



The *OBSE*RVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, October 20
Shepard Garden and Art Center
7:30pm General Meeting

The Human History of the California Condor

Sanford R. "Sandy" Wilbur, who led the California condor research and recovery efforts from 1969 to 1981, will speak about the historical record of this endangered species and the efforts to save it from extinction.

Using color slides and readings from his new book, *Condor Tales, What I learned in Twelve Years with the Big Birds*, Sandy will trace the history of the species from the Pleistocene to the present day. The causes of endangerment and the rationale for the current captive breeding program will also be highlighted.

Sandy, a native of Oakland, California, and a graduate of Humboldt State University, worked with the US Fish and Wildlife Service for 34 years. He is the author of five books and nearly 100 other publications on birds, conservation and history. Since retirement in 1994, he has spent his time writing and publishing works on conservation, American history, and religious topics. He and his wife Sally live in Gresham, Oregon in the winter, and migrate to northern New Hampshire in the summer.

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

Sally Riggs, Program Chair

CHRISTMAS COUNT SCHEDULE December-January, 2005-2006

Saturday, December 3,

American River Natural History Association, Annual Animal Count

Compiler: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Saturday, December 17, Woodfords

Coodinator: Tim Fitzer, (916) 961-5871, e-mail: spskua@aol.com; or

Compiler: Andi Salmi, (916) 691-7216, e-mail: andisalmi@yahoo.com

Saturday, December 17, Auburn

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

Sunday, December 18, Stockton

Compiler: Jim Rowoth, (209) 956-2648, e-mail: rowoth@sbcglobal.net

Sunday, December 18, Putah Creek

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

Monday, December 19, Benecia

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

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

Monday, December 26, Sacramento

Compiler: Cliff Hawley, (916) 300-2495, e-mail: yellowhammerca@gmail.net

Wednesday, December 28, Lincoln

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, (916) 486-9174, e-mail: ERPfromCA@aol.com

Sunday, January 1, Folsom

Compiler: Chris Conard, (916) 362-5942, e-mail: chris.conard@comcast.net

Sunday, January, Angwin

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

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



No More Pelagic Trips?

That's what will happen if we can't find a volunteer to co-ordinate the two yearly boat trips; Monterey in October and the Farralons in August.

Jeff Mangum has been our pelagic trip co-ordinator for more years than he wants to count, and he needs a replacement. This does not require birding skills, just organizational skills, twice yearly.

The main duties are to put a notice in the Observer; receive registrations by mail; reserve the boat; send out information, (maps, etc.) to participants; check people in at the dock, and go on the trip yourself and have a good time! The birding leader will be provided by the Field Activities committee. Jeff has agreed to work closely with

the new volunteer the first time – he has much of this already set up so there are clear guidelines to follow.

If you've been on either of the pelagic trips and had a good time, consider taking this on. You can contact Jeff at 988-2802 or e-mail him at SkuaJM@aol.com

Field Trip Findings

Goethe Park (9/11) — Cooper's Hawks put on quite a show, leader Cathie LaZier reported. Three of the hawks circled, and dived, then one rocketed past at eye-level after a Mourning Dove. Finally an adult female and an immature jostled and chased through the oaks. Gleaning in the oaks were Wilson's, Hermit, Townsend's, Yellow and Black-throated Gray Warblers, with Hutton's Vireos and a Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher. Vaux's and White-throated Swifts were feeding over the river with Tree, Violet-Green, Cliff and Barn Swallows as a Swainson's Hawk and Red-shouldered Hawk circled each other overhead. A group of 15-plus White-tailed Kites was a nice finish to the walk.

Cosumnes River Preserve (9/10) Highlights of a River Walk census led by John Schick were Vaux's Swifts, Warbling Vireos, large numbers of White-tailed Kites and egrets, Spotted Sandpiper, Western Wood-Pewee, and a family of eight River Otters playing among shorebirds.

Sonoma-Mendocino Counties (9/10) At Schollenberger Park in Petaluma, the group led by Ron Storey found two Cackling Geese, a Pacific Golden Plover, Lesser Scaup, several Lesser Yellow legs (some standing next to Greater Yellowlegs), Yellow Warbler, two Common Yellowthroats and several Bonaparte's Gulls. At Fetzer's Winery in Hopland the group had a guided tour of the six-acre organic garden by Nadia, winery naturalist. While there, birders saw a family of California Quail with several young, several Anna's Hummingbirds, a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, and heard a Clapper Rail call. At the Rio Lindo Winery in Healdsburg, the group watched 1,500 to 1,800 Vaux Swifts gather as the sun set and then begin

their spectacular descent into a chimney. While they were at their thickest, a Merlin flew through the vortex trying and failing to catch a Swift, but was successful on a second attempt.

