



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, October 15

Shepard Garden and Art Center
7pm General Meeting

Sparrows: You CAN tell them apart

If you tend to lump all sparrows into that vague group of 'little brown birds', you need to come to the next Sacramento Audubon meeting and have your birding horizons expanded. Sparrows, though often more subtle than some other families, are exquisitely handsome birds and it IS possible to tell them apart. Fall and winter are the prime sparrow seasons, so this is the time to learn them.

At the October meeting Ed Pandolfino will take you through the basics of how to identify our more common sparrows. We'll cover tips to distinguish immature White-crowned Sparrows from Golden-crowned Sparrows. You'll learn how to sort out the 'streaky' sparrows: Song, Fox, Lincoln's, and Savannah Sparrows. We'll also cover some birds often mistaken for sparrows and touch on a few other sparrows you can see in other parts of the state.

If you want to get the most out of the meeting, spend a little time studying the common species above in your field guide. Since you can only learn by doing, Ed will give a few (self-graded) photo quizzes so bring along a pencil and paper. Also, BRING your binoculars.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions.

Lea Landry, Program Chair

SACRAMENTO AUDUBON-SPONSORED CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT DATES FOR 2009-2010

Saturday, December 5, Daybreak, Great American River Bird Count

Co-Compilers: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777
Lea Landry, 638-1141, llandry@softcom.net

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.

Saturday, December 19, Woodfords Christmas Count

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

Sunday, December 27, Sacramento Christmas Count

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

Sunday, January 3, Folsom Christmas Count

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

2009 SACRAMENTO PURPLE MARTIN CONSERVATION UPDATE

For several years, Sacramento Audubon has supported conservation of Sacramento's remnant Purple Martin population as a priority activity. Once again this year, SAS and its members donated funds to help offset expenses incurred by the team of volunteers conducting studies and conservation actions on behalf of purple martins, including Dan Airola, Dan Kopp, Kevin Thomas, and Joe Zinkle.

This year we continued many research and conservation activities, including monitoring the size of the breeding population, determining survival from color-banded birds, determining reproductive success with pole mounted cameras, and commenting on land use projects. We also continued monitoring of Purple Martin nest boxes and erected new nest boxes to encourage new nesting opportunities.

Unfortunately, our results show a continued population decline by 16% from last year, to a total of only 70 nesting pairs. The population has declined by 60% since its high of 173 pairs in 2004. We still do not understand the causes of this year's decline. It was associated with a high rate of adult mortality (50%), but we still do not know the cause and location of this mortality (i.e., here or in migration or wintering ranges).

Purple Martin Update continued on page 6

Field Trip Findings

Yolo Basin Wildlife Area Evening Trip (9/6) — Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Cathie LaZier, reported: “Our trip was amazing. We had more than 35 people show up—exact number lost in the shuffle! Lots of new faces which is always nice and a mix of novice birders and more experienced. We had about the same number of species on a really gorgeous evening at the wildlife area with many scopes to see it all. The bat fly-out was enjoyed by everyone as a nice finale to the evening. Maybe we need to do more of these evening trips!”

Riverbend Park (9/5) — Leader Lea Landry, subbing for Cathie LaZier, reported: “After a cool, slow start, things warmed up for 16 enthusiastic birders hoping for fall migrants. The bluffs above the American River provided good vantage points for observing flocks of Killdeer, Spotted Sandpipers (some with spots!) and Greater Yellowlegs. There may have been a Lesser Yellowlegs in the mix. Double-crested Cormorants and Common Mergansers joined Mallards, Canada Geese, Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets on the waterway. An Osprey cruised overhead, along with Red-shouldered Hawks, Red-tailed Hawk, Turkey Vultures, and a Young Cooper’s Hawk. Orange-crowned Warblers played hide-and-seek in the trees on the river bank. The Oak woodlands provided wonderful sightings of a Hermit Warbler, White-breasted Nuthatches, Downy, Acorn and Nuttall’s Woodpeckers, Bewick’s Wrens, California and Spotted Towhees, and Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. House Finches joined Lesser and American Goldfinches gleaning the thistles along the trail. All-in-all, the group enjoyed a beautiful morning with 40 species of birds.”

Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands (8/30) — Leader Chris Conard reported: “We had a large group with 33 attendees on a very nice, though slightly windy, morning. Highlights included fair numbers of common migrants, including several Yellow, Orange-crowned, and Black-throated Gray Warblers, a couple of Wilson’s, and a single Nashville Warbler. There were also good numbers of Pacific-slope Flycatchers and Western Tanagers, one Willow Flycatcher, one Western Wood-Pewee, one Warbling Vireo, several female and juv Blue Grosbeaks, and a couple of female/juv Lazuli Buntings. The

birds got quieter when the wind picked up a little after 8 a.m., but when we got into the heart of the oak forest, the bird activity really increased.”

Bodega Bay (8/29) — Leader Andi Salmi reported: “Our group of 15 enjoyed a sunny, breezy day at Bodega Bay, observing a variety of shorebirds along the bay and at Bodega Head.

The group observed Least and Western sandpipers, Marbled Godwits, Willets, Dowitchers, Black-bellied Plovers, Semipalmated Plovers several Red Knots, and others. Surfbirds, Black Oystercatchers, Brandt’s and Pelagic cormorants were some of the species observed at Bodega Head. A highlight was a Peregrine Falcon making repeated flights over a flock of shorebirds.

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area/Davis Wetlands (8/23) — Leader Frank Gray reported: “Seven birders had a great morning of birding. Trip highlights included at least two of the recently fledged Least Bitterns at the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area. The birds tended to remain stationary for long periods of time, affording great views. Other species seen included Swainson’s Hawk’s foraging in fields, Red-necked Phalaropes, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, and American White Pelicans.”

Davis Arboretum (8/22) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “In spite of the fact that the number of birders (15) just about out-numbered the total number of bird species found, we had a lovely morning walk in a beautiful area. Best birds were numerous Green Herons, a Spotted Sandpiper and several good looks at Black-headed Grosbeaks.”

Sierra Dragonflies and Birds (8/16) — Leader Zach Smith reported: “Five of us spent a fine Sunday in search of birds and dragonflies along the I-80 corridor from Highway 20 to Boca Reservoir east of Truckee. We got a bit of a late start so I suspect we missed the morning peak of songbird activity. Dragonfly diversity was low, but the recent emergence of

Green Darners was at times spectacular. We ended the day with cool drinks at the Washington Inn overlooking the South Fork Yuba River watching Rufous Hummingbirds fight over the feeders. Highlights from our stops included: Discovery Trail: Warbling Vireo, Black-throated Gray Warbler, Nashville Warbler.

Gap Burn: Mountain Quail, Band-tailed Pigeon, White-headed Woodpecker, Red-breasted Sapsucker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Cassin’s Vireo. Castle Valley: Lazuli Bunting, Pine Grosbeak. Donner Lake: Osprey, Yellow Warbler, Evening Grosbeak.

Boca Reservoir: Western Grebe, Green Darners (1000s). Washington (along Yuba River): Rufous Hummingbird (several), Anna’s Hummingbird, American Goldfinch, Black Saddlebags (dragonflies).”

Marin County Shorebirds (8/15) — Leader Dan Williams reported: “We had ridiculously nice weather for our trip to Marin County. We managed to skip the fog period that usually accompanies a morning of coastal birding, and temps soared well into the 80s. Our first stop at Novato Airport Ponds on Binford Road started us off with most of the common shorebirds. Some phalaropes (both Wilson’s and Red-necked) were a nice treat, as were a few white pelicans. We spent the remainder of the morning hiking out to Abbott’s Lagoon and back. Shorebird numbers were a little thin, but our skillful group still managed to find a few Baird’s Sandpipers, Black-bellied and Semipalmated Plovers, and Ruddy Turnstones just to name a few. The bird of the day, though, turned out to be a young Parasitic Jaeger that appeared out of nowhere over the lagoon and proceeded to patrol up and down the beach, periodically harassing terns and gulls. We finished the day at the Fish Docks near Chimney Rock where we had great looks at Red-throated and Common Loons, all three cormorants, and a comical bunch of squealing Pigeon Guillemots.”

Pete Hayes



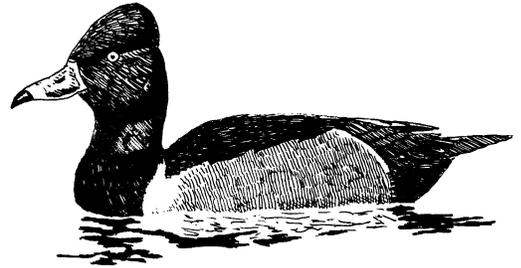
Kirsten Munson

Field Trips

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Mark Cudney, 987-2422, mcudney@aol.com for trips through October 4th. From October 5th through November 10th 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.



