



The *OBSERVER*

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, November 18

**Shepard Garden and Arts Center
7pm General Meeting**

Our Birds and Baja

Jess Morton

Imagine having the ability to step back in time 200 years, then to preserve the abundant wildlife and natural values of a pristine San Francisco Bay, as it was then, in perpetuity. Impossible, of course, but such is the dream today for another vast wetland on which our birds depend, Mexico's Bahia San Quintin.

Opportunities for conservation exist in Baja California that disappeared north of the border decades ago. Landscape scale tracts of prime coastal sage scrub, beaches and coastal bays, deserts, and other wilderness lands on which our migrating coastal birds depend can still be conserved if action is taken soon. Many conservation organizations here and in Mexico are investigating conservation needs and opportunities all across Baja. But a race is on with competing interests, including agriculture, salt mining, industry and recreation, to say nothing of urban sprawl, which has virtually tied Ensenada and Tijuana together.

In his program, Jess Morton will describe the work of the National Audubon Society, its California chapters, and other organizations with which he works on these issues. Of special interest is Audubon's International Alliances Program (IAP). In the town of San Quintin, a local constituency is being built to carefully steward the vast biological and economic resources of their wetlands. Other places, too, will be considered, such as Cabo Colonet, proposed site for a new superport to rival LA-Long Beach.

General Meeting continued on page 7

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2010-2011

Saturday, December 4, Daybreak, Great American River Bird Count

Lea Landry, 638-1141, llandry@softcom.net

Join Jack Hiele and other volunteers to assist with this annual count of birds and other creatures along the American River Parkway sponsored by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA). See further write up on the bottom of page 6.

Saturday, December 18, Woodfords Christmas Count

Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net

Compiler: Andi Salmi, 691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Sunday, December 26, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422, e-mail: mcudney@aol.com

Sunday, January 2, Folsom Christmas Count

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

Other Christmas Bird Counts:

Saturday, December 18, Auburn Christmas Count

Compiler: Deren Ross, (530) 885-9740, derenross@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, December 19, Putah Creek Christmas Count

Compiler: Steve Hampton, stevehampton@gmail.com

Sunday, December 19, Stockton Christmas Count

Compiler: Jim Roworth, (209) 956-2648, roworth@sbcglobal.net

Monday, December 20, Benecia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island), 870-5207, spskua2@comcast.net or

Compiler: Robin Leong, (707) 643-1287, robin_leong@netzero.net

Tuesday, December 28, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, ERPfromCA@aol.com

Thursday, December 30, Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

Compilers: Tom Rusert and Derren Peterie, (707) 939-8007, www.SonomaBirding.org

Saturday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

Contact: Louise Vicencio, 707-224-9386, jlvicen@sbcglobal.net

Compiler: Murray Berner, 707-224-5897, vireocity@hotmail.com

For locations and dates of additional Christmas Bird Counts, visit
<http://natureali.org/cbcs.htm>

Field Trip Findings

Discovery Park (10/16) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “In spite of the good turn out (about 16) and the good weather, there were hardly any birds! Best were a Common Merganser and long, close looks at 3 accipiters. There were no sparrows which is amazing and very little of anything else. At the end of the trip, a skunk surprised everyone by darting out of the bushes to chase away a probably feral cat, most likely to go after the cat food left by someone nearby.”

Bobelaine Sanctuary-The Quotable Naturalist (10/10) — Leader John Huls reported: “Our group of 14 enjoyed the fine weather and the emerald cathedrals of Bobelaine’s California Sycamores and heritage Valley Oaks. Birding was slow and predictable save for many flocks of Cedar Waxwings and a persistently vocal House Wren. In keeping with “The Quotable Naturalist” theme we heard passages from the poetry of Emily Dickinson and from Donald Culross Peattie’s classic, *A Natural History of Western Trees*. A good quote from the outing: “This is the assembly of life that it took a billion years to evolve. It has eaten the storms—folded them into its genes—and created the world that created us. It holds the world steady.” E.O. Wilson

John added, “The unusually slow birding may have been the result of a screaming Quad ATV blasting through the sanctuary at a high rate of speed, sliding sideways through the curves. Our emotions went from dismay to incredulous to anger. We were shocked that the sanctity of the sanctuary was being so crudely violated. On his second pass we attempted to flag down the driver and inform him that he was trespassing. To no avail, for he gunned his engine in defiance as he raced past us, his knobby rear tires throwing up clouds of dust and oak leaves.”

Snowberry Creek/Shadow Glen (10/9) — Cathie LaZier reported: “Fourteen birders joined leader Lea Landry on a beautiful fall day along the trails out of Shadow Glen to Lake Natoma. The beautiful day brought out bikers, hikers, runners and horses (with their riders) which may have reduced some of the birds usually seen along the wooded trails. Although only 34 species were seen (or heard), and NO water birds to speak of (perhaps because of heavy water-craft traffic), several trip

participants were new to the area, so many of the findings were quite welcome. Highlights included Phainopepla, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, White-throated Swifts and Cedar Waxwings.”

