



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

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

Christmas Count Workshop

Join Tim Fitzer, Dan Brown, and John York, for a Christmas Bird Count Workshop. Learn about the history of the counts and get answers to some common questions, i.e., isn't that flock of crows being counted by three different teams? Get tips on counting large flocks of birds in the sky, mixed flocks of birds on the water, and learn to distinguish some common birds that can look confusingly alike in winter plumage on a gray winter's day. A slide presentation will provide good visual aids for some of the tricky identification problems. Remember, you do not have to be an experienced birder to go on a count; participation gives you experience and gives something back to the birds as well. So join us at 7pm for coffee and snacks, and an informal evening of Christmas Count fun; then pick your favorite count area and sign up!

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Art 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.

Cathie LaZier
Field Trip Committee

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SPONSORED CHRISTMAS COUNT DATES FOR 2008-2009

Saturday, December 20, Woodfords Christmas Count

Coordinator: Tim Fitzer, 916/870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net
Compiler: Andi Salmi, 916/691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Saturday, December 27, Sacramento Christmas Count

Compiler: Mark Cudney, 916/987-2422, e-mail: mcudney@aol.com

Sunday, January 4, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 916/362-5942, e-mail: conardc@gmail.com
For locations and dates for additional area Christmas Bird Counts see page 6.

AUDUBON CALIFORNIA BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

Sacramento Audubon's President, Keith Wagner, has been nominated to be the Audubon California Board representative for the Central Valley Council. There are 12 chapters in the Central Valley Council. The Chapter rep represents the interests of your Council chapters to the Audubon California Board and staff, helps plan the Agendas of the Chapter Council meetings, and is available for communication with all of the chapter leaders in his/her Council. The chapters voted by October 31st and we want to both congratulate and thank Keith very much for taking on this added responsibility.

AUDUBON CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY IN MARCH, 2009

The Audubon California Assembly is held every 18 months. All chapter leaders, members, and friends are invited to attend. The next Assembly is scheduled for March 15, 16 and 17, 2009, at the Asilomar Conference Grounds in Pacific Grove, California (www.visitasilomar.com.) If you register by December 11, 2008 you can save \$50. More information and the registration form can be found at <http://ca.audubon.org/assembly.php>.

Speakers and workshops will focus on emerging strategies for the conservation of birds and their habitat in the 21st Century. The workshops will include presentations and discussions such as:

New science capacity at Audubon California that models impacts of climate change on 350 species of California's birds.

Young conservationists from chapter and center programs discussing the next generation of conservationists.

New partners in conservation, new conflicts and opportunities, new landscapes and seascapes, new strategies to increase the capacity of chapters and new strategies for urban conservation.

Field trips with bird ID workshops include Pelagic and Whale Watching on Monterey Bay, Condor viewing in Big Sur, birding at Carmel River Mouth and Point Pinos.

Field Trip Findings

Hope Valley, Alpine County (10/12) — Leader Dan Brown reported: “Five intrepid birders braved the 20 degree temperature!!! and enjoyed the 15 mile per hour wind!! We were too early in the season for much of the fall foliage and the recent winds had stripped the turned leaves away. The sun was out, so the birds did sort of cooperate (29 species). The highlights were Cassin’s Finch, Mountain Bluebird, Townsend’s Solitaire, Prairie Falcon, Yellow Warbler, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, numerous Red-breasted Sapsuckers and a very cooperative American Dipper.”

River Walk Bird Count, Cosumnes River Preserve (10/11) — Leader John Schick reported: “Highlights were an albino Eared Grebe observed all morning in the ponds across from the visitor center. We had Yellow Warblers and Black-throated Gray Warblers, a Say’s Phoebe, some Greater White-fronted Geese, and first-of-season Yellow-rumped Warblers. A total of 78 species were viewed.”

Bodega Bay (10/11) — “Our group of 10 birders enjoyed a sunny and breezy day at Bodega Bay. Highlights included a Brown Creeper, Hutton’s Vireo and Red-breasted Nuthatch in Owl Canyon, Surfbirds at Bodega Head, and a large variety of shorebirds on the mudflats. Shorebirds included Semipalmated, Black-bellied and Snowy plovers, Sanderling, Dunlin, Least and Western sandpipers and Short-billed Dowitcher.”

Bannister Park, American River (10/10) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported his group saw Osprey, Spotted Sandpiper, Sharpshinned Hawk, Cedar Waxwing, Wild Turkey, and Black-throated Gray Warbler.

River Bend (Goethe) Park (10/5) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported “A pleasant autumn’s morning walk yielded good looks at a Fox Sparrow and Spotted Sandpiper, as well as Western Bluebirds and Anna’s Hummingbirds. We had a total of 37 species, as well as California Fuchsia and Vinegar Weed in full bloom.”