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area (9/4) — Lack of water kept numbers of birds and species down. The 20 birders led by Maureen Geiger and Cathie LaZier found about 30 species along the auto loop. They had nice looks at Northern Harriers, White-tailed Kites hovering, a Loggerhead Shrike, a Caspian Tern, many Great and Snowy Egrets and White-faced Ibis fly-overs. Several members of the group were treated to great views of the fly-out of bats along the Yolo Causeway on the way home.

Point Reyes (9/3) — Leader Chris Conard reported a good mix of Western migrants at Five Brooks. A few members of the group saw a bobcat. Good birds at Abbott's Lagoon included a Snowy Plover with a chick and two Baird's Sandpipers at very close range. A Blackburnian Warbler proved to be the highlight of the trip.

Migration at the SRCSD Bufferlands (8/28) — "We had excellent numbers of warblers, including Yellow, Orange-crowned, Wilson's, Townsend's, and Black-throated Gray," leader Chris Conard said. "Other highlights included many Swainson's Hawks and an Osprey."

Bodega Bay (8/31) — Four Sacramento birders made the trip to Bodega Bay to enjoy a beautiful fall birding day at this wonderful coastal location. Leader Dan Tankersley reported, "We were met there by one other Sacramento birder, Stuart Schulz, who brought Nina Van Rumsular, a San Francisco birder. Nina was Sacramento

Audubon's program chair 20 or so years ago. She was known as Nina Kelly in those days." The group tallied 70 species, with the highlights being Wandering Tattler at Bodega Head, and several fall warbler species at Owl Canyon. At low tide they enjoyed many expected shorebirds and were afforded great studies of most of the species present. On Doran Beach they found a Snowy Plover. On the way home, a quick stop at Schollenberger Park yielded four basic plumaged Bonaparte's Gulls.

Bodega Bay (8/27) — A sparkling assortment of birds was recorded on this trip to the coast led by Ed Harper, subbing for Andi Salmi. The list as reported by Ron Storey included, at Owl Canyon, Hermit, Townsend's, Wilson's, Yellow and Orange-crowned warblers; Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Willow Flycatcher, Great-horned Owl, Chestnut-backed Chickadee and Red-breasted Merganser. A Pigeon Guillemot was found at Campbell's Cove, and at least four Wandering Tattlers and a Pigeon Guillemot were seen at Bodega Head. A Red Knot, five Snowy Plovers and five Caspian Terns were found at Doran Park and a Whimbrel and Ruddy Turnstone at Porta Bodega.

Bobelaine Sanctuary Walk (8/21) — Nice weather made for a pleasant morning for seven birders, leader Brian Gilmore reported. Sightings included a Warbling Vireo and Black-throated Gray Warbler near the parking lot and a Spotted Sandpiper and Black-crowned Night-Heron at Lake Crandall. A couple of noisy Belted Kingfishers entertained the birders as they walked the levee. The Oak Trail yielded a Nashville Warbler.

Findings continued on page 5

New Book Published

The American River Natural History Association has published a revised edition of *A History of the Lower American River* with a new title, *The Lower American River: Prehistory to Parkway*.

With a pull-out map, timeline and index, the 135-page volume recounts the story of the native Nisenan who were nurtured by the river's salmon fishery; Jed Smith's "reckless breed" of fur trappers; and empire builder John Augustus Sutter. The gold-seekers, growers and entrepreneurs along with the latter-day heroes who fight to protect the 31 1/2-mile long river parkway are all chronicled.

Edited by Pete Hayes, the book updates a 1991 volume edited by Bill Dillinger. It is available for \$14.95 at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, local book stores and will be available at our General Meetings

In Memoriam - Curt Sutliff

June 12, 1935 – August 18, 2005

Many long time Audubon members will remember Curt Sutliff with a smile. His wide interest in natural history, his deadpan sense of humor, and his reputation as a "character", made any trip with Curt memorable. As his brother David wrote, "although he masqueraded as a curmudgeon, he had many friends because he was, at heart, a generous and kindly person." He will be sorely missed.

