



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, October 20, 2011

Effie Yeaw Nature Center,
Assembly Room

7pm General Meeting

Central Valley Bird Species Changes Since 1944

John Sterling

Since the publication of Grinnell and Miller's *The Distribution of the Birds of California* in 1944 there have been substantial changes in our knowledge of bird status and distribution in the Central Valley. Changes in land use,

decline and restoration of habitat, as well as a tremendous increase in the number of birders have led to our current knowledge of the state of the valley's birds. In his presentation, John Sterling will discuss the many increases and declines of species since 1944. He'll

illustrate the talk with



Bald Eagle
John Sterling

his photographs of birds in the Central Valley.

John has been a very active birder since 1971 and a professional wildlife biologist since 1981. He has traveled extensively throughout California learning about local bird distribution for forty years and is working on a book on the state's avifauna. He has traveled internationally as a guide to Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, Argentina and Antarctica, and as a research ornithologist for many institutions including projects for the Smithsonian Institution in Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Sumatra,

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SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2011-2012

Saturday, December 3, Daybreak, Great American River Bird Count

Lea Landry, 638-1141, llandry46@earthlink.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 page 6.

Saturday, December 17, Woodfords Christmas Count

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

Monday, December 26, Folsom Christmas Count

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

Saturday, December 31, Sacramento Christmas Count

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

Other Christmas Bird Counts:

Monday, December 19, 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

Saturday, December 17, Auburn Christmas Count

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

Sunday, December 18, Putah Creek Christmas Count

Compiler: Steve Hampton, stevehampton@gmail.com

Sunday, December 18, Stockton Christmas Count

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

Wednesday, December 28, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, ERPfromCA@aol.com

Thursday, December 30, Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

Compilers: Tom Rusert and Darren 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

Sacramento Bar (9/11) — Leader Paul Cordero reported: “Fall was definitely in the air on a cooler than expected Sunday morning. We had a nice mix of about 20 beginning and experienced birders and photographers who collectively found many of the expected species along the river. Frank Gray was kind enough to bring along his scope which afforded the group great looks at Spotted Sandpiper, Green Heron, Belted Kingfisher and an immature Cooper’s Hawk. Several migrants were seen including Vaux’s Swift, Cassin’s Vireo, and Wilson’s, Nashville, and Yellow Warblers.”

Shollenberger Park / Ellis Creek, Petaluma (9/10) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Seven participants enjoyed some great birding, with a couple of stops first along Highway 37, and then on to Shollenberger Park/Ellis Creek Wetlands.

On Highway 37, there were many of the expected shorebirds and waterfowl. They were joined by an unexpected lone White-faced Ibis, which is quite unusual for that location. On our second stop, we found a Willow Flycatcher, which presented some i.d. challenges, as it would not stay put at first. Later at that stop, a Peregrine Falcon kept the shorebirds in nervous motion.

Shollenberger was the real high point, rarity-wise. First, we found a Brown Pelican (originally spotted by Dan Tankersley), which is quite rare for this locale. In fact, it is not even on the Checklist of Birds for Shollenberger. This was followed a short time later by four Pacific Golden-Plovers, a Baird’s Sandpiper and a Pectoral Sandpiper, all viewed at close range. Also found during this time was a Bonaparte’s Gull. We tallied about 63 species for the day. All in all a good trip, enjoyed by all.”

Point Reyes for Vagrants (9/4) — Leader Chris Conard reported: “More than 20 participants visited Five Brooks, the Outer Point, and Abbott’s Lagoon. We had numerous Wilson’s Warblers, several Townsend’s Warblers and both Warbling and Hutton’s Vireos at Five Brooks. Many Townsend’s Warblers continued on the Outer Point, but the highlights there were two Tennessee Warblers. With brief views, a bird we cautiously identified as a “Baypoll” Warbler (either a Bay-breasted or a Blackpoll) proved to be a more regularly encountered Blackpoll

Warbler once we saw Linda Pittman’s photos. Over 100 Elegant Terns diving for fish near Chimney Rock attracted at least five Parasitic Jaegers (one was a striking dark morph). On two occasions a jaeger was seen collecting a fish dropped by a harried tern. Saving the best for last, there were good numbers of shorebirds at Abbott’s Lagoon, with many seen at close range despite much of the lagoon being still fenced off for Snowy Plover nesting. Highlights included a Peregrine Falcon chasing a tight flock of American Avocets, a Pacific Golden-Plover, and close views of four Baird’s Sandpipers, and the bird of the day, a Buff-breasted Sandpiper apparently feeding on small flies in the beach grass.”