Stephen D'Amato

Saturday, September 26, 7am

Point Reyes for Vagrants

**Leaders: Mark Cudney, 987-2422
and Tim Steurer, 806-7071**

Join Mark and Tim 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 Mark and Tim at 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, on the north side of the freeway.

Saturday, October 3, 8am

Bushy Lake

**Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458
naturestoc@aol.com**

Join Dan for a look at some of the birds that live along this section of the American River Parkway. This will be about a 4 mile hike and will end before lunch. Bring water and appropriate footwear. Meet in the parking lot at the south end of the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo.

Sunday, October 4, 8am

Sunrise Area, American River Parkway

**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Mark will lead you on a morning walk to one of his favorite spots along the American River Parkway. You will see a nice variety of resident birds and maybe some surprises. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise

Bldv.; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd., and take the first left on Pennsylvania. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders.

Saturday, October 10, 7:30am

Discovery Park

**Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804
mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net**

This park at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers is a great place for a fall walk. Join Maureen to look for migrants, early winter arrivals and the more common birds generally found in the park such as Red-shouldered Hawks and White-tailed Kites. To reach the meeting place, exit I-5 at Garden Highway and drive east to Natomas Park Drive. Turn left onto Natomas Park, then take the first right onto Capital Park. Park along Capital Park. This will be a walking trip and will last until mid-morning. There are no restroom facilities along the way.

Sunday, October 11, 7:30 am

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, 1817 Taylor Road, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through

the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station. Brookfield's is behind Shell.

Thursday, October 15, 8am – noon

Bannister Park

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Explore another beautiful area along the American River with Jack. As always, you can share in his knowledge of the natural history of the parkway. Meet Jack in the parking lot at the end of Bannister Road, south off Fair Oaks Blvd., west of Sunrise Blvd.

Saturday, October 17, 8am – noon

Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek

**Leader: Lea Landry, 638-1141
llandry@softcom.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 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.

Sunday, October 18, 7am

Solano Lake/Putah Creek

**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

The lake is a good area for wintering ducks including possible Barrow's Goldeneye and Hooded Mergansers. Phainopeplas are possible, and Pileated Woodpeckers have been found in the area several times during the last year. A drive up Putah Creek may turn up wintering passerines as well. There is a \$5 per car fee at the Lake Solano campground. Bring lunch and liquids and meet Mark at the Park and Ride in West Sacramento. From I-80 take the West Capitol Ave. exit; turn left at the light; then left again into the lot. Plan on a trip lasting into the afternoon.

Sunday, October 18

8:30am – 12:30pm

Bufferlands Fall Restoration Tour at Upper Beach Lake

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 nearly 20 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. For directions and more information, call 875-9307, or e-mail: scott@sacsewer.com

Sunday, October 18

Habitat Improvement Work Day

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Help Jack restore native vegetation along the American River Parkway. Tasks vary from month to month, so call Jack for details and meeting time, usually early morning.

Thursday, October 22, 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. Raptors

such as peregrine falcon are possible also. 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. 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 24, 3pm – dark
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds of the Sacramento Valley
A "Save Our Sandhill Cranes"
sponsored trip

Coordinator: Mike Savino, 446-1392

Sandhill Cranes are the focus of this trip but ducks, swans and geese, as well as shorebirds, feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta, and hawks patrol overhead. Meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center parking lot at 3 p.m. for a short introduction to crane



Stephen D'Amato

behavior and biology by Paul Tebbel, then stroll the boardwalk in the Lost Slough Wetlands, enjoying views of the cranes, wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. Afterwards we'll drive out along Desmond Road and possibly to Staten Island, watching as flocks of cranes fly in to roost for the night. Dress for changeable weather; bring binoculars, scopes and FRS radios if you have them. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd.; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the preserve, watch for the visitor center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org. This is a great trip for beginners.

