson’s Sapsucker”. Total: 75 species.

Evening Beaver Walk (9/30) – Three Beavers and a Muskrat were spotted, along with the usual suspect birds.

Monterey Coastal & Pelagic Trip (9/24-25) – A Merlin flushing a flock of shorebirds, close-up views of 10-12 Humpback whales in a feeding frenzy, and a bonus demonstration of bird-in-the-hand avian research highlighted this annual weekend trip coordinated by Jeff Mangum. The streaking Merlin was at Moonglow Dairy on Saturday, along with Pectoral Sandpipers, Red-necked Phalaropes, Elegant Tern, Western Tanager and numerous warblers. A Tropical Kingbird near the mouth of the Carmel River was bird of the day for many of the Auduboners. Sora and Semipalmated Plover were found nearby. Andrew Molero State Park produced Brown Creeper, Wandering Tattler, Black Turnstone, Warbling Vireo, and many warblers. Here staff and docents at the Ventana Wilderness Society research station invited the visitors to observe the mist-netting, measuring, banding and releasing of birds, including a MacGillivray’s

Warbler, Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Chestnut-sided Warbler. A fox was seen at the Veterans Memorial Park Campground in Monterey where many Auduboners overnighted, and two bobcats at Andrew Molero State Park.

Sunday’s pelagic trip led by Mark Cudney got off to a bang-up start before the boat left the Monterey pier when a Sabine’s Gull flew over. At sea, the views of the feeding, diving, spouting Humpbacks was very close. How close? Close enough for the crowd to marvel at the feeding whales’ notably bad breath. Other mammals were Risso’s Dolphins and sea lions. Other bird highlights were five South Polar Skuas, Black-footed Albatross, Sooty, Pink-footed and Buller’s Shearwaters; Ashy, Black and Wilson’s Storm-Petrels, Pomarine Jaegers, Rhinoceros Auklet, Brandt’s Cormorant, Common Murre, and Black Turnstone. Several miles out brought a poignant sight: a small bird, apparently a Savannah Sparrow that had been lost in the fog, circled the boat a couple of times before flying off to who-knows-where. All in all, a banner weekend, and on Monday, after the trip formally ended, several birders drove five miles down Highway 1 to Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park and saw a number of California Condors from the local captive breeding flock.

Reichmuth Park (9/17) – Leader Tim Manolis reported: “Landbird migration was a bit slow, but we did see 1-2 Red-breasted Nuthatches. A nice male Mandarin Duck was with the wintering Wood Duck flock. Common Moorhens seemed to have had good breeding success this year as a number of juveniles were seen, and we had a nice hawk show that included Red-

Findings continued on page 4

Entertainment Books

Sacramento Audubon is again benefitting from the sale of Entertainment Books. The books offer money saving coupons for many area restaurants and reduced price coupons for area activities. They will be available for \$40 at all the General Meetings. They can also be purchased at Wild Bird and Wild Birds Unlimited stores. For further information and store locations please call Tim Fitzer at 961-5871 or 870-5207 (cell). He can also arrange to have you pick one up if you’re in the downtown area. All proceeds go to Sacramento Audubon Society.

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

As a Chapter of the National Audubon Society, we will focus on conservation and environmental education to ensure that the Sacramento region’s natural ecosystems and diverse bird populations are preserved, restored, and made available for study and enjoyment.

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 November 29 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

Field Trips

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he/she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Cathie LaZier, 457-6882, empid@sbcglobal.net, for trips through November 13. For trips November 22 through December 11, call the scheduler Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@comcast.net.

Plan to pool cars and share gas expenses with the driver. FRS radios can be helpful on non-local 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.



Daniel Kilby

Saturday, November 5, 7am Bodega Bay Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458 naturestoc@aol.com

Join Dan for a full day of birding, exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. This is often one of the best coastal birding areas, with many gulls, shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors to see, in addition to possible wintering vagrant songbirds. Meet Dan at the Park & Ride off Highway 80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take the West Capital Ave. exit; turn left at the stop-light and then left again into the Park & Ride lot. This Park & Ride is on the North side of the freeway, NOT THE SOUTH SIDE LOT. We will leave at 7am SHARP. Bring food (an option for lunch will be The Tides snack bar), water and warm clothes.