River Bend Park (9/3) — Black-throated Swifts that are more often found in the vicinity of Nimbus Dam were first spotted by Sonja Sorbo against the blue sky here for bird-of-the-day honors. Leader Cathie LaZier’s group of 14 also flushed a Great Horned Owl from a trailside tree, and saw Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Western Bluebirds, and Downy, Nuttall’s and Acorn Woodpeckers, among others. Cathie’s practiced botanical eye i.d.’d late-blooming native plants including white Whorled Milkweed hosting Pipevine Swallowtail Butterflies, Western Ragweed, California Brickellbush, Vinegar Weed, and California Mugwort.

SRCS D Bufferlands (8/28) — Leader Chris Conard reported: “We visited the oak forest on the west side of I-5 and, for a change of pace, a portion of the northern end of the adjacent Stone Lakes NWR. There were 18 participants on a nice morning that started getting warm by 11am. The migrants were not abundant, but before the morning was over we saw fair numbers of several species, including two Pacific-slope Flycatchers, a Solitary Vireo (possibly a Plumbeous, but seen too briefly), a Warbling Vireo, an Orange-crowned Warbler, four Yellow Warblers, two Black-throated Gray Warblers, seven Wilson’s Warblers, four Western Tanagers, and a Black-headed Grosbeak.”

Bodega Bay (8/27) — Leader Andi Salmi reported: “Our group of 16 birders enjoyed a cool day at Bodega Bay, viewing lots of water birds, shorebirds

and a few surprises. We saw Pacific, Common and Red-throated Loon, Snowy, Semipalmated and Black-bellied Plover, both turnstone species, a variety of gulls, Greater Yellowlegs, Western and Least Sandpiper and a Red Knot! Osprey and a Peregrine Falcon also made an appearance, and a turkey at Campbell Cove was a big surprise.”

Davis Wetlands/Wastewater Treatment Plant (8/21) Leader Frank Gray reported:

“Our group had a great morning of birding, and was comprised mainly of beginning and intermediate birders.

Ringneck Duck
Stephen D’Amato



Consequently, much time was spent discussing bird i.d. features for various groups of

birds. Highlights included great looks at a Common Ringed Plover that had just been discovered by top birder Todd Easterla. Other species of interest included Red-necked and Wilson’s Phalaropes, Caspian Terns, Swainson’s Hawks, and others. Our trip ended with a visit to a nearby heron and egret rookery, on private property along Road 103. There we viewed a spectacle of Snowy and Great Egrets and Black-crowned Night-Herons, many still caring for young. We also met the owner’s son onsite and thanked him for site access.”

Marin County Shorebirds (8/20)—Leader Dan Williams reported: “Despite the trip being named Marin shorebirds, we decided to start our day at Sonoma County’s Shollenberger Park due to a group of Pacific Golden-Plovers being regularly reported there. We actually ended up missing them, but saw a great variety of birds to start our day well, including very close views of Red-necked and Wilson’s Phalaropes, three ages of Black-crowned Night-Herons, a Bonaparte’s Gull, and an early returned Wilson’s Snipe.

“From there we moved to Abbott’s Lagoon at Point Reyes where, lo and behold, we had a Pacific Golden-Plover after all! It was a beautiful adult still molting out of breeding plumage, and after watching it for a while on the far shore it flew right

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Field Trips



Short-eared Owl
Daniel Kilby

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check 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.

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, October 5, 8am – 11am
Glenn Hall Park, Paradise Beach
American River Parkway
Leaders: Sally Walters and Don
Schmoldt, 739-6465
dschmoldt25@gmail.com

Join us for a morning bird walk along the levee and willow covered sand bars of the American River. From Highway 50 take Howe Ave north to Fair Oaks Blvd. Turn left onto Fair Oaks and cross over the American River. Turn right on Carlson Ave., which is the first stop light past the American River bridge. Continue on Carlson Ave. to its end, at Glenn Hall Park. Meet on top of the levee. This will be a fairly easy walk, but expect some uneven terrain, gravel, sand, and rock cobble. We hope to see returning wintering sparrows and waterfowl, and resident birds including wrens, towhees, yellow-billed magpies, kinglets. Excellent trip for beginners.