Saturday, October 24

Bufferlands

Make A Difference Day

Join the staff of the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD) Bufferlands to participate in National Make A Difference Day, a celebration of volunteering to help others and improving your local community. You can do this by volunteering to help plant native trees at the SRCSD Bufferlands. The trees you plant will help improve air quality and provide habitat for area wildlife within the Bufferlands wildlife preserve. So come out and make a difference this year and celebrate Make A Difference Day by planting a tree at the SRCSD Bufferlands. For more info contact Kevin Cassady at 875-9196 or cassadyk@sacsewer.com

Sunday, October 25, 7am SHARP

Calaveras Big Trees State Park

Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882

empid@earthlink.net

We'll take a leisurely walk on the one mile loop trail through the North Grove of

Giant Sequoias, enjoying dogwood, hazelnut, and big leaf maple in fall color. Hoped-for birds include White-headed Woodpecker, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Winter Wren, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. Stellar's Jay and Douglas Squirrel

are a certainty. Afterwards we'll picnic at the meadow, so bring a lunch and liquids, and we'll make a short stop at the visitor center before an optional short afternoon hike. Meet Cathie at the Starbucks in the Raley's Shopping Center in the 8300 block of Folsom Blvd. (between Watt and Howe), to LEAVE at 7 a.m. SHARP. Or meet in the large visitor's day parking lot at Calaveras between 9 and 9:30. There is an entrance fee to the park. This trip is suitable for beginners.

Thursday, October 29, 8am – noon

William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack for this walk to check out both the river and the small lake, as well as the developed park area. A variety of birds may be present, and Jack will point out some of the local plants and share information about their use by Native Americans. Meet him just outside the park entrance at the end of Arden Way. This trip is a great one for beginners.

Saturday, October 31, 7am
Bodega Bay
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471
shoppe01@earthlink.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.

Sunday, November 1, 9am
(Daylight saving time ends)
Bobelaine Sanctuary
Leader: Carla Barbaro, 717-8808

Bobelaine is a 430 acre National Audubon Sanctuary on the Feather River, managed by Sacramento Audubon. This riparian forest of cottonwoods, sycamores and willows is home to a wide variety of birds and wildlife. Join Carla to walk the trails and search the thickets for the resident and wintering birds. She hopes to find towhees, kinglets, goldfinches, sparrows, and at the River Overlook there's the possibility of Osprey and otters. A variety of herons, egrets, grebes, and again, sometimes otters, are seen at Lake Crandall as well. To reach the sanctuary take Hwy. 99 north toward Yuba City and about 2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. Bring water for the trail, and snacks if you wish. This is a great trip for beginners, as well as more experienced birders.

Saturday, November 7, 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. 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. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

Sunday November 8, 7:30am
Mather Lake
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457
Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations. Join Wayne 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. This is a fee area. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Tuesday, November 10, 8am
Isenberg Crane Preserve/Cosumnes River Preserve Boardwalk
Leader: Dan Tankersley, 606-6518
dtankers@winfirst.com

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

PRBO'S 32ND ANNUAL BIRD-A-THON SEPTEMBER 1-OCTOBER 15

It's not too late to contribute or participate in the Point Reyes Bird Observatory's Bird-A-Thon. Each year PRBO's Bird-A-Thon raises over \$100,000 and this year's goal is \$110,000. The 32nd annual PRBO Bird-A-thon, runs each fall from September 1 to October 15. The many projects that PRBO runs and partners with provide essential habitat information for conservation organizations throughout the western U.S. and solid bird-based science that provides an understanding of population status and overall habitat health. For more information, you can check their website at www.prbo.org

PRBO has played a vital role in the bird survey efforts at Cosumnes River Preserve in southern Sacramento County. On Sunday, September 20th, John Trochet, Jeri Langham, Andy Engilis and I birded at Cosumnes River Preserve. We hoped to tally 110 species or more, though our exact count was not available at press time.

We are asking for pledges on a per species basis, or, if you choose, you can donate a fixed sum. There are two ways that you can donate:

Online at www.firstgiving.com/cosumnes-birds or by check. Checks should be made out to PRBO and mailed to me:

Chris Conard
2405 Rio Bravo Circle
Sacramento, CA 95826

Thank you for considering a donation to this important organization.

All the best,
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.

Birding Events and News

CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM

It's party time again! The 13th Annual Central Valley Birding Symposium will be held November 19-22 in Stockton, CA, at the Hilton Stockton.

Attend workshops with raptor expert Bill Clark, birding pros Jon Dunn and Joe Morlan, as well as other informative folks. The evening programs include Murrelet Halterman on Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Stephen Shunk on "The Magic of Birding".

There are drawing and digiscoping workshops, our always popular and informative ID Panel with guest experts, programs for beginning birders, and of course field trips. The Birder's Market is full of artists and vendors with a wonderful selection of bird and nature related items.