Bushy Lake (10/4)—Leader Dan Brown reported: “Nine participants enjoyed great post-rainy weather along with 49 species of birds. Highlights were, great scope views of lots of common resident birds, plus Yellow-rumped, Orange-crowned, and Wilson’s warblers, 1 Western Tanager, many Wood Ducks and 1 young but beautiful Peregrine Falcon, spotted by Valerie Phillips, in the scope for all to see.”

Monterey Bay Coastal and Pelagic Trip (9/27-28) — Leader Ken Hashagen reported: “Only 10 Sacramento Audubon members made the trip this year but all had two days of good birding. On Saturday, we added our 10 folks to the pelagic trip sponsored by Monterey Seabirds and had about 35 people on board. Seas were relatively flat and skies overcast. We saw all the usual nearshore pelagic birds, but added South Polar Skua, Black-footed Albatross, and both Flesh-footed and Black-vented Shearwaters. A total of 28 species was seen. Marine mammal viewing was better than usual, with

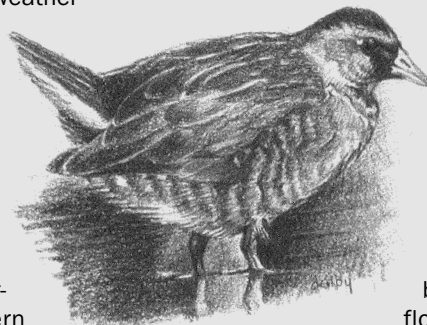
good views of sea otters, Risso’s dolphin, Northern right whale dolphin, Pacific white-sided dolphin, Northern fur seal, sea lion, humpback whale, and harbor seal. Several ocean sunfish (*Mola mola*) were seen, along with one blue shark.

“On Sunday, we started at Andrew Molera State Park, hit the mouth of the Carmel River, and finished up at Moonglow Dairy in Moss Landing. Good birds were seen at each location: California Thrasher, Wrentit,

Common Yellowthroat, Peregrine Falcon, and a large group of Eared Grebes were the best birds at Andrew Molera (warblers were slow). At the mouth of the Carmel River, we had the usual sightings of both Sora and Virginia Rail, Short-billed Dowitcher, huge flocks of Heerman’s and California Gulls, and Brown Pelicans and Elegant Terns. Moonglow Dairy had several

Pectoral Sandpipers, 100s of Tricolored Blackbirds and Red-necked Phalaropes, with a Marbled Godwit and a Long-billed Curlew also seen. The bird list at Moonglow was at least 24 different species in about an hour.”

Last Evening Beaver Walk (9/30) — “This was the worst night ever,” leader Jack Hiehle reported. Still, members of Jack’s group did see one beaver, thus preserving his longtime record of never being shut out on his popular beaver walks. He attributed the lack of activity this time to the gathering dusk and beavers’ genetic instinct to hunker down for the approaching winter.



Daniel Kilby

Findings continued on page 8

HELP! SPREAD THE WORD WITH OUR EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Do you like kids and love to see their faces light up when they discover something for the first time? Consider volunteering for our classroom programs. Whole class programs are led by Julie Serences (or you if you like), but another adult always helps as we go on our field trip around the school grounds. Helping kids see through a scope is magic, even if we are looking at rock pigeons! Currently, I am limited in the number of schools I can assist because I need help!

Writing skills? Help is always needed writing/editing short news-letter articles.

Computer skills? Anyone interested in helping the education committee start and maintain a listserve for folks interested in improving habitat in their own backyards?

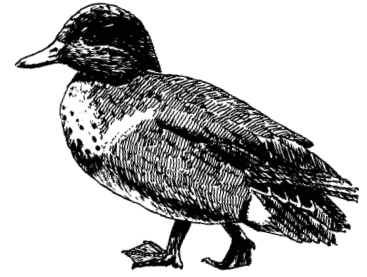
This is an outgrowth of our recent Audubon at Home workshops? Easy, easy, easy. The **Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC)** 2009 is just around the corner and I will need help meeting and greeting at presentations. 5 Saturdays in January and early February. If five people volunteered...

Audubon at Home Workshops planned for late March-April. Again help needed meeting and greeting at presentations.

Please let me know if you are interested in any of these jobs or if you have some ideas about education that you would like to share.

Julie Serences education@sacramentoaudubon.org

Field Trips



Stephen D'Amato

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 Cathie LaZier, 457-6882, empid@earthlink.net, for trips through November 12th. For trips from November 15th through December call the scheduler Maureen Geiger, 444-0804 mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net.

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, November 1, 8am
Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216
andisalmi@yahoo.com

Andi will be looking for the early flocks of ducks and geese that 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 are helpful on this trip.

Sunday, November 2, 8am Daylight Savings Ends! Set your clocks back one hour.
Yolo Basin Wildlife Area
Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
IshiM2000@aol.com

Join Marlene in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl as well. Raptors such as peregrine falcon are possible also. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, and 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. The trip will begin at the first parking lot (Lot A, on your left) at the beginning of the auto tour. Scopes are helpful on this trip, which is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders.