Sunday, November 6, 8am Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216 andisalmi@yahoo.com

We hope to view early flocks of ducks and geese that will winter in the valley or are feeding on their way further south. 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. Take I-5 north toward Woodland; exit at Road 102 and turn right into the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot, to meet Andi. FRS radios would be helpful for the driving tour.

Thursday, November 10, 8am Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge Leader: Dan Tankersley, 359-2829 dtankers@winfirst.com

This is a repeat of Sunday's trip held on a week day with Dan as leader. Meet again at the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot in Woodland.

Thursday, November 10, 8am-noon William Pond Park Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Jack's extensive knowledge of the wildlife and plants of the American River Parkway always makes this an informative and interesting morning walk. Meet Jack at the east end of Arden Way.

Saturday, November 12 Cosumnes River Preserve River Walk Trail

**Leader: John Schick
Info: 684-2816, Ext 5
E-mail: info@cosumnes.org**

Join John on his monthly early morning census of local birds. The wide variety of habitat in this area has produced some very interesting birds. Take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road, east on Twin Cities to Franklin Blvd., then south 1.3 miles on Franklin to the visitor center. Bring water, a snack, insect repellent and be prepared for 4 miles of easy to moderate walking. Be sure to check the preserve number for meeting time and place.

Sunday, November 13, 7:30am Upper Sunrise American River Parkway Leader: Mark Martucci, 722-6098

Join Mark for a morning walk in his favorite parkway birding area. He'll be looking for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds on the river, and a wide variety of land birds. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd.; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd, and take the first left on Pennsylvania. There is a \$4 per car entrance fee. This is a fun trip for beginners.

Thursday-Monday, November 17-21 Central Valley Birding Symposium

Join birders from near and far and enjoy the company of birding greats and naturalists such as John Acorn, Sophie Webb, Graham Chisholm, Ed Harper and Jon Dunn. Workshops and field trips celebrate the diversity of birds that winter in the Central Valley. Check the schedule of field trips and programs at www.cvbc.org <http://www.cvbc.org/> or register by email: registration@cvbs.org or call 209/369-2010 for information. Registration fee of \$80 includes full event or \$35 for single day attendance.

Tuesday, November 22, 8am-noon Old Fair Oaks Bridge/Lower Sunrise Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Jack will lead this nature walk along the American River. Jack knows this area well and always turns up interesting finds. Meet at the north end of the Old Fair Oaks Bridge. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Sunset, go east on Fair Oaks. When Fair Oaks turns left, continue straight ahead on Bridge Street.

Saturday, November 26, 7:30am-noon Woodbridge Regional Park Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804 e-mail: mkgeiger@comcast.net

This park is located on the Mokelumne River and is a great place for wintering riparian species. Maureen will be looking for possible Varied Thrush and Winter Wren as well as more common woodpeckers, nuthatches, sparrows and any reported rarities. Time permitting, we may also visit Lodi Lake. This trip involves walking dirt trails which may be muddy. Take Hwy. 99 south towards Elk Grove and meet at the Park & Ride on the southeast corner of Hwy. 99 and Sheldon Road.

Sunday, November 27, 9am
Nimbus Fish Hatchery, American River
Leader: Frank Gray, 723-5249
e-mail: Fgray4birds@aol.com

Join Frank for a short walk near the fish hatchery. Gull identification will be the main emphasis. He will be exploring fine ID points and seasonal abundance of several species of gulls of this area. Other birds will be noted, as well as natural history elements of interest. Frank will bring a scope but additional scopes are welcome, as are beginning and experienced birders. Wear boots or other footwear suitable for walking on dirt trails. "Pouring" rain cancels. Meet at the entrance to the Nimbus Hatchery parking lot near Highway 50 and Hazel (about 15 miles east of Sacramento). The trip will last until late morning.

Thursday, December 1, 8am-noon
Nimbus Fish Hatchery
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Walk down the American River to look for diving ducks, kingfisher, wintering gulls and other wildlife along the River. Jack's knowledge of this area always assures an interesting and informative trip. Meet in the parking lot of the Fish Hatchery off Hazel Boulevard.