William Pond Park (10/9) — Cathie LaZier reported: “Nine newer birders joined three leaders for a morning walk at William Pond Park. Birding was relatively slow, although leader Mary Beth Metcalf did find a Yellow Warbler. Participants enjoyed watching a Great Egret hunting and had close looks at a pair of Spotted Sandpipers. California Quail and Lark Sparrows were also favorites. The group totaled 41 species, although many of these were not seen by everyone.”

William Pond Park (10/6) — Cathie LaZier reported: “Four people joined me for a morning walk at William Pond Park. Cranes overhead, kinglets and crowned sparrows in the bushes, and flickers calling, all signaled the arrival of autumn. Nancy Bittner’s favorite was a flock of Lark Sparrows and Tim Fitzer found a Fox Sparrow perching high in a tree. We also spotted Lincoln’s and Chipping Sparrows. We totaled 46 species.”

Bodega Bay (10/3) — Leader Tim Fitzer reported the bird of this beautiful day for 16 participants was a rarely seen Magnolia Warbler, spotted by Dan Kopp. Others included Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird, Snowy Plover, Brant, Semipalmated Plover, Black-bellied Plover, and Dunlin.

Point Reyes (10/2) — Leader Chris Conard reported: “This trip was billed primarily as a search for vagrant songbirds. The 2010 fall migration has been very slow along the coast and 10/2 was no exception. The 11 participants had to be content with wonderful views of the coast after the heavy fog lifted, young male elephant seals practicing their fighting skills and a few birds. Most enjoyable was a pair of Harlequin Ducks feeding along the rocky coastline at the Fish Docks/Chimney Rock. We also had good views of a Pectoral Sandpiper at the Mendoza Ranch Pond. About half the group stayed behind for a walk along the Estero Trail, where we had great views of Pygmy Nuthatches, Townsend’s Warblers, Brown Creepers, and a few “chimpling” Winter Wrens. A large roosting flock of Marbled Godwits and Willets in the shallow water of the Estero ner-

ously eyed the small (probably leopard) sharks roiling the water. Perhaps the most unexpected sighting was a sea otter floating on its back at Drake’s Beach. In a follow-up, Rich Stallcup said there are only a few records of this species, probably males scouting new grounds, in Marin County each year.”

River Bend Park (9/26) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “It was a slow morning for 8 birders, although by the end of the walk we had totaled 42 species. Most of the expected birds showed up, but did not stay around long enough for satisfying looks. Best bird for Mark Martucci and Darrell Mohr was a FOS (first of season) Hermit Thrush, and Mark Martucci also pointed out a stand of blooming Vinegar Weed.”

Point Reyes for vagrants (9/25) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “While the weather was not too bad for the most part, birding proved pretty slow for fall at Point Reyes. Our first stop was the Estero Trail, where we hiked a little over a mile from the parking area down to an arm of Drake’s Estero. Along the way we encountered a birdy spot with many sparrows, including Lincoln’s, Song, White-crowned and a couple of Golden-crowned. Also, American Goldfinch and Pine Siskin, and a Hairy Woodpecker. Most notable, though, was the number of Pygmy Nuthatches. They seemed to be everywhere we looked.”

Down at the Estero, the tide was out but beginning to come in. Here we found Willets, Marbled Godwits, Dowitchers and Least Sandpipers, plus a small fly-by flock of Sanderlings. The most notable species was not a bird, but a Leopard Shark, viewed right below us in about 3 or 4 feet of water. Proceeding on to Outer Point Reyes, things slowed considerably. Most notable birds were a pair of Harlequin Ducks, which seem to have taken up residence at Fish Docks, as they have been seen continually throughout the fall. We did have a fairly birdy spot here, with a Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Red-breasted Nuthatch and others. But did not locate the Palm Warbler that had been seen by others earlier. At the trees at Drake’s Beach, we had a very inquisitive Hutton’s Vireo that came within a few feet, and a Townsend’s Warbler. All in all, a nice day for 8 birders, but no vagrants seen.”

Findings continued on page 8

Field Trips



Northern Flicker
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 Maureen Geiger, 444-0804, mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

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.

Wednesday, November 3, 8am
Isenberg Crane Preserve/Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 606-6518
dtankers@winfirst.com

Join Dan to look for wintering geese and ducks, including Gadwall, Northern Shovelers, teal and wigeon. In shallow water there may be shorebirds, such as

dowitchers, sandpipers, yellowlegs, Dunlin, and maybe some surprises. Our wintering Sandhill Cranes will be back, and the usual herons and egrets will be around. The boardwalk is also a good place to look for the noisy but hard-to-see Marsh Wren, and the cryptic Wilson's Snipe. Meet Dan at the Nugget Market at 8 am. Going south on I-5, take the Florin Road West exit; go west to the first signal light, (Greenhaven Drive), and make a U-turn. The parking area for the market will be on the right. This trip will end by noon. Bring FRS radios and spotting scopes if you have them. This is a great trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Thick fog cancels this trip.