Wednesday, November 5, 8am – noon
Old Fair Oaks Bridge
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Jack knows this area well, and always finds interesting birds and plants on this morning nature walk. Meet at the north end of the

old Fair Oaks Bridge. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Sunrise, go east on Fair Oaks. When Fair Oaks turns left, continue straight ahead on Bridge Street.

Thursday, November 6, 7:30am in Davis
Lake Solano and Putah Creek
A Yolo Audubon Trip
Leader: Sami LaRocca
(530) 908-0288
Sami182@wavecable.com

On this trip we'll go to Lake Solano where Yolo County borders Solano County, to check for birds during the transition time of late fall to early winter. Bird sightings may include residents such as Osprey, Phainopepla, Wood Duck and varied woodpeckers; expected wintering species such as goldeneye, mergansers and Bufflehead may have arrived. There could be some surprises like Pileated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker and Golden Eagle. After checking the lake we'll drive up Hwy 128 as far as Monticello Dam. One stop will include the bridge to check for the American Dipper that has wintered there for the last four years. Meet at the Marketplace Shopping Center (near Big 5 Sporting Goods, 1301 W. Covell in Davis, just east of Hwy 113) at 7:30am. We'll plan on getting back to Davis about 2pm. All levels of birders are welcome. Bring water, snacks/lunch and binoculars. A \$5 fee per car will be needed for parking at the picnic grounds.

Saturday, November 8, 8am
Riverbend Park, (formerly Goethe Park)
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie at the first parking lot on the right past the entrance kiosk for this morning walk. We'll look for resident birds and wintering species in the oak woodland and on the river. This walk will end before

noon and is a good trip for beginners. This park is at the end of Rod Beaudry Drive, off Folsom Blvd. From Hwy 50 take the Bradshaw exit; go north to Folsom Blvd, east to Rod Beaudry Drive and turn left. There is a \$5 park entrance fee; if you want to carpool into the park meet Cathie about 10 minutes earlier behind the pizza place on the northeast corner of Folsom and Rod Beaudry Drive.

Sunday, November 9, 7:30am
Spenceville Wildlife Area
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603
offleash56@yahoo.com

This scenic recreational area of rolling hillsides, streams, reservoirs and ponds offers a variety of wildlife. Join Richard as he searches this foothill area for wintering waterfowl, raptors and passerine species. The trip involves moderate hiking; wear appropriate footwear and layered clothing. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and dress for changeable weather. Meet Richard 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.

Wednesday, November 12, 7:30am
Sacramento Old City Cemetery
Broadway and Riverside Blvd.
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Discover the variety of birds that live in and migrate through this historic city cemetery near the heart of downtown Sacramento. This walking tour is perfect for beginning birders. Meet Maureen at the cemetery's main gate at Broadway and 10th Street. Visitors may park in the lot across from the 10th Street gate and meet inside the cemetery entrance. This will be a short walk,

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

1-2 hours. The tour is a public service of the Old City Cemetery Committee and is offered under the auspices of the Division of History and Science of the City of Sacramento. Call or email Maureen if you have questions.

**Saturday, November 15, 7am
Caswell Memorial State Park
Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636
email: 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 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. Passerines, including several species of swallows, sparrows, woodpeckers and warblers are park specialties in spring and summer, with hold-overs and migrants in autumn. There is a day-use fee per vehicle to enter the park. 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. Meet at the Park and Ride on the east side of Hwy 99 at the Sheldon Rd exit.

**Sunday, November 16, 7 am
Sacramento County Delta
Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942
email: conardc@gmail.com**

This seldom visited portion of Sacramento County, including Sherman Island and Brannan Island, has a lot of potential. There can be thousands of waterfowl, shorebirds, sparrows, and blackbirds. Recent surprise finds have included Brant, Ruff, Cassin's Kingbird, and Common Grackle. The area is remote, so bring a lunch, dress for potentially cold and windy conditions, and plan to return to Sacramento by mid-afternoon. There are two sites with a \$5 per car entrance fee. We will meet at the northeast end of the Nugget parking area on Florin Rd, just east of Shari's. Take the Florin Rd West exit from I-5 (5 miles south of downtown Sacramento). Head west on Florin Rd, then make a U-turn at Greenhaven Dr.

**Sunday, November 16, 8am - Noon
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Habitat Improvement
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack and other nature lovers to assist with habitat restoration at this lovely nature area. Possible tasks include weed removal, pond clean-up, erecting fencing around oak trees for protection, and checking bird nest boxes. Call Jack for details.

**Tuesday, November 18, 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 which wind through the oak woodland and down to the American River. This is an excellent birding area, and Jack will share his knowledge of the native and non-native plants and trees of this parkway area as well. A great trip for beginners and more experienced birders alike.

**Wednesday, November 19, 8am
Lake Solano
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 359-2829
email: dtankers@winfirst.com**

Target birds for this trip are Phainopepla and Barrow's Goldeneye, with the possibility of Pileated Woodpecker. It could be muddy if we've had recent rains; wear appropriate footwear for our 2 to 3 mile walk. There is a \$5 parking fee at the Lake Solano area. Meet Dan at the Park and Ride off Mace Blvd and I-80 in Davis, behind Ikeda's Market at 8am. Rain and/or high wind cancels. Bring lunch and liquids for this trip which will last into early-afternoon.