Saturday, October 8, 8am
Discovery Park
Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216
andisalmi@yahoo.com

This park at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers is a great place for an autumn walk. Join Andi to look for migrants, winter arrivals and resident species generally found in the park such as Red-shouldered Hawks and White-tailed Kites. Other possibilities include sparrows, woodpeckers and bluebirds. This will be a walking trip and end before noon. There are no restroom facilities along the way. On I-5 from downtown, take the Garden Highway exit and turn left/east 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 street, and we'll walk into the park.

Saturday, October 8
Beginning Birding Field Trip
William Pond Park

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 people per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, 457-6882.

Saturday, October 8, 7am
River Walk Bird Count
Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information, 684-2816
www.cosumnes.org

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

Sunday, October 9, 8am
American River between Howe and
Watt
Leader: Dan Kopp, 213-2791
rey_ality@hotmail.com

Join Dan at his favorite spot along the Parkway in search of our wintering birds, and get to know an area he knows well. He'll find our resident and wintering birds, and will be looking for uncommon species; he's found a White-throated Sparrow the last four years. There are well worn trails and some that require a little more work, so depending on everyone's ability, he will

decide how strenuous the walk will be in the morning. The trip will last until lunch time. From Hwy 50, take the Howe Avenue exit and head north; from Howe, take the first exit before the bridge. To do this, you will need to be in the right-most lane. Cross La Riviera Drive and enter the Howe Avenue Access to the American River. There is a \$5 fee to park in the lot, or parking is available on La Riviera Drive. This trip is good for beginners and more experienced birders.

Thursday, October 13, 8am
River Bend Park
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie in the first parking lot on your right just past the entrance kiosk, for this morning walk looking for the resident birds of the parkway, as well as early fall migrants. In the oak woodland and along the river we may see warblers, vireos or Cedar Waxwings. Vinegar weed, a very interesting plant, will be blooming. This is a good trip for beginners. From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field Road, take Rod Beaudry Drive north into the park, (formerly called Goethe Park). A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, October 15, 8am – noon
Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek
Leader: Lea Landry, 638-1141
llandry46@earthlink.net

This morning walk will include riparian habitat, ridge trails and a good view of Lake Natoma. Lea will be looking for both woodland birds and waterfowl. There may be some short steep climbs on the trail, and if the rains come it may be muddy, so wear appropriate footwear. Bring liquids and

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snacks if you wish. Lea usually finds a nice variety of birds on this trip, which is suitable for both beginning and experienced birders. Meet Lea in the parking lot of the Snowberry Creek Equestrian Staging area, (Shadow Glen Stables), about ¼ mile east on Main, from where Main and Sunset Avenues meet in Orangevale.

Family Friendly Trip!!!

Saturday, October 15, 9:00-11:00am

Taylor Ranch Nature Preserve

Leader: Sandra Beseler

This morning walk will take place in an 88 acre nature preserve of recreational land located in Penryn and will be specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. Join Sandra in finding interesting birds such as Western Bluebird, California Quail and White-tailed Kite in an open oak woodlands area. Binoculars will be available for children who need them. Reservations are required and space is limited; to reserve space, contact Maureen Geiger at mgeiger@sbcglobal.net or call her at 444-0804.

Tall Forest Bird Count, 7am

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, so this is your opportunity to bird there. John has an appreciation of nature on many levels, and a trip with him is always exciting. Be sure to check the recorded information a couple of days before to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details, such as water levels on the trails, as they sometimes change. Arrive a little early, as this trip always leaves promptly.

Sunday, October 16, 7am SHARP!

Putah Creek Preserve

Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722

matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Join Mark for some excellent birding, a morning walk along the levee road looking for our wintering riparian birds. Meet Mark 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. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders alike.

Wednesday, October 19, 8am

Bushy Lake, Cal Expo Floodplain

Leader: Darrell Mohr, 225-3999

mohrdd@gmail.com

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident species and Wood Ducks are a good possibility on the lake. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. Bring water and sunscreen. This is a great trip for beginners.

Saturday, October 22, 7am SHARP!

Hope Valley-Alpine County

Fall Foliage Birding

Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458

naturestoc@aol.com

Autumn Color explodes in mid October at Hope Valley. Join Dan to enjoy the fall foliage and to look for resident and specialty birds that include: Sooty (Blue) Grouse, Williamson's Sapsucker, Stellar's Jay, Clark's Nutcracker, Mountain Chickadee, Townsend's Solitaire, and Cassin's Finch. Some of the terrain is hilly, so wear sturdy shoes and dress in layers. A camera is a recommended addition to your pack. Bring water and lunch. FRS radios would also be helpful on this trip. Meet Dan at the north end of the Raley's parking lot in El Dorado Hills. From Hwy 50 east take Exit #30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the shopping center on your right. Meet at the far north end of the parking lot. We will leave at 7am sharp!