Saturday, November 6, 8:30am (in Yuba City)
Northern Sutter Co. and Grey Lodge Wildlife Refuge
Leaders: Don Schmoltdt and Sally Walters, 739-6465
BajaOwl@surewest.net

We will drive around the edge of Sutter Buttes, on Pass Road, West Butte Road, and North Butte Road, and then to Gray Lodge. The focus of the trip will be on raptors and waterfowl. Meet at 8:30 AM at the mini-mart/gas station at the junction of Hwy 20 and Acacia Ave, about 6 miles west of Yuba City. From Sacramento, take

Hwy 99 north to Yuba City, then left (west) onto Hwy 20. Bring lunch and water. Don says to allow about an hour from downtown Sacramento. For further information, call Don or Sally at 739-6465 or email at bajaowl@surewest.net.

Sunday, November 7, 7:30am
NOTE: Daylight Savings Time Ends Today

Mather Lake
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations, and he usually turns up quite a list of bird species. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident and wintering birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, Wild Turkey, Green Heron, Pied-billed Grebe and Common Yellowthroat. 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 Parks Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

NEW – Family Friendly Trip!!!
Saturday, November 13, 8:30-11am
Folsom Lake State Park near Beek's Bight

Leader: Sandra Beseler, 580-8398
ssbeseler@yahoo.com

This morning walk near Folsom Lake will be specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. Join Sandra in finding wintering, migrating and resident birds such as Phainopepla, Western Bluebird, and Wild Turkeys in this oak woodlands area. Meet at Twin Rocks and Boulder Staging Area. From Hwy 50 east, take Folsom Blvd. Exit and head east. This turns into Auburn-Folsom Road. Go about 10 miles

(past Douglas Blvd) and make a right onto Twin Rocks Road. Continue to the end of the road where it meets Boulder Road and park at the staging area. From Hwy 80 east, exit on Douglas Blvd. and head east. Make a left at Auburn-Folsom Road, go about 2 miles and make a right on Twin Rocks Road. Bring liquids and be prepared for a nice walk. Sandra will have a few extra pairs of binoculars for children to use.

Saturday, November 13, 6:35am
River Walk Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information, 684-2816
www.cosumnes.org

Meet at the Visitor Center on Franklin Blvd, south of Twin Cities Road, for this monthly birding census trip. It is a great birding area, always full of surprises, and joining the group is a good way to find out what's happening and to hone your birding skills. This walk covers about four miles at a leisurely pace and takes approximately five hours, so bring lunch and liquids. Be sure to check the website activity schedule a day or two before for exact meeting time and possible updates.

Sunday, November 14, 8am
Yolo Wildlife Area
Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
ishiM2000@comcast.net

Join Marlene in this great area just 10 minutes from downtown. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl and raptors including possible Peregrine Falcon. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-80

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Field Trips continued from page 3

west, take the first exit (#78, E. Chiles/Rd 32A) 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.

Tuesday, November 16, 7:45am
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 606-6518
dtankers@winfirst.com

The Colusa NWR is another great location in the Central Valley to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be many duck species and plenty of Snow, Ross's and Greater White-fronted Geese as well as other wetland birds. This refuge often provides an opportunity to view the elusive race of the Greater White-fronted Goose. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well. We can expect many raptors with the possibility of Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon. We will spend a good amount of time on the main viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through a riparian forest next to the main viewing pond. We will then take the short auto tour and finish our outing with a return visit to the platform. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Weather permitting, there should be ample photo ops. Scopes and FRS radios will be helpful on this trip. Meet Dan at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 7:45am From Sacramento, take I-80 west to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again to the Park and Ride behind Ikeda's Market. We will meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Rain, strong wind, or thick fog cancels. Bring snacks and liquids as the trip will end in the very late morning to very early afternoon. We will leave the meeting area at 8am sharp.

Thursday-Monday, November 18-21
Central Valley Birding Symposium
Contact: Frances Oliver
(209) 369-2010
hummer52@sbcglobal.net

Join others from near and far and enjoy the company of great birders and naturalists such as Jon Dunn and Joe Morlan presenting workshops on sparrow and shorebird ID plus others on varied subjects such as digiscoping and bird sketching. Excellent presenters will speak on "The Owls and Woodpeckers of the West" and "California's Threatened and Endangered Birds," and the ever popular "stump the experts" bird ID

panel will be fun and interesting. Field trips visit surrounding hot spots to celebrate the diversity of birds wintering in the Central Valley. Check the schedule of field trips and programs at www.cvbs.org and register by email or phone with Frances Oliver.

