



The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

MARK THE DATES NOW FOR OUR CHRISTMAS COUNTS

Saturday, December 6, ARNHA Count

American River Natural History Association
Annual Bird Count (and Mammals!)
Compiler: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Saturday, December 20, Woodfords Christmas Count

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

Saturday, December 27, Sacramento Christmas Count

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

Sunday, January 4, Folsom Christmas Count

Compiler: Chris Conard, 916/362-5942
e-mail: conardc@gmail.com

Monterey Bay Coastal and Pelagic Trip

September 27 and 28, 2008

This year's 2-day coastal and pelagic trip is full but if you still have an interest in going please contact Monterey Seabirds (831-375 4658), identify yourself as a Sacramento Audubon participant, and have them put you on the waiting list. People may cancel or perhaps there will be an upgrade to a larger boat if the number of people on the waiting list warrants it. You may contact Ken Hashagen at 916-316-8596 for questions. More information can be found in the article on the trip in last month's *Observer*.

General Meeting

Thursday, September 18
Shepard Garden and Arts Center
7pm General Meeting

The Farallons, 40 Years Later Ron LeValley

Forty years ago when Point Reyes Bird Observatory established the Farallon Island Research Station, Ron was a young biologist who had volunteered as a bird bander for a number of years. In August of 1968 Ron spent a month on the islands, a month that was instrumental in focusing his career. During the late 1970's, Ron worked as a full time Farallon Biologist for PRBO.

This past summer, twenty-nine years after his last visit, he returned to the beginning of his career and participated in today's research activities.

Ron will share some of his experiences—both old and new—on the islands, providing an interesting perspective on the changes—both on the island and in the ecosystems that the Farallons are a part of.

His outstanding photographs will illustrate his talk. For glimpses of what's to come, see Ron's Website, www.levalleyphoto.com. There are many interesting photos (as you can see here) from Ron's recent visits and research on the island.

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

Lea Landry, Program Chair



Pigeon Guillemot

Ron LeValley, July 1, 2008
SE Farallon



Tufted Puffin

Ron LeValley, June 23, 2008
SE Farallon

Field Trip Findings

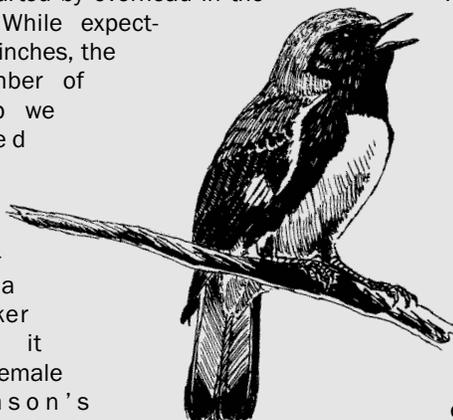
Evening Beaver Walk (8/12) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported the group saw three-plus beaver, a doe and fawn, a turtle and the usual suspects including Great Blue Heron, Great Egret, Black Phoebe, Belted Kingfisher, and Mute Swan.

Shorebirds of the Sacramento Valley (8/10) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: "With 15 species of shorebirds and 64 species in all, it turned out to be an enjoyable morning for the 8 birders in attendance. A Solitary Sandpiper at Davis Wetlands was the bird of the day. Also notable were a Marbled Godwit, 5 Willets and a Whimbrel at the Davis WWTP. Other species of note were a Peregrine Falcon and an adult male Blue Grosbeak. And along Road 103 north of Davis, several Cattle Egrets were living up to their name by perching on the backs of cows."

Carson Pass (8/9) — Leader Gary Fregien reported: "Although there was a morning chill in the air at around 8,500 feet elevation, and a brisk wind, we hiked the trail from Carson Pass to Winnemucca Lake and back, enjoying the birds, remaining wildflowers, and beautiful alpine scenery. One of the first bird species of the day was Dusky Flycatcher. As the day progressed, it seemed they were following us, as we were seeing them in numbers and about everywhere we went.

We estimated at least a dozen individuals. The group commented that they had never seen so many on a given day. We also had flocks of Dark-eyed Juncos, 30-40 strong. Juvenal plumage Chipping Sparrows proved challenging, until an adult made its appearance with the half-dozen or so juveniles. White-crowned Sparrows were found at around 9,000 feet elevation. A couple of Band-tailed Pigeons darted by overhead in the morning. While expecting more finches, the only member of the group we observed was Pine Siskin. Close inspection of a woodpecker revealed it to be a female Williamson's Sapsucker. Northern Flicker was heard calling at a distance later in the day. Our warbler count included only Nashville and Yellow-rumped. We were already to Winnemucca Lake before seeing a Rufous Hummingbird. All of the

several thrushes we saw were identified as Swainson's. It was already mid-afternoon and well into our return hike that the first Clark's Nutcracker was heard, and then finally seen. Common Raven was the only other corvid we saw. While keeping watchful eyes out for Accipiters, hoping for the largest one of the species, of course, we did manage one Cooper's and one Sharp-shinned Hawk. Red-tailed Hawk was seen a couple of times during the day also. Although we may have anticipated more species, the number of individuals seen was impressive, thanks to all the juncos and flycatchers. The group tallied 21 species on the hike."