**Thursday-Monday, November 20 - 23
Central Valley Birding Symposium
Contact: Frances Oliver
(209) 369-2010
e-mail: hummer52@sbcglobal.net**

Please see page 7 for complete information on this not to be missed event.

**Saturday, November 29, 8am
Road 113, Robinson Road and
Birds Landing Area
Leader: Tim Fitzer, 870-5207
e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net**

This is a great area for wintering Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, Prairie Falcons, Merlins, curlews, possible Mountain Plovers, shrikes, and other interesting birds. Bring liquids, lunch, warm clothes, spotting scopes, and FRS radios if possible. Meet at the West Capitol Ave exit Park and Ride. This trip will last into the afternoon.

**Sunday, November 30, 2pm - dark
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering**

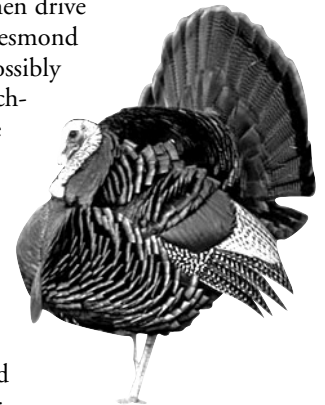
**Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes"
sponsored trip
Coordinators: Mike Savino, 446-1392
Plus Birding Guides from
Sacramento Audubon**

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip, but experienced birding leaders will help with identification of waterfowl and shorebirds that winter here. 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 2pm, and stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, then drive

out along Desmond Road and possibly further, search-

ing for more cranes and other birds. Optional dinner at Wimpy's afterwards with SOS Cranes board

members for further discussions. 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.



**Monday, December 1, 8am - Noon
Nimbus Fish Hatchery
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

This is another opportunity to explore the Nimbus/American River area. Walk with Jack and look for diving ducks, kingfishers, wintering gulls and other wildlife along the river. He will also be sharing his knowledge of interesting archeological points relating to early Chinese gold mining. Meet in the parking lot of the Nimbus Fish Hatchery off Hazel Avenue.

**Thursday, December 4, 8am in Davis
Mix and Gates Canyons on
Vaca Mt. Ridge
Leader: Sami LaRocca
(530) 908-0288
email: Sami182@charter.net**

In Solano County off Pleasants Valley Road we'll go up the ridge exploring the oak riparian and chaparral habitats of the Vaca Mountains. Along the ridge there is a stand of Black Oak; we may be treated to a display of golden fall color. Often seen here during winter are a variety of hawks and resident birds such as Bewick's Wren, Oak Titmouse and Pygmy Owl. Seasonal visitors include Fox Sparrow, Stellar's Jay, Varied Thrush, Band-tailed Pigeon and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Meet at the Marketplace Shopping Center (near Big 5 Sporting Goods, 1301 W. Covell in Davis, just east of Hwy 113) at 8am. We'll plan on getting back to Davis about 2pm. All levels of birders are welcome. Bring water, snacks/lunch and binoculars.

**Saturday, December 6, Daybreak
Great American River 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 sponsored by the American River Natural History Association (ARNHA). 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. The 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 7, 2pm – dark
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes"
sponsored trip
Coordinators: Mike Savino, 446-1392
Plus Birding Guides from
Sacramento Audubon**

Same information as for the trip on Sunday, November 30th.

**Wednesday, December 10, 9am-Noon
Nimbus Fish Hatchery/American River
Leader: Ed Harper, 971-3311
email: calidris@surewest.net**

Join Ed for an informative walk along the American River. Ed is a great birder who will be looking for any interesting birds, with emphasis on tricky identification of the many gulls that winter on the river near Nimbus Dam. This trip will last until late morning. A scope is useful in addition to binoculars. Meet at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery parking lot near Highway 50

and Hazel Avenue (about 15 miles east of Sacramento).

**Saturday, December 13, 8am – Noon
Wetlands and Waterfowl Tour II
Leader: Roger Jones, 875-9174
Email: 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 2 mile walk guided by a Bufferlands staff wildlife biologist who will explain current management and restoration techniques. Space is limited and the meeting location is weather-dependant, so please contact Roger Jones during the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

**Saturday, December 13, Very Early
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 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 recorded information a day or two before for exact meeting time and possible updates.

**Sunday, December 14, 8am
Discovery Park
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net**

This is a great, often overlooked and under-birded park near downtown Sacramento. Join Maureen in finding a variety of wintering species such as sparrows, hawks, woodpeckers and bluebirds. On I-5 from downtown, take the Garden Highway exit and turn left onto Garden Highway. Take the first left onto Natomas Park Drive, and the first right onto Capital Park Drive. Parking is permitted on either side of the Drive. There are no restrooms after the first half mile of the walk. This trip will end before noon.