Friday, November 19, 6:25am
Tall Forest Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information: 684-2816
www.cosumnes.org

Meet at the Farm Center Gate at the intersection of Desmond and Bruceville Roads, ON TIME, to join this monthly bird count. Usually led by John Trochet, this area is normally closed to the public, so this is your opportunity to bird there. John has an appreciation of nature on many levels, and a trip with him is always informative. You must check the website activity schedule a day or two ahead to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details. Arrive a little early, as this trip always leaves promptly.

Saturday, November 20, 7:30am
Gray Lodge Wildlife Area
Leaders: Carla Barbaro, 717-8808
Mark Cudney, 987-2422
mcudney@aol.com

Join Carla and Mark for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, we will take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes. This area is great for raptors and grassland birds including wintering sparrows. Bring lunch, liquids, warm clothing and FRS radios. Meet in the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd. and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1.

Sunday, November 21, 8am
Upper Sunrise Area, American River Parkway
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
Wayne.blunk@gmail.com

Wayne will lead you on a morning walk to this great spot along the American River Parkway. You will see a nice variety of resident and wintering birds and maybe some surprises. Take South Bridge Road off of Sunrise just south of the Sunrise Bridge. Pass through the kiosk to the stop sign at bottom of the hill. Turn right at the stop sign and make an immediate left.

Park in the first parking lot on the left. A Sacramento County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. This is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders.

Saturday, November 27, 8am
Pleasants Valley Rd./Putah Creek (Solano Co.)
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
calaveri@sbcglobal.net

This outing entails driving to the Vacaville area to pick up Pleasants Valley Road, and birding our way up to Hwy 128, then Putah Creek, Solano Lake and the Monticello Dam Overlook. We will make several stops along Pleasants Valley Rd, looking for migrating passerines, including Phainopepla, Western Bluebird and Say's Phoebe. Along Putah Creek and Solano Lake we may see Barrow's Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, American Dipper, and Osprey. At the Monticello Dam Overlook, we'll be watching and listening for Canyon and Rock Wrens, and possibly Peregrine Falcon. Plan to spend 3-4 hours birding, plus driving time getting there and back. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for seasonal conditions. Bring along hand held radios, food and water. Our lunch spot will be at Solano Lake County Park, where there is a day-use fee. We'll also look for Pileated Woodpecker and owls here. Meet Gary at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. Car pooling is strongly advised due to limited access at stops and the distance traveled.

Saturday, November 27, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip but ducks, swans and geese, as well as shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center parking lot at 3:30pm to hear a brief presentation of Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in

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

**Sunday, November 28, 8am
Lincoln Grasslands
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Tim and Mark will be checking this Placer County area for the many wintering hawks and sparrows that call this area home during the winter months. They 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 and Mark at the Brookfield's Restaurant parking lot, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfield's is behind Shell. Bring lunch, scopes and FRS radios if you have them.

**Sunday, November 28, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored
trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392**

See description for Saturday, November 27, above

**Saturday, December 4
American River Natural History
Association Annual Animal
and Bird Count
Compiler: Lea Landry, 638-1141
llandry@softcom.net**

Join Lea, Jack Hiele and other volunteers to assist with this annual count of birds and other creatures along the American River Parkway sponsored by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA). See the bottom of the next page for complete details.

**Sunday, December 5, 8am
Paradise Beach/American River
Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
rey_ality@hotmail.com**

Dan lives near the American River, birds here often, and knows this area well. Join him in exploring the rich riparian habitat along the Parkway. This area is dominated by cottonwoods, alder, box elder and willows, with a few oaks, a combination which often turns up excellent wintering birds, plus the usual residents found on the Parkway. Dan is a great birder and is good with beginners and experienced birders alike. This trip will involve walking on well-defined trails and will last until late morning. Meet Dan at Glen Hall Park at the corner of Carlson Drive and Sandburg.

**Wednesday, December 8, 8am-Noon
Wetlands and Waterfowl Tour II
Leader: Roger Jones, 875-9174
jonesro@sacsewer.com**

Tour one of the seasonal or permanent 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 wildlife biologist who will explain current wildlife management and habitat restoration techniques. Space is limited. The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact Roger Jones during the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

**Saturday, December 11, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216
andisalmi@yahoo.com**

Andi will be looking for the great flocks of ducks and geese that winter in the valley or stop to feed 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. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike. FRS radios are helpful on this trip. Meet 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. Please note there is a fee for each vehicle at the refuge: either \$3 for a day pass, or a \$12 Refuge Annual Pass.