For more info, check the website at www.cvbs.org, or contact Frances Oliver at hummer52@sbcglobal.net or 209-369-2010. Register soon!

CONTRA COSTA BREEDING BIRD ATLAS

The Contra Costa County Breeding Bird Atlas by Steve Glover is now available. For each of the 161 species of the birds that breed in Contra Costa County, the book includes current and historical status, life history information, conservation concerns, and range maps.

Also, the book contains 56 beautiful drawings by Dana Gardner. This is a terrific book and a must have for birders. To purchase the Atlas go to Mt. Diablo Audubon's website at www.diabloaudubon.com/index.php and click on the Atlas icon which is located on the left side of the homepage. The cost is \$26.80 which includes tax, handling, and postage.

LODI'S SANDHILL CRANE FESTIVAL

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

For 13 years, Lodi's Sandhill Crane Festival has celebrated the return of the cranes. In collaboration with the City of Lodi, the Festival continues this November 6-8, welcoming an ever-growing circle of friends to share the wonder of the Sandhill crane.

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

GALT, 3RD ANNUAL, WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The City of Galt is hosting its 3rd Annual Winter Bird Festival, Saturday January 30, 2010 at the McCaffrey Middle School facility located in Galt. The purpose of this event is to advance public awareness and conservation of the region's wildlife. Sandhill Cranes, Canada 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. For more information see their website at www.ci.galt.ca.us, or call their 24 hour recorded information line at 209-366-7220.

Purple Martin Update

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Reproductive success increased from last year's low level, but still, overall production was modest. Our recent study results will be published later this year in the journal *Western Birds*.

We also coordinated with SAS to provide information for comments on several land use projects at martin colony sites. The City of Sacramento's inadequate treatment of Purple Martin impacts continues to be a challenge. We installed additional nest boxes at the Yolo Basin Wildlife Area, where we initiated our box program in 2008. We also erected new boxes there and at the Railroad Museum colony, in an attempt to encourage martins to adopt nest boxes. Martins still have not used the boxes, but we continue to have high use by Tree Swallows, which may serve as attractants to martins. We also released several rehabilitated nestlings at the Wildlife Area, in hopes that they may return in subsequent years to breed in boxes.

Dan Airola also coordinated a status survey of selected martin colonies elsewhere in Northern California, in part to understand whether the substantial decline in Sacramento is a local issue or part of a broader problem. Results from this volunteer-based study, which was sponsored in part by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are still being summarized. Preliminary results suggest populations within the central and north coast regions are healthy, while interior populations continued to be at risk of decline.

Conservation of the Purple Martin in Sacramento and elsewhere continues to be a substantial challenge, due to low population size, low recent survival and reproduction, continued threats posed by land use projects, and generally low level of interest and support by agencies and other conservation organizations. The Purple Martin team is very grateful to SAS' for its support of our efforts to maintain this species!

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

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Don Cable
Alice Winston Carney
Rebecca Davis
Sandra Kreun
Nathan Smith

Please note that when you put a vacation or temporary hold on your mail, the US Postal Service returns your *OBSERVER* to us.

Thanks Lea Landry
Membership Chair

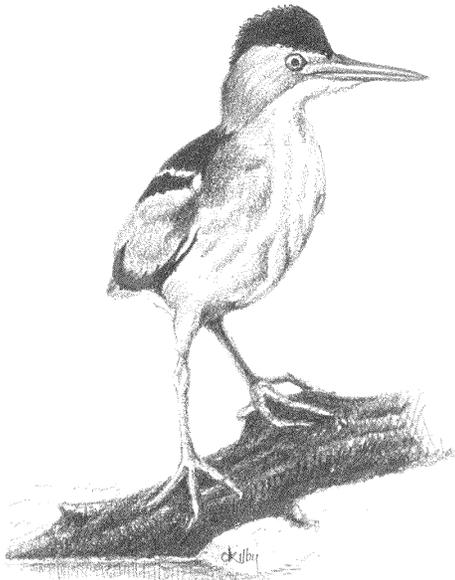
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Delberta Bass, Paul Beach, Wayne Blunk, Jacquie Cranston, Patrick Fitzgerald, Susan Fregien, Laurie Isabell, Thomas Manning, Linda Pittman, Joyce Rietz and Patricia Wells, to the **General Fund**.