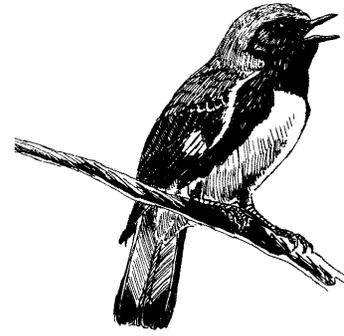
Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

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

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be October 25 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

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/she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Mark Cudney, 987-2422, for trips through October 8. For trips October 10 through November 13, call the scheduler Cathie LaZier, 457-6882, empid@sbcglobal.net. Plan to pool cars and share gas expenses with the driver. Walkie-talkies can be helpful on non-local trips. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.

Saturday & Sunday, October 1-2, Noon
Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park,
Northeastern Shasta Co.
Leader: Gary Fregien
(916) 708-0636 (cell)
E-mail: calaveri@sbcglobal.net

This trip to lava country on the Modoc Plateau requires "paddle power"; a canoe or kayak is preferable. Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park sits on and along Big Lake and features a great opportunity for boating, hiking, many species of birds and scenic viewing. The scenery includes spectacular views of Mount Shasta to the west and Lassen Peak to the south, and crystal clear waters at Ja-She Creek and Crystal Springs. Birds include American White Pelican, Osprey, Bald Eagle, Swainson's Hawk, Sandhill Crane, Northern Pygmy-Owl and Spotted Owl, Common Nighthawk, Lewis' Woodpecker and many others too numerous to mention. This trip is best enjoyed by staying over. "Primitive" camping (meaning no running water & pit toilets) is available at 9 sites along the shoreline in the state park. A small camping fee may be charged. For a sneak peek, go online at www.parks.ca.gov and then open "Find A Park". Big Lake can be accessed at a PG&E public boat launch known as "Rat Farm". It is reached from the town of McArthur by turning left off Highway 299 on to Main St., continuing past the Inter-mountain Fairgrounds, across a canal, through a gate (usually open) and proceeding about 3 miles north on a graded dirt road. Meet Gary at the launch ramp at 12 Noon on Saturday. You may also arrange to caravan up with Gary on Friday morning, Sept. 30. This trip requires confirmation of your attendance in advance (by Sept. 24). Please call or email Gary to confirm your attendance and to discuss travel information. Inclement weather may cause a cancellation and rescheduling.

Saturday, October 1, 7am
Point Reyes for Vagrants
Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942,
chris.conard@comcast.net

Join Chris on this annual trip to the coast for rare fall migrants. With fall migration in full swing, who knows what will appear. The geography of Point Reyes Peninsula makes it a magnet for warblers and shorebirds migrating south. Bring lunch and liquids for a full day of birding. Meet Chris at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take the West Capitol Avenue exit off I-80; turn left at the stop light, then left into the Park and Ride.

Sunday, October 2, 7:30am
Yolo Wildlife Area
Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen for a morning drive around this diverse area just a few minutes from downtown Sacramento. A good variety of species is possible this time of year; shorebird numbers will depend on the amount of water available. To reach the Wildlife Area from Hwy. 80, take Exit 78 at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. At the stop sign, turn right, pass under the freeway, then turn left onto the gravel road which tops the levee and drops down into the Wildlife Area. Meet at the first large parking lot. This trip will end by noon.

Saturday, October 8, 6:30am
Coastal Trip
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 961-5871
spskua@aol.com
Dan Brown, 362-2458
Naturestoc@aol.com

Where the birds are! That's where Tim and Dan will take you on this full day of coastal birding. It may be Bodega Bay, or Point Reyes, or ???, so call Tim shortly before the trip for an alternate meeting place. Bring

lunch, liquids, and layered clothing for those coastal breezes, and meet Tim and Dan for an EARLY start at 6:30am at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take the West Capitol Avenue exit off I-80; turn left at the stop light, then left into the Park and Ride. Bring a scope if you have one. Gulls, loons, scoters, turnstones, peeps, and larger shorebirds should all be present and Tim and Dan will be looking for any unusual migrants.

Thursday, October 13, 8am
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Jack knows this area better than anyone. With fall migration in full force, some interesting birds may be present. Jack is especially good at identifying the plants and animals sure to be seen on this trip. This is a good trip for beginners.