**Saturday, December 11, 7am
River Walk Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information, 684-2816
www.cosumnes.org**

Meet at the Visitor Center on Franklin Blvd, south of Twin Cities Road, for this monthly birding census trip. It is a great birding area, always full of surprises, and joining the group is a good way to find out what's happening and to hone your birding skills. This walk covers about four miles at a leisurely pace and takes approximately five hours, so bring lunch and liquids. Be sure to check the website activity schedule a day or two before for exact meeting time and possible updates.

**Sunday, December 12, 7:30am
Jepson Prairie/Wilcox Ranch
Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
Ken Poerner, (707) 580-6277
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net
kenpoe@sbcglobal.net**

The Jepson Prairie south of Dixon is well known for the magic of its vernal pools in late spring but less so for the wintering raptors and shorebirds which arrive in good numbers by this date. Join Maureen and Ken in exploring the Prairie and the Wilcox Ranch property owned by the Solano Land Trust not normally open to the public. They will also explore the Barker and Calhoun Sloughs and the legendary Robinson-Flannery Roads in search of Mountain Plovers, shrikes, falcons, eagles and other wintering raptors. Time permitting, they will cross Hwy 12 and check the Collinsville area for shorebirds and waterfowl. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch and liquids. FRS radios will be useful. Meet Maureen at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave exit. Turn left, and the Park and Ride will be on your immediate left. Or meet at the entrance to Jepson Prairie at Cook Lane and Hwy 113 south of Dixon BY 8am.

**Sunday, December 12, 6:30am
Tall Forest Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information: 684-2816
www.cosumnes.org**

Meet at the Farm Center Gate at the intersection of Desmond and Bruceville Roads, ON TIME, to join this monthly bird count. Usually led by John Trochet, this area is normally closed to the public, so this is your opportunity to bird there. John has an appreciation of nature on many

Field Trips continued from page 5

levels, and a trip with him is always informative. You must check the website activity schedule a day or two ahead to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details. Arrive a little early, as this trip always leaves promptly.

Saturday, December 18
Woodfords Christmas Count
Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net

Sunday, December 19, 9am
East Lawn Cemetery
Leader: Mary Beth Metcalf, 456-7382

Join Mary Beth for a 2-3 hour slow-paced walk through East Lawn cemetery where one can spot many of the common wintering species. Sometimes there will be less common finds such as red-breasted sapsuckers or golden-crowned kinglets, and some years there have been red-breasted nuthatches as well. Meet Mary Beth at the entrance gate at 43rd Street and Folsom Boulevard. There is street parking on 42nd and 43rd streets.

Saturday, December 25, 3:30pm
Christmas with the Cranes!
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip
Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip but ducks, swans and geese, as well as shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes

River Preserve Visitor Center parking lot at 3:30pm to hear a brief presentation of Sandhill Crane behavior, biology and status. Then we'll stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards, we'll drive along Desmond Road and possibly to Woodbridge Road or Staten Island, to see flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars, scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners.

Sunday, December 26
Sacramento Christmas Count
Compiler: Mark Cudney, 987-2422
mcudney@aol.com

Sunday, December 26, 3:30pm
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A Save Our Sandhill Cranes-sponsored trip

Too much turkey? Try cranes instead! If you're not doing the Sacramento Christmas Count, (and you should be!), get out in the fresh air and enjoy the wintering waterbirds. All information the same as Dec. 25th trip.

Sunday, January 2
Folsom Christmas Count
Compiler: Chris Conard, 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2010-11

Time: 8am, ending by noon
Location: William Pond Park on the American River or similar area
Each Trip Limited to 10 participants: Registration required
Dates (all Saturdays): November 13, January 8, February 12, March 12 and April 9

These outings will be 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. Each trip is limited to 10 participants. Register via email to Cathie at 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.

THE ANNUAL AMERICAN RIVER WILDLIFE COUNT

Saturday, December 4, 2010. Daybreak until early afternoon, rain or shine
Compiler: Lea Landry, llandry@softcom.net (preferred) or (916) 638-1141.

Join long-time American River Natural History Association (ARHNA) Count compiler, Jack Hiehle, and other team leaders in the annual ARNHA Wildlife Count on the first Saturday in December, the 4th, for a day of competition, companionship, and challenge in finding and identifying wildlife along the American River Parkway. The Count stretches from Nimbus Dam to Discovery Park with 12 teams of at least 2 persons, including birders in canoes, vying to find the most birds and increasing the count total from the 115 species seen last year (176 total species in 25 years since the count's inception in 1985).

The ARNHA Count differs from Christmas Counts in that teams count species of birds, rather than total numbers of each species. Additionally, ALL wildlife are counted, including mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. The team leaders will be contacting their "usual" team members to ascertain their availability and loyalty. We are always in need of enthusiastic birders to join our teams. You need not be an expert to contribute to the fun and competition. If you are interested in joining one of the teams, contact Lea for details, team assignments, and meeting and compilation locations.