Stephen D'Amato

Sailor Bar (8/3) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: "Eleven birders had 52 species of birds on a three hour hike along Sailor Bar. Highlights included Rufous-Crowned Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Bullock's Oriole, Nashville Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Lazuli Bunting and Phainopepla."

Findings continued on page 5

SACRAMENTO PURPLE MARTIN CONSERVATION UPDATE

As noted at the May SAS meeting, the Chapter has supported conservation of Sacramento's remnant Purple Martin population as a priority activity. This year, SAS and its members donated funds to help offset expenses incurred by the team of folks who have working as volunteers conducting studies and conservation actions on behalf of purple martins, including Dan Airola, Dan Kopp, Kevin Thomas, Stan Kostka and Lynn Schmidt.

This year's activities have been many, including monitoring the size of the breeding population, determining survival from color-banded birds, determining reproductive success with pole mounted cameras, installing wire "nest guards" in nest entrances to reduce nestling fallout, monitoring construction projects, commenting on land use projects, and erecting specialized Purple Martin nest boxes at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (YBWA).

Team Purple Martin is just finishing field work and compiling results as of this writing. Preliminary results show a population of about 80 pairs, representing another decline in the breeding population by about 25%. This decline comes on top of a previous decline of 40% since 2004. This year's decline may have been caused mainly by dry spring weather conditions that may have affected the availability of insect food. Annual survival of adult birds was low, contributing to the breeding population decline. Reproductive data has not been analyzed, but it appears that it also

was lower this year than in 2007, which was a banner breeding year. We installed nest guards in all holes used for breeding at one colony, and continue monitoring their effectiveness in preventing nestling fallout.

We monitored a major parking lot construction project initiated at the beginning of the nesting season at the S and 29th St. colony. We were pleasantly surprised to see how readily the martins adapted to high levels of construction disturbance and that they maintained a good nesting population and nesting success at this site.

We coordinated with SAS to provide information for comments on several land use projects at martin colony sites, including the Curtis Park West railyard redevelopment. Finally, we erected 15 Purple Martin nest boxes at the YBWA and installed a player system to play the martin's attraction song. Not surprisingly, martins did not use the boxes in their first year, but we had use by Tree Swallows, which is a sign that we selected suitable sites for martins.

Conservation of the Purple Martin 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 government agencies and other conservation organizations. The Purple Martin team is very grateful for SAS' support for efforts to maintain this species!

Dan Airola

Field Trips



Kirsten Munson

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Scott Hoppe, shoppe01@earthlink.net, 835-8471, for trips through August 31. For trips through October 5th call the scheduler Mark Cudney, 987-2422.

Consider car pooling and share gas expenses with the driver. FRS radios can be helpful on all trips. Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.

Thursday, August 28 Evening Beaver Walk

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Summer is coming to an end and there won't be many more beaver trips this year, so if you haven't had the opportunity to watch the evening's activities with Jack, now's the time. As always, Jack will share his knowledge of all the plant, bird and animal life of the river. Trip is limited to 8 people, with a minimum age of 8 years, so call him to sign up and find the meeting time and place.

Saturday, August 30, 7:30am Bodega Bay

**Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216
andisalmi@yahoo.com**

Join Andi for a day of birding, exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. This is often one of the best coastal birding areas, with many gulls, waterfowl, songbirds and raptors to see, in addition to possible shorebirds returning from their breeding grounds. Meet at the Park and 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 and Ride lot. Bring food, water, and warm clothes.

Sunday, August 31, 5pm Yolo Wildlife Area, evening trip

**Leader: Mark Martucci, 722-6098
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Join Mark for an evening drive around this diverse area just a few minutes from downtown Sacramento. A good variety of species is possible this time of year; shore-bird numbers will depend on the amount of water available. In some years there are good numbers of White-faced Ibis; foraging owls may make an appearance in the late evening, and at sunset the parking lot

is a good place to view bats flying out from their under-the-freeway roost. 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.