Saturday, Oct 15, 8:30am – 1:30pm
Bufferlands Habitat Restoration
Workshop

Are you interested in Habitat Restoration? If you are a student, volunteer, consultant, professional restorationist, or would just like to learn more about this critical aspect of conservation, we invite you to participate in the Bufferlands Habitat Restoration Workshop. In 1990 the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) began numerous ongoing habitat restoration projects on its 2,650-acre Bufferlands. Over the years, the natural resource staff has applied and developed many techniques that have led to successful projects. This workshop will draw from over ten years of onsite restoration experience. You will see the restoration sites up-close as we discuss how the projects were implemented, what worked, and how we addressed challenges. We will walk through a portion of the Upper Beach Lake project and discuss several sites and management

strategies. We will focus on field techniques for riparian forest restoration, grassland restoration, and seasonal wetland management. There will be many opportunities to ask questions.

Space is limited, so sign-up in advance. For more information call 875-9309 ext. 1, or e-mail: conardc@saccounty.net

Sunday, Oct 16, 8am

Goethe Park

Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882

empid@sbcglobal.net

On this morning walk we'll be looking for early winter returnees, such as sparrows, kinglets, thrushes and Yellow-rumped Warblers. Trip will end before noon. This is a good trip for beginners. Meet Cathie at the first parking lot on the right past the entrance kiosk. There is a \$4 per car entrance fee. If you wish, you can meet Cathie at the corner of Rod Beaudry Drive and Folsom Blvd. at 7:50am to carpool into the park.

Saturday, Oct 22, 8am

Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek

Leader: Lea Landry, 638-1141

llandry@softcom.net

Meet Lea in the parking lot of the Snowberry Creek Equestrian Staging area, where Main and Sunset Avenues meet in Orangevale. Parking lot is your first right after you turn off the main road. This morning walk includes riparian habitat, some ridge trails and a good view of Lake Natoma. A variety of woodland birds and waterfowl are possible, including early sparrows and late migrating warblers. Wear comfortable shoes; there may be some short steep climbs on trails. Bring liquids and snacks if you wish, and layered clothing.

Sunday, Oct 23, 8am

Bobelaine Sanctuary

Leader: Carla Barbaro, 486-1198

cbarbaro@comcast.net

Join Carla for a morning autumn walk through this great riparian habitat. Herons, egrets, cormorants and grebes should be on the water, and Yellow-rumped Warbler, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and a variety of sparrows will be settling in for the winter. Take Highway 99 north toward Yuba City; about 2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue and follow it to a dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. Bring liquids, and a snack if you wish.

Thursday, October 27, 8am - Noon

Bannister Park

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Explore another beautiful area along the American River. As always, you can learn much about the local history as well as nature, when you take a walk with Jack. Meet in the parking lot at the south end of Bannister Road, next to Waldorf School entrance.

Saturday, Oct 29, 9am

Calaveras Big Trees State Park

Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882

empid@sbcglobal.net

Meet Cathie in the large parking lot on the left, past the entrance kiosk of Calaveras Big Trees, at 9am. This park is about a two hour drive from Sacramento; call Cathie if you need directions. We will take a leisurely walk on the one mile loop trail through the North Grove of Giant Sequoias, enjoying dogwoods, hazelnut and big leaf maple in fall color. Hoped-for birds include White-headed Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Red-breasted Nuthatches. Afterwards, we'll picnic at the meadow, make a short stop at the visitor center, and possibly do a short afternoon hike before heading home. Dress for changeable weather; bring your lunch and drinks.

Sunday Oct 30, 8am - Noon

Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills

Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804

mkgeiger@comcast.net

NOTE: Daylight Savings Time

Starts Today

Join Maureen for a leisurely walk through this riparian habitat and look for resident birds such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds and marsh birds as well as winter warblers and sparrows. River otters are a possibility. Time permitting, a second walk along New York Creek is possible. Meet at the Bella Bru restaurant in the Raley's shopping center on El Dorado Hills Boulevard just off Highway 50.

Saturday, Nov 5, 7am

Bodega Bay

Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458

naturestoc@aol.com

Join Dan for a full day of birding, exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. This is often one of the best coastal birding areas, with many gulls, shorebirds, waterfowl and raptors to see, in addition to possible wintering vagrant songbirds. Meet Dan at the Park & Ride off Highway 80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take the West Capital Ave. exit; turn left at the stoplight and then left again into the Park & Ride lot. This Park & Ride is on the North side of the freeway,

NOT THE SOUTH SIDE LOT. We will leave at 7am SHARP. Bring food (an option for lunch will be The Tides snack bar), water and warm clothes.

Sunday, Nov 6, 8am

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216

andisalmi@yahoo.com

We hope to view early flocks of ducks and geese that will winter in the valley or are feeding on their way further south. There is a 3.7 mile driving route, and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon, so bring lunch, drinks, and warm clothes. Take I-5 north toward Woodland; exit at Road 102 and turn right into the Jack-in-the-Box parking lot, to meet Andi. CB radios would be helpful for the driving tour.