Saturday, December 3, Daybreak
American River Natural
History Association
(A.R.N.H.A.) Bird Count
Compiler: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack and other volunteers to assist with this annual count of birds and other creatures along the American River Parkway. Results of this count are important to future planning for the Parkway, and the goal is to have 11 teams of two or more persons each. This count differs from other Christmas Counts in that teams count species rather than total numbers of each species. Contact Jack for details, team assignments and meeting and compilation locations.

Sunday, December 4, 7:30am Sharp
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Brian Gilmore, 451-9146
e-mail: b2gilmore712@comcast.net

Join Brian at this Nature Conservancy area 20 minutes south of Sacramento. He will search the ponds and fields on Desmond Road for Sandhill Cranes, shorebirds, ducks and geese, and the radio tower for the often-present Peregrine Falcon. Walks along the boardwalk, bridge and trail areas should

turn up other interesting species in this rich riparian area. This trip will last until late morning.

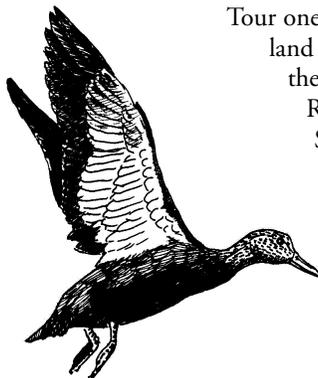
Tuesday, December 6, 8am-noon
Sailor Bar Area
American River Parkway
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack in exploring the plants, birds and animals of this riparian corridor along the River. Jack will share his broad expertise of the usual wintering residents of this area. From Winding Way turn south on Kenneth, then east on Emperor Street to the end.

Saturday, December 10, 8am-noon
Sun City, Lincoln
Leader: Dave Pearson, 408-4273
e-mail: capdavid@2xtreme.net

Explore the varied habitat of the Lincoln hills with Dave who knows this area well. He will be checking the ponds and other nearby sites for ducks and shorebirds as well as the "grand canyon of Lincoln Hills" (otherwise known as the Canyon Oaks Trail) for sparrows, other winter residents and raptors. Take Hwy. 65 north, turn right on Twelve Bridges Drive, left on East Lincoln, right on Del Webb Blvd., and follow to the Meridians Restaurant. Meet Dave in front of the lodge in the parking lot. This trip will end late morning.

Saturday, December 10, 8am-noon
Sacramento County Bufferlands
Wetlands and Waterfowl
Contact: Chris Conard, 362-5942
e-mail: chris.conard@comcast.net



Stephen D'Amato

Tour one of the wetland areas within the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands in Elk Grove. The wetlands and waterfowl tour offers a chance to see

many bird and mammal species including waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, beavers and coyotes. Tour participants will enjoy a short walk guided by a Bufferlands staff biologist who will explain current management and restoration techniques. Space is limited. The meeting location is weather-dependant, so

please contact Roger Jones at 875-9174 or jonesro@saccounty.net during the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

Sunday, December 11, 8am
Lincoln Grasslands
Leader: Tim Fitzter, 961-5871
e-mail: spskua@aol.com

Tim will be checking this Placer County area for the many wintering hawks and sparrows that call this area home during winter months. He will also be looking for winter rarities that flock with Horned Larks and sparrows in the Brewer Road area. Birding and lunch at the Chamberlain Cemetery will be followed by more birding along the rural roads on the way to Camp Far West Reservoir. Meet Tim at the Park and Ride lot on Highway 99 at Elkhorn Boulevard just north of downtown Sacramento and the I-5/99 split. This trip will last until mid-afternoon.

Field Trip Findings

Continued from page 2

tailed, Red-shouldered, Swainson's and Cooper's hawks."

Tall Forest, Cosumnes River Preserve (9/17) - Leader John Trochet's group found 87 species in the heart of the passerine fall migration, but he said the only modestly interesting species was a late, heard-only Blue Grosbeak. "A Mourning Cloak butterfly, a species I see most years only in spring at Cosumnes, was the day's personal highlight," he added.

Evening Beaver Walk (9/16) Leader Jack Hiehle's group found five-plus Beavers, Western Bluebirds, and Spotted Sandpiper, among others.

Shorebirds of the Sacramento Valley (8/14) - Highlights were a Solitary Sandpiper that gave extended close views at the City of Davis Wetlands, a Willet that was close and accommodating at the Davis Oxidation Ponds, and a fantastic aerial show by up to 100 American Pelicans, leader Steve Abbott said.