Saturday, September 6, 7am Bodega Bay

Leader: Scott Hoppe, 652-5409

Enjoy a full day of birding, exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. Plan to see waterfowl, shorebirds, gulls, raptors, and migrating songbirds. 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.

Sunday, September 7, 7am-11am Upper Sunrise, American River Parkway

**Leader: Mark Martucci, 722-6098
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 a pulse of migrants. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd, 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 beginners.

Tuesday, September 9 Beavers on the Parkway

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Cool off on a hot evening with a walk on the parkway with Jack, to view beavers busy at their work. Jack has been doing these evening walks for many years, and always

sees beaver, so don't miss this opportunity. Jack will also be looking at the birds active on the parkway. Trip is limited to eight persons, so call Jack for meeting time and place.

Saturday, September 13, 7am Pt. Reyes for Vagrants

**Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942
conardc@gmail.com**

There will be two trips to Point Reyes this fall for rare migrants. Chris is an expert birder who can sort out that confusing fall warbler. Be prepared for several miles of walking. 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, September 14, 7:30am Sailor Bar, American River Parkway

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

Join Mark to explore this part of the parkway. Returning winter species such as the crowned sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, mergansers and goldeneye may be seen, as well as resident species. A trip with Mark is always interesting and is appropriate for both newer and more experienced birders. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee. Meet Mark at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road.

Wednesday, September 17 Evening Beaver Walk

Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

This will be one of your last opportunities this year to view the beaver with Jack on

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

this evening walk. The seasons are changing and you don't want to miss the opportunity to go on one of these trips. Give Jack a call for a meeting time and place.

Thursday, September 18, 7am
Capay Valley to Blue Ridge
(A Yolo Audubon Trip)
Leader: Sami LaRocca
(530) 908-0288

Come along on this trip through the scenic Capay Valley; the timing is the transition from summer to autumn and the birds may surprise us. Driving along Hwy 16 there are a number of roads that lead off to the left and right which we'll explore. We'll go up to Blue Ridge via Rayhouse Road where Blue-Gray Gnatcatchers and Lawrence's Goldfinch may be seen at Fiske Lake. Residents such as California Thrasher, Wrentit and Fox Sparrow should be found in the chaparral. Further on near the boundary with Lake County we'll look for Osprey and Eagle nest sites at Davis Reservoir.

Meet Sami at 7am at the Marketplace Shopping Center (near Big 5 Sporting Goods, 1301 W. Covell, in Davis). Bring water, snacks, lunch and hiking shoes. All levels of birder welcome, some binoculars will be available. We'll plan on returning by mid-afternoon.

Saturday, September 20, 7am
Point Reyes for Vagrants
Leaders: Mark Cudney, 987-2422
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 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.

Saturday, September 20
Tall Forest, Cosumnes River Preserve
Recorded Information: 684-2816

Meet at the Farm Center Gate at the intersection of Desmond and Bruceville Roads, ON TIME, to join this monthly bird count. Usually led by John Trochet, this foray into an area usually closed to the public is a great opportunity to bird the

area with a very experienced birder, who will find any rarities present. You must check the recorded information a day or so before the trip to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details. Arrive early, as this trip always leaves the parking area promptly.

Sunday, September 21, 7:30am
Reichmuth Park
Leader: Tim Manolis, 485-9009
Ylightfoot@aol.com

Join Tim at the park entrance on Gloria Drive and 43rd Avenue at 7:30am. In the past Tim has found many uncommon birds in Reichmuth Park. On this first day of autumn he will be looking for fall migrants, warblers, vireos and flycatchers. This is a good chance to work on identifying birds in confusing fall plumage, and Tim has the expertise to do it.

Saturday-Sunday,
September 27
and 28
Monterey Bay Coastal
and Pelagic Trip
Two-Day Monterey Trip,
leader to be announced
Reservations:
Ken Hashagen, 635-4435

Please see July-August *Observer* for details. Saturday: The best pelagic birding in North America - Monterey Bay. Sunday: Visit several Monterey Peninsula and adjacent area hot spots for land and shore birds.

Tuesday, September 30
Last Evening Beaver Walk
Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Join Jack for the season's last Beaver Walk. In addition to beaver, muskrats are sometimes seen. Herons and egrets make an appearance and Jack will point out other interesting birds and plants of the area. Call him for the meeting time and place.