Saturday, October 22,

3:30pm

Sandhill Cranes and Other

Wintering Birds of the

Sacramento Valley

A Save Our Sandhill

Cranes-sponsored trip

Coordinator: Mike Savino,

446-1392

Our Sandhill Cranes are back! They, as well as a variety of ducks, swans, geese, and shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center deck 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 and bring binoculars. Scopes are helpful. 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, October 23, 7:30am

Bobcat Ranch, Yolo County

Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804

mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net

Karen Velas, (530) 510-0399

kvelas@audubon.org

This wonderful 7,000-acre property owned by Audubon California is currently open to the public solely for docent-led trips. Join Maureen and take a nice hike with Karen Velas, the ornithologist at the Ranch, for our third visit to this beautiful property. We will hike amongst the blue oak woodlands, looking for local and migrating bird species (including Golden Eagles, Lark Sparrows, Lewis's Woodpeckers). We will also learn about the restoration efforts taking place. We should have fabulous views of the valley. This outing will involve moderate hiking on fairly level ground and should last until lunch time. Bring liquids; a picnic lunch at the Ranch is possible or a



return to Winters where there are several good restaurants. There are restrooms at the meeting site. Meet at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento no later than 7:30am. Alternate meeting place is Steady Eddy's at 5 E Main Street, next to the parking lot at the inter-

section of Main and Railroad in Winters by 8am. To reach the Park and Ride, from I-80, take the West Capitol Avenue exit, turn left at the light and left into the lot.

Sunday, October 23, 3:30pm
Sandhill Crane Trip
See trip info for October 22

Thursday, October 27, 8:30am
Yolo Basin Wildlife Area
Leader: Marlene Ishihara, 635-9758
IshiM2000@comcast.net

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 as raptors. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) 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, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS radios and scopes are helpful on this trip, which is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders. Trip will end before noon.

Saturday, October 29, 7am
Bodega Bay
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net

Join Scott for a full day of birding around Bodega Bay, taking in a variety of habitats. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls and raptors. Bring lunch, water and warm clothes. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take the West Capitol Ave exit. Turn left, and the Park and Ride will be on your immediate left. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike.

Saturday, October 29, 3:30pm
Sandhill Crane Trip

Another opportunity to visit the Cosumnes River Preserve for Sandhill Cranes and wintering waterfowl. All trip info is the same as Saturday, October 22.

Sunday, October 30, 7:30am
Spenceville Wildlife Area
Leader: Richard Barbieri, 761-1124
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.

Sunday, October 30, 3:30pm
Sandhill Crane Trip
See trip info for October 22

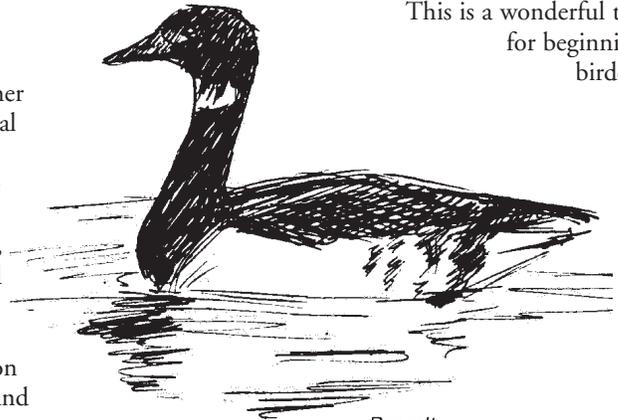
Tuesday, November 1, 7:45am
Colusa National Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Dan Tankersley
662-1290
dtankers@winfirst.com

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, Greater White-fronted and possibly a few Cackling Geese as well as other wetland birds. Eurasian Wigeon is often seen here as well, and 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 riparian habitat 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 towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance a short distance beyond 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.

Saturday, November 5, 8am
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.



Brandt
Kirsten Munson

Sunday, November 6, 9am (Note: Daylight Savings Time begins today.)
Bobelaine Sanctuary
Leader: Carla Barbaro, 717-8808

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. The sycamore and wild grape should give us some fall color as well. Take Highway 99 north toward Yuba City; about 2 miles north of the Feather River bridge turn right on Laurel Ave. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. You may want to bring water and snacks.