DEPT OF FISH AND GAME TO OFFER WINTER SWAN TOURS IN SACRAMENTO VALLEY

Join a Department of Fish and Game (DFG) naturalist-led swan tour of Marysville's Rice and Waterfowl area this November through February. Co-hosted by local rice farmers and land owners, these tours will focus on finding Tundra Swans, as this tract is one of the best locations for seeing swans in California. Ducks, geese, cranes, shorebirds, white pelicans, herons, egrets and raptors including bald eagles are also commonly seen in this area, known as District 10. The area contains 23,000 acres of rice fields and restored habitat not normally open to the public. This is an excellent example of rice farming for wildlife habitat.

Tours are held on the second and third Saturdays of each month from 9 to 11am. They are driving tours along a short route with very little walking required. Pre-registration is required on the DFG website, www.dfg.ca.gov/regions/2/SwanTours. Up to 30 people may register for each tour. The tours are free, but registrants are encouraged to make a donation online to the California Wildlife Foundation to support this program.

The swan tours are part of DFG's wildlife viewing services program, which includes similar outdoors opportunities at Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Yolo Basin Wildlife Area, Isenberg Crane Reserve and North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve.

For more information about the swan tours, call (916) 358-2852.

RECENT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON BOARD ACTIONS

At the September meeting the SAS Board voted to donate \$1,000 in support of the Central Valley Birding Club Symposium, and \$250 to Point Reyes Bird Observatory. Also a donation of \$500 was made to an inner city grade school class to fund a field trip to Effie Yeaw Nature Center, including bus transportation and related classroom materials.

MAGAZINE EXCHANGE

Remember to bring those birding magazines that are piling up at home, and we'll have a table for an informal magazine exchange. And don't forget your coffee cups. Either bring your own or bring one to add to our collection. Thanks in advance!

General Meeting continued from page 1

Jess serves on Audubon's National Board of Directors, and is the Treasurer for both Palos Verde/South Bay Audubon and the Endangered Habitats League. He is the founder of the Audubon YES! (Youth Environmental Service) Program, which facilitates youth involvement in conservation. And last, but hardly least, Jess is a wildlife photographer, so there will be superb photos of many of the birds we are all working to protect.

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.

Lea Landry, Program Chair

CONTRIBUTE TO PROJECT FEEDERWATCH

One backyard at a time, participants in Project FeederWatch are doing their part to unravel nature's mysteries—simply by sharing information about the birds that visit their feeders from November to April. The 24th season of Project FeederWatch begins November 13, and goes through April, although new participants can join at any time.

People of all ages and skill levels can count the numbers and different species of birds at their feeders and enter their information on the FeederWatch website at www.FeederWatch.org. Based on nearly a quarter-century of FeederWatch data:

- The nonnative Eurasian Collared-Dove is invading North America at an unprecedented rate – it is now found in backyards from Florida to Alaska.

- **Southwestern U.S. & California:** American Crows, Downy Woodpeckers, and Black-capped Chickadees were recorded at more FeederWatch locations than at any point since the project began in 1987. Golden-crowned Sparrow reports were the lowest on record for the project.

To learn more about joining Project FeederWatch and to sign up, visit www.FeederWatch.org or call the Cornell Lab toll-free at (866) 989-2473. In return for the \$15 fee (\$12 for Cornell Lab members) participants receive the FeederWatcher's Handbook, an identification poster of the most common feeder birds, a calendar, complete instructions, and Winter Bird Highlights, an annual summary of FeederWatch findings.

RUSH TO RENEWABLES

In the face of climate change and limited fossil fuel resources, there is no question that we need to ramp up renewable energy development as quickly as possible. Our energy consumption shows no sign of slowing, and as electric vehicles become more widespread, energy demand will continue to increase. However, large-scale renewable energy projects like wind and solar farms, along with the transmission corridors they require, will have long-term impacts on our land and wildlife, and we should be thoughtful in how we proceed.

Renewable energy facilities can be planned, sited, and operated in a manner that avoids habitat disturbance rather than relying on mitigation. Open space and viable agricultural lands should not be the first places we consider for such facilities; rather, already-degraded sites, especially in urban areas, should be fully explored and developed first. In addition, monitoring wildlife impacts following installation should be mandatory for each project, especially those built on our state's still intact wildlife lands.

Audubon California has developed state guidelines for siting wind energy projects, and the federal Wind Turbines Guidelines Advisory Committee has established recommended guidelines for proposed wind facilities. Similar recommendations for solar facilities do not yet exist, but will hopefully follow soon.

Since land use planning and development decisions are made individually by county governments that often have little incentive to discourage development, local residents must provide the voice of reason. With some strategic planning and local diligence, we have an opportunity to build an energy-independent California while maintaining quality wildlife habitats and agriculture.