Pete Hayes

AL THE ALBATROSS OF PT. AREA - CALIFORNIA

On February 17, 1994, a Laysan Albatross was first reported in Point Arena Cove at Point Arena, California (about two hours north of Bodega Bay on Highway 1). The "discoverers" were Todd Easterla and Jim Booker.

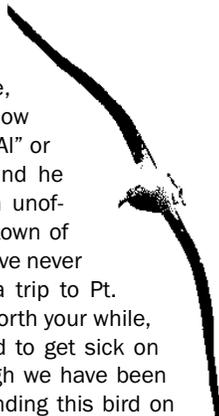
The bird has returned to the Point Arena cove for the past 12 years, being easily observed from a short pier on the south side of town (see below for directions). The bird may have been using the Arena Cove in years prior to its discovery but simply went unnoticed and/or unreported.

We have no information about when this bird was first given a name, but this Albatross is now generally known as "Al" or "Al the Albatross", and he now has become an unofficial mascot of the town of Point Arena. If you have never seen an Albatross, a trip to Pt. Area would be well worth your while, especially if you tend to get sick on pelagic trips. Although we have been very successful in finding this bird on most of my trips to the Point Arena Cove from December through February, reports estimate that you have a 50/50 chance of seeing it, and you never know what time of day it will arrive or leave. The best strategy is to plan on staying the day and check back at the cove every couple of hours throughout the day. We have found that the locals who fish from the pier are very helpful in providing information regarding when the bird was last seen.

This is a great place to visit during the winter months if you can plan your trip for a good weather day. The Point Arena Lighthouse is a picturesque place to visit, and from the point you can observe many pelagic birds with the help of a good spotting scope.

If you go further north 35 miles you will arrive at the town of Mendocino. Here you can see Longspurs, and just south (about two miles) of Mendocino is Van Damme State Park, where you can find Gray Jay. If you continue north of Mendocino (about 11 miles) to MacKerricher State Park, you will have a chance of seeing Rock Sandpiper and Harlequin Duck. Directions to Point Arena Cove from Highway 1, Point Arena: At the south end of town go west (towards the ocean) on Iverson Ave. Stay on Iverson until it dead ends at a pier (park your car here).

Ron and Phyllis Storey
ronstorey@ronstorey.com



Events & Announcements

TANZANIAN SAFARIS IN 2006

Ed Harper and Susan Scott are offering their popular Tanzania safaris again in 2006. For inquiries, contact Sandpiper Journeys at calidris@surewest.net or call Ed or Susan at (916) 971-3311.

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM, November 17-20

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the Ninth Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium Nov. 17-20, 2005 at the Radisson Hotel in Stockton. There will be field trips to more than 3 counties, workshops with topics including photography, digiscoping and sketching, and a Birding Nature Fair and Art Show with over 25 vendors selling nature-related items. Friday night's keynote address is entitled "Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker".

In the words of chairperson David Yee, "This is a wonderful time to be a birder We've learned so much - yet there is still much more to discover. An "extinct" bird wasn't, it was just hanging out in places birders rarely visited. The Central Valley is also under-birded . . . what discoveries await us here? Come to the Symposium and we'll find out!"

Further information can be found in this month's field trips. A complete schedule, brochure, registration form, etc. are on the website: <http://cvbs.org>. The non-computer inclined can contact Frances Oliver at (209) 369-2010.

SAS VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATE IN THE SALMON FESTIVAL

Sacramento Audubon participated for the first time in the Salmon Festival, an annual fall event at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. We had a successful weekend, with a great booth location right on the river, talking to a variety of people and encouraging participation in our field trips as well as sharing information about local birds and birding. Maureen Geiger arranged and coordinated our festival participation. Marlene Ishihara, Cathie LaZier, Kathy Moore, Maggie Nunes, and Carolyn Sandie helped with set up and manning the booth. It was our first opportunity to use our new table display, a project Maggie Nunes has just completed with great success.

She obtained some wonderful photos of birds of northern California, donated by

Dan Brown, Chris Conard and Ron Storey, and also worked with Terri Patterson, a local graphic artist who donated her design talents. Generous monetary donations for this project were received from RBS Public Policy Strategy and Sergeant Major Assoc., Inc.