**Sunday, December 14, 8am-Noon
Habitat Improvement Day
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack and help restore and improve an area near the American River. Your efforts will help keep this area a beautiful place to be. Call Jack for details as projects vary.

**Sunday, December 14, Sunrise!
Tall Forest Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information: 684-2816**

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 recorded information 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 20
Woodfords Christmas Count**

Check the Christmas Count list on the front page for information.

**Sunday, December 21, 8:30am
Riverbend Park
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
email: empid@earthlink.net**

Meet Cathie at the 1st small parking lot on your left, about 2/10ths of a mile past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk a loop from this parking lot up to the bike bridge and back, along the river, looking for mergansers, goldeneye, gulls, ducks, herons, sparrows and pipits. This walk is frequently on loose, uneven, and possibly wet cobbles, so wear sturdy shoes. Walk will last from two to three hours, depending on how many birds we find. Riverbend (formerly Goethe) Park is at the end of Rod Beaudry Drive, off Folsom Blvd in Rancho Cordova. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee.

**Saturday, December 27
Sacramento Christmas Count**

Check the Christmas Count list on the front page for information.

**Sunday, January 4
Folsom Christmas Count**

Check the Christmas Count list on the front page for information.

Birding Classes

BIRDS OF WINTER IN THE SACRAMENTO VALLEY

Ed Harper's class highlighting the wintering birds of our area has already started. Classes are being held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center on Oct. 30, Nov. 6, and Nov. 13 with field trips scheduled for Nov. 1, 8, and 13. To find out if there is any space left contact Effie Yeaw Nature Center 489-4918.

INTRODUCTION TO ORNITHOLOGY

Introduction to Ornithology (Bio 332), will be offered this coming Spring Semester at Sacramento City College. This course covers the ecology, behavior, and identification of birds, and will meet on Fridays beginning on January 23, 2009. Lecture will be from 11:30am-12:50pm, and lab from 1:30-4:35pm, in Lillard Hall, Room 109. There also will be several Saturday field trips during the semester. Please contact Professor Alexis Ackerman if you have questions (ackerma@scc.losrios.edu).

"HOW TO BIRD" CLASS AT LEARNING EXCHANGE

If you are a beginning birder or know anyone who is, this is the chance to join local birder and SAS field trip leader Maureen Geiger, in a class for new enthusiasts that covers all the basics of how to be a birdwatcher. Topics include: finding birds and other birders, increasing observational skills, dressing for success, birding by habitat and season, field trips and bird festivals, choosing optics, birder's code of ethics, and keeping notes and records. The class is offered at the Learning Exchange on Howe Avenue, February 25 and March 4 from 7-8:30pm followed by a field trip on Saturday, March 7th. Contact Maureen at 444-0804 or the Learning Exchange at 929-9200 for more information.

The Learning Exchange recently made a donation to our Education Committee which we appreciate very much. They offer education and recreational programs for personal and professional development, were founded in 1976 and are locally owned and operated. Their website for more information is www.learningexchange.com.

2009 DEER CREEK HILLS HIKE, BIKE, AND RIDE

Please join Sacramento Valley Conservancy for the 2009 Hike Season at Deer Creek Hills. Here's the schedule through March, 2009.

Saturday, January 24, 9am-1pm
Deer Creek Overlook Hike

Saturday, February 28, 9am-1pm
Geology Hike

Sunday, March 1, 9am-1pm
Equestrian Ride

Saturday, March 28, 8am
Wildflower Hike

Sunday, March 29, 9am-1pm
Equestrian Ride

Hikers/Cyclists/Riders should meet at Latrobe and Stone House Roads (north of Highway 16 or Jackson Rd. and west of Rancho Murieta). Both roads can be accessed off of Jackson Rd. Carpooling is strongly encouraged since parking is limited, and all vehicles should park on the dirt portion of Latrobe Rd.

Weather is unpredictable, so please bring layers of clothing for all weather types. Water, light snacks and a hat for warmth and shade are also suggested.

There is active cattle grazing at Deer Creek Hills, and the conditions of hiking routes vary and may include stream or fence crossings and uneven terrain. Heavy rain and/or wind cancel hike/ride.

Please RSVP with Gina Silvernale at (916) 731-8798 or ginasilvernale@hotmail.com -tour size is limited for your enjoyment. For more information please contact Sacramento Valley Conservancy at their website, www.sacramentovalleyconservancy.org or (916) 731-8798.