What you can do... Audubon California has resources if you want to get involved or join a discussion group. Visit our website for more renewable energy resources: <http://ca.audubon.org/chapters-advocacy-energy.php>

Jordan Wellwood, Audubon California

Birding and Nature Events

LODI'S SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

Long before Lodi existed, Sandhill cranes descended into the rich delta wetlands at the end of a long migratory journey, some from nesting grounds as far away as Siberia. In awe-inspiring numbers, and with a prehistoric call, stately gait, and elegant choreography, the Sandhill crane continues to attract and inspire visitors.

For 14 years, Lodi's Sandhill Crane Festival has celebrated the return of the cranes. In collaboration with the City of Lodi, the Festival continues this **November 6-8**, welcoming an ever-growing circle of friends to share the wonder of the Sandhill crane.

For more information, the phone contact is 800-581-6150 or email info@cranefestival.com. Online information can be found at www.cranefestival.com including the program and tour schedules. You may register for a nature tour in advance either online, by phone at 800-581-6150, or by downloading the registration form and mailing it in with your payment to: Lodi Sandhill Crane Association, P.O. Box 1616, Lodi, CA 95241

GALT, 4TH ANNUAL, WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Mark your calendar now for the 4th Annual Winter Bird Festival, in Galt. It's scheduled for Saturday, **January 29, 2011**. The City of Galt in collaboration with the Cosumnes River Preserve and Galt Joint Union Elementary School District are pleased to bring you the 4th Annual Winter Bird Festival. The Winter Bird Festival steering committee and volunteers hope that you will find this festival to be an exciting and educational opportunity to celebrate the Winter Birds and habitat we all call home. Guided Tours offer an exciting opportunity to see the birds in our local habitat. Hop on a bus and have your binoculars ready!

Speakers include Lon and Kat Yarbrough and Chris Conard, with additional presentations on bats and the insects they eat and also a group called Wild Things that cares for displaced wildlife. There are lots of activities for kids including crafts and an art festival. Lon Yarbrough is leading a sunrise photography tour, Chris Conard is leading a tour to the Bufferlands and the Cosumnes River Preserve tour is being led by John Trochet, including areas not normally open to the public. For more information and to register for the tours see the website at www.ci.galt.ca.us, or call 209-366-7115.

EAST AFRICA 2011

Ed Harper has announced there are still a few openings for the Tanzania safari he and Susan Scott are leading July 1 - 15, 2011. Drawing on their many years of experience, Ed and Susan have designed a highly productive itinerary. Camps and lodges have been carefully chosen to maximize the wildlife viewing experience. This friendly and inviting country is very safe and has some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities in all of Africa.

Responding to requests, Ed and Susan will offer another safari to Uganda. Tentative dates are from July 19 to August 3, 2011. Special highlights include Mountain Gorilla tracking as well as Chimpanzee tracking. The birding is spectacular with Shoebill and other Uganda bird specialties being high priority.

For more information for prices and itineraries, contact Ed at calidris@surewest.net or call him at 971-3311 or 704-7954.

Findings continued from page 2

Monterey Bay Coastal and Pelagic Trip (9/18-19) — Reporting on land birding 9/18, leader Mark Cudney said, "We were greeted the first thing in the morning at Andrew Molera State Park with a bird that I had not seen in almost 30 years—a soaring California Condor. What a start! The group was treated to spectacular close looks of over 10 Sora and Virginia rails flying and swimming at Carmel River State Beach. All three species of Cormorant in one scope view provided a good study." Dan Brown reported that seven Sacramento Audubon Society participants joined the Monterey Seabirds Cruises (MSC) trip on what the MSC website described as an "exceptionally calm and lovely day." For Dan a big highlight among 21 reported species was a flock of 16 Long-tailed Jaegers. Others from the e-bird report included seven Black-footed Albatrosses, Northern Fulmar, Pink-footed, Buller's and Sooty shearwaters, Ashy Storm-Petrel (by Todd Easterla only), Red-necked and Red phalaropes, Sabine's, Heermann's, Western, and California gulls, Arctic, Common and Elegant terns, Pomarine, Parasitic, and Long-tailed jaegers, Common Murre, and Cassin's and Rhinoceros auklets.

Mammals seen included 2 Blue Whales, several Humpbacks, and a huge pod of White-sided and Northern Right Whale Dolphins.

Hidden Falls Regional Park, Placer Co. (8/14) — Leader Scott Dietrich reported: "The trip went very well. We had 12 people show up and got a great view of this new county park. The highlight was the many Western Bluebirds calling at the parking lot area as well as 2 Red-shouldered Hawks and a Red-tailed Hawk soaring above us at the parking lot. We had a very good look at a beautiful male Western Tanager in one of the big pine trees. We also got a great view of a couple of Hutton's Vireos that were making lots of noise, also got a good look at an Orange-crowned Warbler, and heard a Wrentit near the creek. Did hear a Hairy Woodpecker down on the creek as well. We had many foothill oak woodland birds such as White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse, Acorn Woodpeckers and Spotted Towhee. We also saw one Rufous-crowned Sparrow and both House and Bewick's wrens. Everybody seemed to enjoy a pleasant evening among the rolling hills and beautiful oaks and also enjoyed great views of the falls where we had lunch. Overall we had a total of 35-40 birds. Not bad for this time of year."