This display will be on view at some of our local meetings, as well as other events in which Sacramento Audubon will participate throughout the year. If you are available to help at a function for a half day occasionally, call Maureen Geiger, 444-0804; mkgeiger@comcast.net or Cathie LaZier, 457-6882; empid@sbcglobal.net. It's a good way to get the Audubon message out, and meet people and have fun as well.

Seasonal Observations

continued from page 6

Truman Aakre, Roger Adamson, Jennifer Albright, Lola Brocksen, Brent Campos, Terry Colborn, Daryl Coldren, Cathy Corcoran, Leo Edson, Andrew Engilis, Maureen Geiger, Brian Gilmore, Richard Hall, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Karen Hochgraf, Marcel Holyoak, Dave Johnson, Mary Kiernan, Jon King, Marianne Kirkland, Jeri Langham, Jim Laughlin, Robin Leong, Jim Lomax, Ron Melcer, Kurt Mize, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Shawn Petrush, Andy Pfeffer, Mary Schiedt, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, John Trochet, and Melanie Truan.

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

September 1 to September 30
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
783-2331

September is a month of transitions. The last glimpses of many summer breeders, such as **Western Kingbirds** and **Blue Grosbeaks** usually occur this month. **Swainson's Hawks** depart from their breeding territories, and are often seen in large congregations in agricultural fields before most of them leave for the winter. By mid-month, **Sandhill Cranes** are seen overhead daily, and the winter residents are firmly in place, with the less common of these-**Winter Wrens, Varied Thrushes, Golden-crowned Kinglets**-usually accounted for by the end of the month.

Continuing from August, the main highlights this September were reports of rare songbird migrants. Among reports of regular Western warbler species throughout the month, a first-year **Blackpoll Warbler*** was mist-netted at the Putah Creek Sinks on 9/2, and a **Black-and-White Warbler*** was reported from an Elk Grove backyard on 9/11. Babel Slough produced **Northern Parula*** reports on 9/18 and 9/22, and a report of Yolo County's first **Ovenbird*** on 9/22. A first-year male **Blackburnian Warbler*** was reported from the Orr Forest at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 9/25.

A highlight for the month was a male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak*** seen by many on a Yolo Audubon trip to Babel Slough on 9/11, with another found in a Davis backyard the following day. Other good reports include a **Lark Bunting*** at CRP on 9/13, a **Brewer's Sparrow*** at the Michigan Bar Bridge on 9/18, and a **Green-tailed Towhee*** from Yolo Grasslands Park on 9/21 to at least 9/23. A **Bell's Vireo*** was reported from the Solano side of Putah Creek near Winters on 9/29. After a year's absence, there

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were several reports of **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** from Putah Creek. A late **Western Kingbird** was reported on 9/28 from west of UCD.

While overall shorebird numbers were not on par with last month, several good reports included a **Stilt Sandpiper*** from the Davis Wetlands (DW) on 9/4, single **Red Knots*** at the Lodi Sewage Ponds (LSP) on 9/9 and 9/18, a female **Ruff*** (DW) on 9/12,

a juvenile **Sanderling*** at the Sacramento County Bufferlands on 9/23, and a juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpiper*** (LSP) on 9/27. Other good waterbird reports include an **Arctic Tern*** (LSP) from 9/22 sporadically through 9/27. Up to six **Common Terns*** (9/23) were also found at that location, and one was reported from Lagoon Valley near Vacaville on 9/28.

Several interesting birds were reported throughout the month from Yolo Rd 41 and Sand Creek Rd in Colusa County. Highlights included **Greater Roadrunners** (3+), **Western Screech-Owls**, a **Hairy Woodpecker**, 50 or more **Lawrence's Goldfinches**, plus a bobcat and a gray fox. A **Common Poorwill*** was found at the Howard Ranch in southeastern Sacramento County on 9/18, and a **Eurasian Collared-Dove**, possibly Yolo's first, was found in north Davis on 9/11.

Documentation of species listed with an asterisk (*) seen in the Sacramento area should be submitted to the Sacramento Bird Records Committee.

Thanks to the following for their reports (the majority were taken from http://groups.yahoo.com/group/central_valley_birds/) :

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

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Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 362-5942

e-mail preferred: chris.conard@comcast.net

Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail: sawelma@cwnet.com

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.

Observations continued on page 5