CHRISTMAS COUNT DATES FOR OTHER AREAS, 2008-2009

Saturday, December 6,

**American River Natural History Association
Annual Bird Count (and Mammals!)**

Compiler: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Sunday, December 14, Putah Creek Christmas Count

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

Monday, December 15, Benicia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island), 916/870-5207,

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Saturday, December 20, Auburn Christmas Count

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Tuesday, December 30, Lincoln Christmas Count

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Thursday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

Floyd Hayes, floyd_hayes@yahoo.com

Friday, January 2, Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

Compilers: Tom Rusert & Derren Peterie, 707-939-8007,

SonomaBirding.org

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

FRIENDS OF THE SWAINSON'S HAWK

The Friends of the Swainson's Hawk will hold their next program on Wednesday, November 19. Refreshments start at 6:30 and the Panel is from 7-8:30pm. The program is held at the South Natomas Community Center, 2921 Truxel Ave in Sacramento. (You may RSVP at 447-4956.) Panelists will show slides/video and discuss their experiences monitoring Swainson's Hawk nests during the summer of 2008. A Swainson's Hawk biologist will be part of the program.

Friends of the Swainson's Hawk celebrated the release of four rehabilitated Swainson's Hawks to the wild in September. The hawks were hearty, eager to fly and showed good flight skills. Three were juveniles and one was an adult who had been illegally held. The hawks were rehabilitated by Vickie Joseph, D.V.M. of the California Foundation for Birds of Prey. The release was made at Babel Slough in Yolo County, a well known roosting site for Swainson's. They are a threatened species in California and reproduce primarily in Sacramento, Yolo and San Joaquin Counties. They nest in large trees, usually near agricultural fields. They leave for wintering grounds in Mexico and Central America in late September and return in March. (For more information about Swainson's Hawks in our region, see www.swainsonshawk.org.)

SWAN DONATES TO EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Pam Giarrizzo is the leader of SWAN, (Sacramento Women's Action Network), a local giving circle. She became aware of Sacramento Audubon's Education Programs by attending Maureen Geiger's field trips downtown. Lucky us!

SWAN members get together monthly to socialize and discuss local nonprofit organizations. Members can nominate different organizations for consideration and the members vote on which will receive the monthly donations. At their September meeting, they discussed environmental groups and Pam very kindly suggested the Education Committee of Sacramento Audubon as a potential recipient and SWAN ended up giving \$875 to our program! This money will be used to buy additional binoculars for our school and youth programs and to assist with print costs of our Sacramento Bird Checklist - Youth Edition. Thank you SWAN for your generosity!

Birding Festivals

12TH ANNUAL CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM

Join birders from near and far and enjoy the company of great birders and naturalists such as Ed Harper ("Birders' Welcoming Party," Thursday evening), John Laws ("Exploring the Sierra Nevada as Naturalist and Artist", Saturday evening), Hans Peeters ("Owls of California and the West," Friday evening), Jon Dunn, Joe Morlan and Keith Hansen. Field trips take birders to surrounding hot spots to celebrate the diversity of birds that winter in the Central Valley, and workshops provide excellent information on a variety of topics such as digiscoping, difficult-to-identify species, birding by ear and bird sketching. Check the schedule of field trips and programs at www.cvbs.org and register by email: hummer52@sbcglobal.net or call (209) 369-2010 for information. The registration fee of \$90 includes the full event or \$45 for a single day attendance. Consider attending the Post-symposium Field trip (Youth scholarship Fund Raiser) on Digiscoping with Clay Taylor of Swarovski Optik on Monday from 8am - Noon.

LODI SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

The 12th Annual Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival will be held November 7-9 at Hutchins Street Square in Lodi. Festival admission and exhibits are free and there is a fee for the escorted nature tours. Sandhill Cranes return each fall to the wetlands near Lodi. The Festival provides fun, educational and recreational experiences for the whole family. Activities start Friday evening. Saturday and Sunday feature nature tours, an art show, hands-on exhibits, workshops and lectures. The fly-in of the Sandhill Cranes at sunset is the most spectacular event of the Festival. Please call (800) 581-6150 or visit www.cranefestival.com for more information.

GALT, 2ND ANNUAL WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The City of Galt is hosting its 2nd Annual Winter Bird Festival, Saturday January 17, 2009 at the McCaffrey Middle School facility located in Galt. The purpose of this event is to advance public awareness and conservation of the regions wildlife. Sandhill Cranes, Canadian Geese, Tundra Swans, pintails, and hundreds of other birds call Galt and its surrounding cities home. The Winter Bird Festival will offer the community a chance to spend time discovering, learning, and educating themselves on the importance of these feathered creatures as well as the wetlands, agriculture, and open space which are all crucial to their survival.

The festival's events will include a variety of specialized tours to the Cosumnes River Preserve, a youth Art Gallery showcasing Galt Elementary School children's drawings of migratory and resident winter birds, performances and live entertainment, workshops, guest speakers, local food vendors and much more. For more information visit their website at www.ci.galt.ca.us, or call their 24 hour recorded information line at (209) 366-7220.

MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Mark your calendar for the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival, January 16-19, 2009. Morro Bay is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway and one of the country's pre-eminent birding spots. At last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified! The Festival also offers workshops aimed at sharpening your birding skills, as well as evening programs with outstanding speakers. For more information check out the website at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org, or call (805) 772-4677. The registration deadline is January 5, 2009 but early signups are encouraged as the most popular events fill up quickly.