2011 ARNHA WILDLIFE COUNT SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

The ARNHA Wildlife Count was originally organized as a fund-raising Bird-a-thon in 1985. Jack Hiehle provided the impetus and organization to get it going. He then maintained the momentum and records through its transformation into a Wildlife Count in 1993. In 2010, Jack served as a mentor while Lea Landry took over the coordination of the 26th Annual Count. The count is utilized by the staff of Effie Yeaw and ARNHA to follow the population trends of various species of wildlife in the American River Parkway as well as their effect on other aspects of the Parkway.

On the 2010 Wildlife Count on December 4, twelve teams (including 1 team with 6 counters in canoes) competed tallying a record-setting 123 bird species, 8 more than the 2009 count high of 115 species. Despite the damp start, the day turned out almost balmy with a bit of sunshine poking through during the afternoon. And NO WIND! The high, fast flow of the American River discouraged shorebirds and made all of the water birds appear to be “flying” by. The outflow from Nimbus Dam was 6,766 cubic feet per second--last year it was 1,833 cu. ft./sec.

There were no new species seen. The Mew Gull was not seen for the first time in Count History. The rarities included Western Grebe, Snow Goose, Gadwall, *Red-breasted Merganser*, Bald Eagle,

Peregrine Falcon, Virginia Rail, Sora, Long-billed Dowitcher, Say's Phoebe, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Pacific Wren (formerly Winter Wren, before the split by the AOU), Townsend's Warbler, Common *Yellowthroat*, *Wilson's Warbler*, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and *Tricolored Blackbird* (italicized birds were seen for only the second time on the count).

Fourteen mammal species were seen, including 70 whitetail deer (down from 114 seen last year), 50 ground squirrels, 46 western gray squirrels (5 eastern gray squirrels), 10 house cats and 1 California Sea Lion. There were no coyotes seen in the 2010 Count.

Folks who are interested in participating in the 2011 Wildlife Count can email their name, email address and phone number to the Count Coordinator, Lea Landry, at llandry46@earthlink.net (preferred) or phone her at (916) 638-1141. Unless you have a specific area of the Parkway you're interested in, your name will be provided to the Team Leaders who need more participants on their teams. The Count starts about 7am, finishing by 3pm. Different leaders have different start times and specific meeting places.

Lea Landry, 2011 ARNHA Count Coordinator

New Location for our General Meeting

Effie Yeaw Nature Center is now our new host

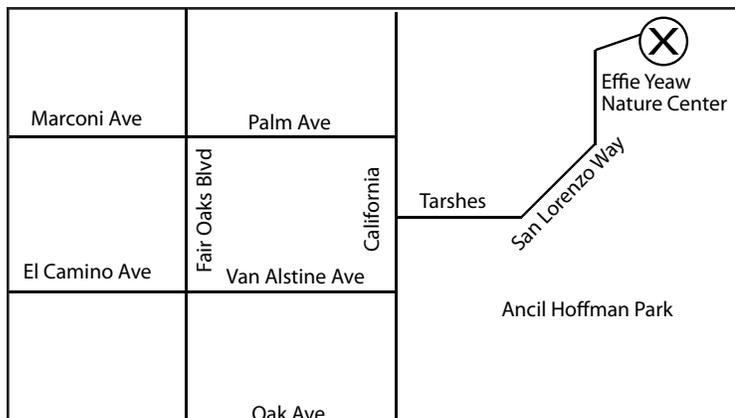
The September general meeting was our first meeting in the new location at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Ancil Hoffman Park. If you have a Sacramento County Parks Pass or an ARNHA membership card remember to display it. If you do not, an Audubon member will be in the parking lot with temporary permits for your dashboard.

Directions to the new monthly meeting location at Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC) in Carmichael, near Sacramento are below. Unless you are extremely familiar with the location of the EYNC please follow these directions:

The Center is nearer to Hwy 50 than to Hwy 80. Depending on where you are coming from get onto Fair Oaks Blvd. From Watt Ave you will go East onto Fair Oaks Blvd and from Sunrise Blvd you will go West onto Fair Oaks Blvd.

Once on Fair Oaks Blvd, go east onto Van Alstine Ave (or Oak Ave); left onto California St; and right onto Tarshes, then left onto San Lorenzo, then right into the first parking lot. Walk the short trail to the center. (Please note that Palm Ave only allows vehicles to exit the park onto Palm Ave.)