Pete Hayes

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Spencer Eberle Lou Mosnier
Phil Laing Katherine Triboli

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Michael Eaton, Ken Hashagen, Nancy Joye, Ann Kohl and Phil Laing, to the **General Fund**.

Wayne Blunk, Elizabeth Bower, Jon Courtway, Monte Ikemire, Marlene Ishihara and Nancy Joye, to **Conservation and Education**.

A donation for **Bobelaine** upkeep came from Janice Carvantes after a trip there with students.

Pete Hayes made a contribution in memory of Ken Head.

Dolores Wolfe made a contribution in memory of her friend Ben Ashbaugh, and also donated a membership to his widow, Cathy Ashbaugh, remembering that Ben and Cathy always enjoyed bird watching from their home.

VACATION HOLDS

If you like to go where it's Warm in the Winter and Cool during the Summer AND have your mail held by the US Post Office, your *Observer* will NOT be held, but will be returned to Sacramento Audubon—and we have to pay the return postage. Additionally, you will not receive that issue as there's no forwarding address. Therefore, if you want to know what was in the newsletter, you must go to www.sacramentoaudubon.org to read it on line—during the following month. You can get current Field Trips and General Meeting information. If this occurs for extended periods of time (several months), we will probably ask you to close your subscription and get your information and updates on line.

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

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

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

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

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be held on November 30, 2010 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS FOR 2011

January 20 - Andy Engilis, *Birding in Chile*

February 17 - Scott Crosbie, *Yellow-billed Magpies* (Tentative Date)

March 17 - Ed Pandolfino, *Raptor Survey*

April 21 - Ben Sacks, *Central Valley Red Fox* (Tentative Date)

Observations continued from page 10 for details. With nearly 100 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:

Dan Airola, Dan Brown, Scott Dietri h, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Kevin Guse, Steve Hampton, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Mark Martucci, Ron Melcer, Ron Pozzi, Mary Schiedt, John Sterling, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, Ed Whisler, and Dan Williams.

Thanks to everyone for their reports—with-out them, this column would not be possible.

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

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

Rarities were hard to come by at coastal hotspots like Point Reyes, but the Sacramento area had a good September, which continued into October. There was a little flurry of Sacramento County **Green-tailed Towhees**, with the first found along the American River Parkway (ARP) at Sacramento Bar on 9/10. Attempts to refind this bird were unsuccessful, but produced three **Olive-sided Flycatchers** that afternoon. This latter species is a rare but regular migrant, and seems to be more regularly found in the eastern half of the county than down in the flats, at sites such as Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). Another **Green-tailed Towhee** was found near the "Accidental Forest" at CRP on 9/18-19, and a third was seen by many near the Gristmill access of ARP from 9/19-23.

Sacramento County's first **White-winged Dove** was seen in a Citrus Heights backyard from 9/16 through at least 9/18. Yolo County produced the lion's share of rare songbirds this month. Among the most notable reports were of a **Red-eyed Vireo** on 9/14 at Babel Slough, a **Pygmy Nuthatch** along Pumphouse Rd near Clarksburg, a **Blackpoll Warbler** from Babel Slough on 9/27, and a female **Baltimore Oriole** at the Sacramento Bypass on 9/11. **Evening Grosbeaks** started turning up in the Valley at multiple sites, especially in early October, but the first reports were of single birds on 9/25

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at the UC Davis riparian reserve and near the Gristmill access to ARP on 9/28.

Additional interesting reports included a **Snowy Plover** and a **Sanderling** at the Granite Bay boat launch at Folsom Lake

on 9/6, a **Solitary Sandpiper** the same day at CRP, **Black Swifts** among a large foraging flock of swifts and swallows at Lake Solano on 9/19, a **Hammond's Flycatcher** in north Davis on 9/13, and single **Brewer's Sparrows** at the Yolo Wildlife Area on 9/4 and Sherman Island on 9/28. Single **Yellow-breasted Chats** were mist netted at Stone Lakes NWR on 9/15 and 9/22. **Pine Siskins** were widely reported in fair numbers, and **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were reported from many sites and in impressive numbers. Finally, testing of shorebirds that died at the Woodland WTP, as reported last month, appears to show the culprit was avian botulism.

We are now featuring photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (<http://sacramento-audubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html>).

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit www.cvbirds.org and click "Listserv"

Observations continued on page 9

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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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