Findings continued from page 2

Reichmuth Park (9/21) — Leader Tim Manolis reported: “We had a very nice hike with about a dozen attendees. Nothing too earthshaking to report in the way of observations, though. There were modest numbers of the typical migrants (American Robins, Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanagers, Yellow, Wilson’s and Orange-crowned warblers, Black-headed Grosbeaks) with a mix of 1-2 each of some other migrants, e.g., Black-throated Gray Warbler, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Warbling Vireo, Fox Sparrow, etc. Wood Ducks, as usual were present in good numbers in the swamp. An Osprey circling over nearby at the end of the walk was a nice observation.”

Tall Forest, Cosumnes River Preserve (9/20) — Leader John Trochet reported: “The September Tall Forest bird survey was one of lots of birds to look through, but lots of these birds afforded poor looks and crossed to places where we couldn’t follow. In that sense it was somewhat exasperating. Still, we managed to see a fair variety of migrant songbirds. Best among these was the long-staying Northern Parula. We found Warbling Vireo, eight other species of regular western wood warblers, and Western Tanager. A few Sandhill Cranes were heard, but there was no water

around the Tall Forest, so shorebirds were not detected and waterfowl variety and numbers were poor.”

Point Reyes for Vagrants (9/20) — Leader Mark Cudney reported: “A beautiful day at Pt. Reyes for the 16 participants. The bird of the trip was a brightly-colored young male Magnolia Warbler. The group observed four Blackpoll warblers, two difficult to identify Tennessee Warblers, one female American Redstart, and a Willow Flycatcher.”

Capay Valley and Rayhouse Road (9/18) — Leader Sami LaRocca reported: “Three adventuresome birders left Davis at 7am in order to get a jump on the day. First stop at Guinda Park we were rewarded with a California Thrasher walking between some bushes and under the bridge vegetation. We all got good close looks. Other exceptional birds seen were Eurasian-collared Dove, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Say’s Phoebe (early), and Golden Eagle. On both my scouting trip as well as actual trip I was distressed to see how much Rayhouse Road past the top of Blue Ridge has suffered from lack of maintenance. Total species seen were 54.”

Pete Hayes

GREEN SUMMIT IN WOODLAND

It is a pivotal time in planning for the future of our region, which faces critical development pressure and challenges from climate change and increasing energy costs. Because of the accelerating rate of change, the decisions that we make now will have much more significant ramifications into the future. Needless to say, all these issues will have a profound effect on the bird life of Yolo County. A group of environmental organizations, including Yolo Audubon Society, are planning a green summit for the region.

Have you ever felt depressed about the conservation challenges facing us locally, but have been unsure about what to do about them? Are you tired of wringing your hands? This workshop is for you. There will be sessions on habitat planning, climate change, water and flood management; on the general plan update; on communication tips and tools to best reach elected officials and policy-making bodies.

This summit will take place on November 15 at the Woodland Community and Senior Center, 2001 East Street in Woodland. Tickets are \$15 and include lunch and snacks. More information is available at www.tuleyome.org.

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.

SACRAMENTO SPLASH

presents a
**Nature in the Neighborhood
Family Event**

Creatures of the Night

A Nocturnal Wildlife Walk at Mather Field
Saturday, November 8, 6:30pm–9pm

Join us as we venture into the woods around Mather Lake to discover the nocturnal creatures that rise when the sun sets.

The first half-hour of this program will introduce you to the incredible adaptations that enable nocturnal animals to survive. We’ll take a very short drive to the Mather Lake parking area where we will embark on a leisurely one-mile stroll on relatively level ground. Our walk will take place in darkness illuminated by silvery moonlight.

As we walk we’ll discuss the nocturnal critters that live at Mather; learn how to see in the dark without a flashlight; practice moving stealthily through the night; and try predator calling (making sounds that attract foxes, coyotes, owls, etc.)

On previous night walks, we’ve seen or heard beavers, otters, raccoons, skunks, owls, muskrats, night herons, coyotes, insects, and more! Come explore the secret world of nocturnal critters beneath a canopy of stars, while enjoying a symphony of nighttime sounds!

Be sure to wear good walking shoes and warm, dark clothing. Bring a flashlight and bug protection of your choice. Reserve your spot early, as space in this fun program is limited!

For more information visit www.sacsplash.org and click on “Nature in the Neighborhood.” You may reserve a spot for this program (strongly recommended) on our website or by calling Splash at 364-2437. The Splash Education Center is located at 4426 Excelsior Rd., Mather. For directions, visit our website and click on “Find Us.” Suggested donations are \$10/adult and \$5/child (5-18). Children must be accompanied by an adult.

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

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Carter, Hal D
O'Farrell, Susan
Williams, Daniel P

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Karen Benson, Wayne Blunk, Julie Hamlin, Ken Hashagen, Monte Ikemire, Marlene Ishihara, Barbara Klocek, Ken Mateik, Dixie Robinson, Phillip Silva, Richard Soehren, Joanne Vinton, Keith Wagner and Dan Williams, to Conservation and Education.