You will be given a free parking pass for your car in the lot if you have not purchased an annual Regional Parks Pass. The meetings are free and open to the public. Passes are available at the Dept of Regional Parks 4040 Bradshaw Road, Sacramento or on-line at www.arpf.org



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Canada and Russia. John currently has his own company specializing in tours, birding classes, research and environmental consulting. His website is www.sterlingbirds.com (photos, classes, tours, county birding).

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Carmichael. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions.

Sally Walters, Program Chair

Findings continued from page 2

toward us and gave us stunning views on our shore. We also tracked down a few of the breeding Snowy Plovers out there, had brief views of a flying, then distant, Baird's Sandpiper, watched murrelets with their chicks out beyond the breakers, and enjoyed a resting Elegant Tern among Caspians on the beach.

“On the way back to the parking lot a family of American Bitterns stole the show; a downy juvenile being fed in some reeds beside the trail provided us a chance for great photos.”

Pete Hayes

FIRST ANNUAL SAS KIDS' CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT!!!

Sometime in the 1940's, Sacramento Audubon sponsored its first Christmas Bird Count, and this effort has been going strong ever since. Currently, SAS sponsors three CBC's for adults: Sacramento, Woodfords and Folsom. Information gathered at these counts is used by scientists and others who study birds all over the world.

This Christmas bird count season, SAS is planning its first count for children and youth on January 7, 2012 at Cosumnes River Preserve. Sacramento area kids ages 6 to 16 can join the first group of children to participate in this exciting event. Volunteers are needed to help this event be a success, and reservations are a must for all children. To reserve space or to volunteer, contact Maureen Geiger at 444-0804 or mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net.

East Africa in 2012

Responding to requests, Ed Harper and Susan Scott will offer another safari to Uganda. Tentative dates will center around 17 days in July. Special highlights include Mountain Gorilla tracking as well as Chimpanzees and other primates. In addition, there will be elephants, hippos, cats, and many other mammals. The birding is spectacular with Shoebill and other Uganda bird specialties being of high priority.

Following Uganda, an option exists for a week of wildlife viewing in Kenya with emphasis being on the migration that moves into the Masai Mara in early August. It will be your own Big Cat Diary! Camps and lodges have been carefully chosen to maximize the wildlife viewing experience. Ed and Susan have just returned from Kenya where they checked all locations and accommodations and report the wildlife viewing was spectacular.

If you would like to be placed on the planning list or would like more information regarding prices and itineraries, contact Ed at calidris@surewest.net or call him at (916) 704-7954 or (916) 971-3311.

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM

The Central Valley Bird Club will be hosting the Fifteenth Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium Nov. 17-20, 2011 at the Stockton Hilton Hotel in Stockton, CA. Please come and help us kick off this year's CVBS! Come meet the CVBS board and staff members! Reconnect with old friends! Meet new ones! Take advantage of the scrumptious Hors D'oeuvres buffet and No Host Bar on Thursday night.

Thursday Night Keynote speakers are: Ed Harper and John Sterling presenting a program on "Appreciating the Birds of the Central Valley." Come sit back and watch as Ed and John take us on a photographic journey to catch a glimpse of the avian world of the Central Valley.

Friday Night's keynote program is presented by Ron LeValley on "The Writings of William Leon Dawson—a California Bird Pioneer." Dawson's writings are humorous, sad, spiritual, satirical, and inspirational. Ron's presentation and photography captures much of this feeling.

Saturday Night's keynote program is by Jeff Gordon on: "10 Birds that Changed Birding." There is the "spark" bird—the one that turned you from a casual observer into an avowed birdwatcher, willing to endure long miles and early hours in search of new species. There are birds that thrilled you with their rarity, their beauty, and their unexpected behaviors. Come hear what Jeff has to say.

Other events include workshops on Swallow ID by Joe Morlan and a Warbler ID Workshop by Jon Dunn. There are also programs on topics of Bird Migration and Wetlands Icons.

Our field trips always turn up exciting birds. Add in the always entertaining and educational Bird ID Panel, the wonderful display of art and gifts for yourself or others at the Birder's Market and the camaraderie of hundreds of like-minded folks, and you know you'll have a good time! There's something for everyone interested in birds. Come and join us to bird, learn, and just have fun!

The schedule, brochure, registration form, etc. are on the website at: <http://cvbs.org>. Registration started August 1 utilizing the Regonlink button on the website. The Brochures are printed and available.