Candy Ansafoff, Alan Baron, Terry Campbell, Norman Eade, Charlene Eberwine, Julie Haas, George Koch, Joyce Rietz, Patricia Wells and Bill Wingfield, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Laura Sperry made a donation to **Sacramento Audubon** to celebrate Leslie Lewis' retirement and the resulting increase in her bird watching activities!



Daniel Kilby

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Observations continued from page 8

Notable songbirds included the continuing **Red-eyed Vireo** at North Pond in Davis from 7/18 to 8/15, and the **Northern Parula** at the same site from 7/29 to 8/8. A **Dusky Flycatcher** was found in north Davis on 8/26, and an out-of-season **Ruby-crowned Kinglet** was at CRP on 8/16, with another from Rush Ranch in Solano County around the same date. Seven **Nashville Warblers** at CRP is a high total for this species, which is usually more common locally in spring than fall. An **American Pipit** from YWA on 8/18 was very early, and a **White-crowned Sparrow** in Fair Oaks on 8/23 was a month ahead of schedule. Rounding out the highlights, a **Summer Tanager** was found in Yolo County at Rds 27 and 88, and a **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was in Fair Oaks on 8/18; these species are both now detected annually, where only five years ago they were considered exceptional.

Photos of highlight birds are on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (<http://sacramento-audubon.org/activities/recent sightings>).

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:

Chad Aakre, Roger Adamson, Chuck Brittain, Dan Brown, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Gil Ewing, Maureen Geiger, Steve Hampton, Jim Holmes, Jeri Langham, Tim Manolis, Michael Perrone, Shawn Petrash, Vance Russell, Kathryn Sanderson, Mary Schiedt, Zach Smith, John Sterling, John Trochet, Dan Williams, Bruce Webb, and Ed Whisler.

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

Chris Conard

Seasonal Observations

August 1 to August 31
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

Avoided by many because of the heat, August is one of the most productive months of the year. It rivals September as the peak month of the songbird migration, and is probably the best month of the year for shorebirding. This August was no exception. Visits to local riparian forests in the hours just after sunrise were often rewarded with good numbers of migrants. The report of a possible juvenile **Red-necked Stint** at the Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA) on 8/30 sucked up all the oxygen in the local birding community, with folks from throughout the state trying to get a look at it. This Asian stray has only been recorded about 10 times in the state. While adults in breeding plumage are pretty straightforward, the identification of a juvenile is tricky business. If you were lucky enough to see this bird, which was reported sporadically into September, please send photos and written descriptions to the California Bird Records Committee (californiabirds.org). The bird was found among thousands of **Western and Least Sandpipers** in partially flooded rice fields just east of the auto loop; also present were one or two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** and at least one **Baird's Sandpiper**.

There were at least two family groups of **Least Bitterns** in the public portion of YWA. One group was seen for nearly the entire month, with at least one adult and five juveniles present. These were certainly the most viewed **Least Bitterns** in

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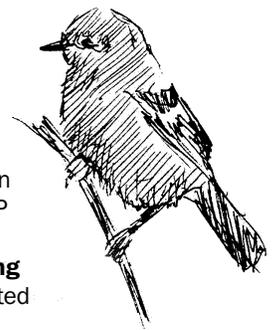
local history, providing much happiness to those who have struggled to find these marsh skulkers in the past. Reports of **Tundra Swans** on 8/18 in Olivehurst and 8/20 in Roseville are absurdly early for a species not typically recorded in our area until late October or November. A female **Redhead** at the Gristmill access of the American River Parkway (ARP) on 8/30 was a surprise in both timing and loca-

tion. A juvenile **Brown Pelican** was at the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands on 8/4-5, providing only the fourth record for the county.

Additional **Semipalmated Sandpiper** reports included one from the Sacramento Regional WTP (SRWTP) on 8/3, two at the Woodland WTP on 8/7, and one at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 8/18. Five **Willetts** were at SRWTP on 8/3, with single **Baird's Sandpipers** there on 8/18 and 8/24. The

Franklin's Gull from last month continued at the Davis WTP through at least 8/6, with that or another also seen at Woodland WTP on 8/5. Two very early adult **Herring Gulls** were reported

by a very experienced observer from *Kirsten Munson* the Gristmill access of ARP on 8/29-30. Members of the **Least Tern** family at SRWTP were seen through 8/7.



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Observations continued on page 7