Delberta Bass, Ken Mateik, Richard Soehren and Jon Wato, to the General Fund.

Sara Gillespie to Bobelaine.

Dan and Jan Tankersley to Conservation and Education fund in memory of Sheila Deaner.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

An Osprey eating fish and a Kestrel eating dragonflies were two of the favorite scope views at the Salmon Festival at Nimbus Fish Hatchery, but the main event was a group of very cooperative Turkey Vultures who sunned, dust bathed and fought over dead fish. Also on view were Spotted Sandpipers, Green Heron, egrets and mergansers. Our Audubon Outreach booth location, right on the river, was busy both Saturday and Sunday with people stopping to talk about birds, learn about our field trips and programs, and just enjoy watching the birds. Volunteers manning the scopes were: Tim Fitzer, Maureen Geiger, Ken Hashagen, Marlene Ishihara, Gail, Harry and Heather Janke, Lea Landry, Cathie LaZier, Louise McCullough, Barbara Mohr, Darrell Mohr, Jonilynn Okano and June Persson.

Upcoming events for the Outreach table are the Central Valley Bird Festival in Stockton in November and the Galt Winter Bird Festival on January 17th. If you'd like to help for a few hours either day, call or email Cathie, 457-6882 or empid@earthlink.net.

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

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Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP + 4 _____

Email _____

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

FUTURE SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS

January 15 – Speaker TBA, Save Our Sandhill Cranes
(Galt Festival is January 17th)

February 19 – Speaker TBA, Wildlife Care

March 19 – Chris Conard, *Birding Alaska*

April 16 – John (Jack) Muir Laws, *Exploring the Sierra Nevada as a Naturalist and an Artist*. Julie Serences will be coordinating an Education Program with Jack on the 16th, prior to the General Meeting

May 21 – Speaker TBA, Friends of the Swainson's Hawk
(SAS/FOSH Field Trip in June)

Observations

continued from page 10

Flycatcher at CRP on 9/4, a late Western Kingbird in Davis on 9/22, and a **California Thrasher** that spent the month near the Howe Access was unusual for ARP.

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

Roger Adamson, Todd Easterla, Steve Hampton, James Holmes, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Mark Martucci, Jeri Langham, Jim Laughlin, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, June Persson, Dave Quady, Toby Rohmer, Deren Ross, Mary Schiedt, Zach Smith, John Sterling, John Trochet, 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 31
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

September is the heart of fall songbird migration, and this year it did not disappoint. Regular western migrants were reported in good numbers and from many locations. Shorebird numbers and diversity also remained strong. By the end of the month, many returning winter residents, such as **Red-breasted Sapsuckers**, **Hermit Thrushes**, and **White-crowned** and **Golden-crowned Sparrows** were being recorded.

Highlights begin with eastern songbirds detected along the American River Parkway (ARP). For the second year in a row, a **Bay-breasted Warbler** was found at the Gristmill access (9/20-21). A **Palm Warbler** was an excellent find just upstream of the Howe Access (9/23-25). Rounding out the parkway warblers, a male **Black-and-white Warbler** was found at Lower Sunrise on 9/24. An adult male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was found at Discovery Park on 9/10, while a probable first-year bird was seen the same morning just to the north along Bannon Creek. The male **Northern Parula** found at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 7/26 continued into October. 9/27 produced a second **Northern Parula** at a different CRP location. A **Tennessee Warbler** was a nice find along Putah Creek, upstream of Davis (9/9).

In a month packed with highlights, a **Chimney Swift** heard calling among a

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flock of **Vaux's Swifts** near the UC Davis Med Center on 9/9 is one of few ever reported for the Sacramento area. A first-year **Sabine's Gull** at the Woodland WTP on 9/25 was another excellent find. A **Hairy Woodpecker** at CRP on 9/28 was only the fourth record for the preserve in

20 years of surveys. A **Chestnut-backed Chickadee** at Discovery Park on 9/10 is one of few records for Sacramento County. Shorebirds were well-represented among the month's reports. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** was found on 9/24 at the Woodland WTP, and a **Snowy Plover** was along the shoreline of Folsom Lake at Beal's Point on 9/11. Two **Sanderlings** were there as well, and they were more widely reported than usual: Lincoln WTP on 9/5, south of Dixon on 9/15, and along the Feather River at Bobelaine on 9/18-19. Two **Solitary Sandpipers** were at North Davis Farms on 9/8, and one was west of Yuba City (9/16-17). **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were found along Brewer Rd in Placer County on 9/4 and at the Lincoln WTP on 9/10. **Pectoral Sandpipers** were widely reported, with 9 or more at the Woodland WTP on 9/24.

Other interesting reports include a first-year **Common Tern** at the Davis WTP (9/9), an **Olive-sided Flycatcher** at the Sacramento County Bufferlands on the fairly late date of 9/19, a **Dusky**

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.

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