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2011-12

Location: William Pond Park on the American River

Dates, (all Saturdays): October 8, November 12 and January 14

Time: 8am, ending by noon

Each Trip Limited to 10 participants: Registration required.

Location: Cosumnes River Preserve

Date: Sunday, November 13

Registration required.

These outings are 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. 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.

FAMILY FRIENDLY TRIPS

Saturday, October 15, Traylor Ranch Nature Preserve, Penryn

Sunday, November 20, William Pond Park, American River Parkway

These monthly birding and nature walks are specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. There is a trip limit to ensure a quality experience for all. Register for trips by contacting Maureen Geiger, at mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net, or 444-0804.

Birding and Nature Events

NATURE FEST

Sunday, **October 23**, 10am until 3pm, this outdoor event at the **Effie Yeaw Nature Center** in Ancil Hoffman Park is a great family outing. There will be vendors and exhibits, activities and demonstrations. Admission is free but there is a \$5 per car entrance fee to the park unless you have a park pass. Check for more information at www.sacnaturecenter.org. And stop by the Sacramento Audubon table and say hello.

FRIENDS OF THE SWAINSON'S HAWK PROGRAM AT REI

Thursday evening, **October 27**, from 7 to 9pm, at REI, 1790 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento, FOSH will present a program on protecting Swainson's Hawks in our area. A panel of scientists will provide a status update and Robert Sewell will show some highlights of the nesting Swainson's Hawks of Sutter Landing Park. This program, co-sponsored by Sacramento Audubon and Friends of the River Bank, is free, but space is limited and reservations are suggested. Make them online at www.rei.com/stores/21. More information is available at www.swainsonshawk.org.

SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

The 15th annual Sandhill Crane Festival will be held **November 4th through 6th**, at Hutchins Street Square, 125 S Hutchins Street, Lodi. Admission is free and there will be wildlife tours, workshops and presentations, an art show, live animal displays, family activities, and an exhibit hall with vendors and displays. (Stop by the Sacramento Audubon table.) Learn more about the event and sign up for tours at www.cranefestival.com.

16TH MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 16th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 13-16, 2012**. Located on California's scenic Central Coast, Morro Bay is an important stop on the Pacific Flyway and one of the country's pre-eminent birding spots. The area is recognized worldwide for its diversity of both resident and wintering birds, and at last year's festival, over 200 species of birds were identified!

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival is sponsored by MCAS and gives you the chance to join local and national birding experts on a variety of field trips and workshops. Field trip group sizes are limited to maximize spotting and identification opportunities. The Festival also offers workshops aimed at sharpening your birding skills, as well as evening programs with outstanding speakers.

The keynote speaker Saturday, January 14th will be Jon Dunn, presenting a program on the diversity of Wood Warblers of North America. Jon is one of the primary experts on field identification in North America and is a tour leader for WINGS Birding Tours.

To register and for more information about the Festival, check their website at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org. Registration starts on October 1, 2011 and the brochure will be available then. The deadline is December 31, 2011 but early signups are encouraged as the most popular events fill up quickly.

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON 2011-2012 PROGRAMS

November 17 Mark Jorgensen
Anza-Borrego's Sister Park in Mongolia

2012

January 19 Josh Hull

Great Grey Owls (program change)

February 16 TBD

March 15 David Carle

Around the World Starting at Mono Lake

April 19 TBD

May 17 TBD

ALTAMONT PASS WIND FARM GETS MAJOR UPGRADE

For years, environmentalists have raised alarms about the slaughter of red-tailed hawks, golden eagles and other raptors that have fallen victim to the whirling blades of thousands of wind turbines along the Altamont Pass in eastern Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Now the most iconic wind farm in California is getting a major upgrade that promises to drastically reduce the number of bird deaths.

Nearly 2,000 of the 4,000 wind turbines in operation, many of which are nearly 30 years old, will be replaced. For every new turbine installed, 23 of the old ones will be removed—a dramatic drop expected to significantly reduce the number of birds killed each year. Studies have tried to quantify how many bats and birds are killed by turbines in the Altamont each year, but the task is difficult because scavengers often eat the corpses.

The older turbines were built with a lattice structure that created many perching areas for raptors to hunt from, putting them in proximity to the blades. The new turbines are mounted on monopole towers that don't have perching areas, which should help keep birds safely away from the turbines.