Thursday, Nov 10, 8am

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: Dan Tankersley, 359-2829

dtankers@winfirst.com

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

Saturday, Nov 12

Cosumnes River Preserve

River Walk Trail

Leader: John Schick

Info: 684-2816 Ext 5

E-mail: info@cosumnes.org

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

Sunday, Nov 13, 7:30am

Upper Sunrise

American River Parkway

Leader: Mark Martucci, 722-6098

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

Entertainment Books

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

Field Trip Findings

Continued from page 2

Lake Tahoe (8/20) — An off-course Lark Bunting was the headliner on this trip arranged by Nancy Bittner and led by Chris Conard. The chunky sparrow relative is normally found on prairies east of the Rockies and winters in the Southwest. Other highlights included Marbled Godwits, Forster's and Caspian Terns, Bald Eagle and White-faced Ibis. Also: Yellow, Wilson's, and MacGillivray's warblers, and a flock of Pygmy Nuthatches.

Tall Forest, Cosumnes River Preserve (8/20) — Leader John Trochet reported that the group found a fair number of songbird migrants along with Lesser Yellowlegs, Common Raven, and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Cosumnes River Preserve (8/20) John Schick's monthly census along the River Walk Trail yielded Osprey, Willow Flycatcher, Cooper's Hawk, Caspian Tern, early Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-headed Blackbird.

Beaver Walk (8/19) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported the group spotted five-plus Beavers and one Muskrat, along with Spotted Sandpiper, Nuttall's Woodpecker, and White-tailed Kite, among other usual parkway suspects.

Pete Hayes

Seasonal Observations

continued from page 6

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

Steve Abbott, Mel Bolinder, Brent Campos, Mary Chambers, Terry Colborn, Andrew Engilis, Maureen Geiger, Brian Gilmore, Steve Glover, Richard Hall, Steve Hampton, Joan Humphrey, Dave Johnson, Jon King, Jeri Langham, Sami LaRocca, John Luther, Ron Melcer, Kurt Mize, Frances Oliver, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Ryan Phillips, Terry Ronneberg, Mary Schiedt, Julie Serences, John Sterling, and John Trochet.

Chris Conard

Events & Announcements

TANZANIAN SAFARIS IN 2006

Ed Harper and Susan Scott are offering their popular Tanzania safaris again in 2006. Each safari is limited to 10 participants and the February 19 - March 5 trip is nearly full. There is still room on the March 13-26 safari for several more. The dates are an excellent time to visit Tanzania since the birding is at its best with local populations being augmented by bird species from Europe and Asia. The wildebeest herds are calving and predators abound! Also, since air travel to Europe is much less expensive in winter, getting to Africa is appreciably less expensive. For inquiries, contact Sandpiper Journeys at calidris@surewest.net or call Ed or Susan at (916) 971-3311

DON'T FORGET THESE FESTIVALS

The Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge will hold its 18th Annual **Festival of the Cranes** from Tuesday, November 15 through Sunday, November 20, 2005. Brochures are available by calling (505) 835-2077. You may also check www.friendsofthebosque.org/crane for more details or write P.O. Box 340, San Antonio NM 87832

Come to where the birds are and join Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) for their **10th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival**, January 13-16, 2006. For more information about the Festival, check out our new website at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org, or call (805) 772-4677.

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM, November 17-20

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the Ninth Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium Nov. 17-20, 2005 at the Radisson Hotel in Stockton. There will be field trips, workshops, and a Birding Nature Fair and Art Show with over 25 vendors selling nature-related items. The schedule, brochure, registration form, etc. are on the website: <http://cvbs.org>. The non-computer inclined can contact Frances Oliver at (209) 369-2010.

*More information on the Symposium and the Festivals can also be found in September's *Observer*.

AREA BIRDING UPDATE

Birding quality is expected to improve markedly at the popular Vic Fazio Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area in October as State Fish and Game managers complete flooding at the 16,000-acre preserve off Interstate 80 in East Yolo County.

Normally the area is flooded in September, attracting abundant waterfowl and shorebirds, but the flooding was delayed this year, to control mosquitoes that may be carrying the West Nile Virus and also to permit construction of swales and islands. Removal of noxious weeds that will make the water more manageable will also be done.

"The added topography will provide islands for birds to sit on and nest so they'll be more visible from the auto route. It's going to be incredible," Manager Dave Feliz said.