Each of the three blades on a turbine is 160 feet long, nearly the width of a football field. In high winds, the tips of the blades spin at 180 mph. The wind energy company NextEra, will also remove 6.5 miles of overhead electrical lines and about eight miles of road, allowing the land to return to a more natural state. Wind energy advocates say the collaboration between NextEra and environmental groups to reduce bird mortality marks an important milestone.

Dana Hull

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Clifford E Anderson	Rosemary Lovely
Kathleen Davis	Kathy McCord
Irene Devon	Carmen Pereira
Virginia Kaser	Steve and Jean
Earl F King	Schempelt
Brooke and Elizabeth	John Weber
Kopff-Witchel	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Laurie Isbell, Connie Schwartz, Keith Wagner and Patricia Wells to the **General Fund**.

Terry Campbell, Irene Devon, Joseph Easley, Stanley Ford, Cary Hart, Thomas Manning, K.A. McCord, M.A. Nunes, Carmen Pereira, Joyce Reitz, Christie Vallance and Frank Wallace to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

AUDUBON OUTREACH

There's a lot happening this autumn, and events include the **NatureFest at Effie Yeaw Nature Center**, a **Friends of the Swainson's Hawk** program at REI, the **Lodi Crane Festival** and the **Central Valley Birding Symposium**. We'll have our Outreach table at all these events, so come by and visit our table, or if you'd like to help out contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net.

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

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

llandry46@earthlink.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.

Observations continued from page 10

Peregrine Falcon was seen catching bats as they emerged at dusk from the Franklin Blvd Bridge near CRP. **Swainson's Hawks** were also making an attempt at the bats, but were far less successful. Finally, a cooperative juvenile **Brewer's Sparrow**, allowing scope-filling views, was a nice find at CRP on 8/20.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html). Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserve. Visit cvbirds.org and click "Listserve" for details. With more than 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:

Dennis Cavallo, Todd Easterla, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Frances Oliver, Linda Pittman, Ron Pozzi, Jim Rowoth, Mary Schiedt, Susan Schneider, John Sterling, John Trochet, Ed Whisler, and Dan Williams.

Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

Chris Conard

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.

Seasonal Observations

August 1 to August 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

Once again shorebirds stole the show. There were good numbers of common migrant songbirds, but with few exceptions, nothing particularly noteworthy. A **Brant** spotted on Sherman Island was just the second record for Sacramento County. Likely the same bird was being seen near Benicia in the same time window. The first Sacramento County record was also from Sherman Island: 2/10-19/2001. An **Eastern Kingbird** was found at the eastern edge of the Yolo Wildlife Area on 8/30, and was seen by many through 9/1 among dozens of **Western Kingbirds**. This was only the third Yolo record and the first since 1973.

The bird of the month and most likely the Sacramento Area bird of the year was a **Common Ringed Plover** found at the Davis Wetlands on 8/19. This was another excellent find by Todd Easterla, a first state record, and one of few records for the Lower 48. This species, just slightly larger and more boldly marked than a **Semipalmated Plover**, put on an excellent show, calling and even allowing close approach to see that it lacked webbing ("palmation") between its toes. When a rare migrant is found the day following discovery it is considered good luck, but it is not too unusual when a bird continues for a couple of days. This bird, however, stayed until 8/26, allowing 100+ birders to see it and attracting considerable media attention; though it did disappoint

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many traveling from outside the area by disappearing just before dozens of birders arrived on Saturday, 8/27.

Another excellent find for the month was a **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** at the Lincoln WTP on 8/29-31. This species shows up along the coast each fall in very low

numbers, but this was a first for Placer County and only the second record for the Central Valley. Other good shorebird records include two **Snowy Plovers** at the Lincoln WTP on 8/8, a **Solitary Sandpiper** at Sherman Island on 8/15-16, a **Solitary Sandpiper** and a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 8/6, and a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** at the Davis WTP on 8/14 and the Davis Wetlands on 8/18.

Brown Pelicans continued to be seen throughout the summer, with four in Contra Costa County near Sherman Island on 8/14. The Lodi Sewage Ponds bird continued from 7/20 to 8/14, and a **Brown Pelican** was found in West Sacramento on 8/24, continuing into September. A flock including two **Arctic Terns** and 11 **Common Terns** over the Davis Wetlands on 8/24 was a first county record for **Arctic Tern** and the largest flock of **Common Terns** recorded in the county. **Least Terns** at the Sac Reg. WTP continued through 8/12 after fledging three chicks. A single adult was at the Lodi Sewage Ponds on 8/7. On 8/20, a

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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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