While birding is looking up at Sacramento's "Backyard Birding Hot Spot," such is not the case at the Woodland Wastewater

Treatment Plant off Road 102. The city closed the birding area around the ponds until Fall, 2007 while construction to expand the plant goes forward.

And birding at the City of Davis Wastewater Treatment Plant wetlands on Road 28H is again limited to Mondays, from 7am to 1pm, until Feb. 14 during hunting season.

In southern Sacramento County, flooding also was delayed as a mosquito-control measure at the ponds along Desmond Road at the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). A birding option there is the River Walk Trail (formerly Willow Slough), which CRP authority John Trochet said in mid-September "continues to be a terrific place." The trail is accessible at the bridge behind the visitor's center or the old trailhead a quarter mile north of the turnoff to the visitor's center on the east side of the road.

Pete Hayes

Seasonal Observations

August 1 to August 31
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
783-2331

By the beginning of the month, many observers were reporting a conspicuous absence of **Yellow-billed Magpies**. In addition to the highest number of human cases in the state, Sacramento County magpies were hit very hard by West Nile Virus, a disease that tends to impact Corvids (jays, crows, magpies) harder than any other family of birds. In some neighborhoods where the species had recently been common, it is now nearly absent. If there is any good news, it's that adjacent populations have been reported in stable numbers, and hopefully the species will rebound quickly from these losses. Christmas Bird Count numbers over the next few years will be instructive.

Throughout the month, there were reports of good to excellent numbers of regular migrant flycatchers, vireos, and warblers. By the end of the month, the changing season was reflected in early reports of a **Yellow-rumped Warbler** and a **White-crowned Sparrow** near Winters along the Solano County side of Putah Creek on 8/31.

Among the common migrants, one always hopes to find surprises, and this month did not disappoint in the slightest. The hot-spot for local rarities was Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). A **Prothonotary Warbler*** was a very nice surprise near the Orr Forest on 8/5 and 8/6. A **Black-throated Sparrow*** was found nearby on 8/5. A **Virginia's Warbler*** was reported near the Visitor Center bridge on 8/14. A gorgeous adult male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak*** was reported from the Accidental Forest on 8/18. The same location produced reports of a **Northern Parula*** and a **Red-eyed Vireo*** on 8/25. A **Say's Phoebe** on 8/24 was the earliest report for the season.

Sacramento Audubon Society
PO Box 160694
Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Permit #2310
Sacramento, CA

Moving on to shorebirds, a **Sanderling*** was reported at CRP on 8/5. There were several good reports from the Sacramento Regional WTP. Single juvenile **Semipalmated Sandpipers*** were reported on 8/3 and 8/12. One to three juvenile **Baird's Sandpipers** were present on most days during the month, and a juvenile **Willet** was found on 8/18. A **Solitary Sandpiper** was reported from the surrounding Bufferlands on 8/17.

Yolo County had outstanding shorebird habitat for much of the period. Sadly, Woodland

WTP will be closed to birders for at least a year due to construction. Prior to that, however, a very early **Dunlin** was found on 8/3, a **Ruddy Turnstone*** was found on 8/4, and a **Pacific Golden-Plover*** was found on 8/10. The Davis Wetlands had a site record of 10,500 dowitchers on 8/24, with a small proportion of **Short-billed Dowitchers** noted in the group. A **Snowy Plover*** was reported on 8/13, and there were multiple reports of single **Solitary Sandpipers**, **Willetts**, and **Semipalmated Sandpipers***. **Marbled Godwits**, while still regular, were reported primarily in ones and twos, and not dozens as in recent years. **Baird's Sandpipers** were unusually difficult to find in Yolo County, with only two reports—on 8/10 and 8/28.

Other interesting reports include a **Ruff*** from near Sutter NWR on 8/15. The **Common Nighthawks*** reported from Meiss Rd in Sacramento County continued through at least 8/18, when a single male was recorded. Breeding **Lesser Nighthawks** were found, but it was never determined if **Common Nighthawks** successfully bred there. **Common Ravens** continue to be reported regularly in Sacramento County—particularly from CRP.

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

Observations continued on page 5

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

Correspondence: P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Membership/Subscriptions: Jan Clark, (916) 783-8305

Seasonal Observations: Chris Conard, 2405 Rio Bravo Circle,
Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 362-5942

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

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

Copy deadline is the 15th of the month. Send all copy to the Editor. Observations must reach the Seasonal Observations Editor by the 8th of the month.

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