Saturday, October 4, 8am
Bushy Lake
Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458
naturestoc@aol.com

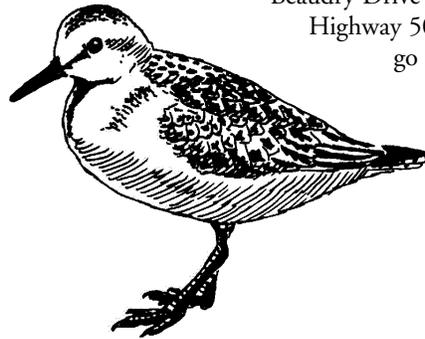
Join Dan for a look at some of the birds that live along this section of the American River Parkway. This will be about a 4 mile hike and will end before lunch. Bring water and appropriate footwear. Meet in the park-

ing lot of the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, located just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo.

Sunday, October 5, 8am
River Bend (Goethe) Park
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882
empid@earthlink.net

Meet Cathie at the first parking lot on the right past the entrance kiosk at 7:30am for this morning walk. We will look for resident birds and wintering species along the levee, in the oak woodland and down at the river. This walk will end before noon and is a good trip for beginners. River Bend (formerly Goethe) Park is at the end of Rod Beaudry Drive off Folsom Boulevard. From

Highway 50 take the Bradshaw exit, go north to Folsom Boulevard, east to Rod Beaudry Drive and turn left. There is a \$5 park entrance fee; call Cathie if you want to meet outside the park and carpool in.



Stephen D'Amato

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The **Harvest Festival** in Fair Oaks Park was the latest event for our Outreach program. Cathie LaZier and Julie Serences talked to people about creating garden habitats for birds, bats, butterflies and bees. Julie provided a new list of drought tolerant plants which provide food and shelter for birds, to add to our brochures on reducing the use of pesticides and other "green" gardening ideas.

Our next event will be the **Salmon Festival at Nimbus Fish Hatchery** on Saturday and Sunday, October 11th and 12th. We'll need lots of people to help at this one; our location is right on the river and we have scopes set up for viewing. Last year we had kestrels, osprey and egrets in the scopes and many people stopping to talk about birds. If you'd like to help for a few hours either day, call or email Cathie, 457-6882 or empid@earthlink.net.

Findings continued from page 2

Discovery Park (8/2) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: "About 15 of us had a nice walk this morning in Discovery Park—although there were many cyclists and we had to keep leaping off the pavement so as not to get hit. In addition to what one might expect, I was surprised to see a Western Bluebird pair with a juvenile in the open part of the park close to the entrance; to my knowledge they have never nested there before. We saw two gorgeous, male Western Tanagers, along with a pair of White-breasted Nuthatches and a Kestrel family of 4. Dominant bird was Spotted Towhee, many singing everywhere!"

Evening Beaver Walk (8/4) — Besides three-plus beaver, leader Jack Hiehle's group saw two turtles, a rattlesnake, Common Merganser and one chick, Mallard with two chicks, Green Heron, Belted Kingfisher, Barn Swallows, Canada Geese and Mute Swan.

Evening Beaver Walk (7/29) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported that three plus beaver put on a show, either slapping the water with their tails or grooming themselves out of the water. His group also saw Western Bluebird, male Ring-necked Pheasant, Mourning Doves, Great Blue Heron and Great Egret.

Bushy Lake/Cal Expo Floodplain (7/27) — Leader Dan Brown reported: "Nine of us had a very pleasant morning; the weather was great with the delta breeze blowing nicely. We recorded 42 species with the highlights being White-tailed Kites, Western Kingbirds, American Kestrels, Nuttall's and Downy Woodpecker, Cassin's Finch, Pine Siskin, 1 Black-headed Grosbeak, Cooper's Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, and about 20 Wood Ducks. Conspicuous by their absence were Red-shouldered Hawks; we neither heard nor saw any!"

Carson Pass (7/26) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported these sightings: Pine Grosbeak, Band-tailed Pigeon, Steller's Jay, Mountain Chickadee, Pacific-slope Flycatcher, Violet-green, Cliff and Tree swallows, Brewer's, Chipping, White-crowned and Fox sparrows, Orange-crowned and Yellow-rumped warblers, Red-tailed Hawk, Kestrel, and Clark's Nutcracker.

Dragonfly trip (7/20) — Leader Tim Manolis reported: "Three folks (Dan Brown, Cathie LaZier, and Zach Smith) joined me on a Sacramento Audubon field trip to look for dragonflies along Bear Creek in Colusa County. We had a great

trip. From about 9:30am to about 1pm we checked three spots along the creek and Bear Valley Road between the intersection of Highways 20 and 16 and where Wilbur Springs Road intersects Bear Valley Road. Weather was mostly sunny, with mild temperatures and a variable breeze. We saw: American Rubyspot, about 20 at various spots along the creek; Sooty Dancer, about 50, various spots along the creek; Vivid Dancer, a few seen, perhaps 5-10; California/Aztec Dancers, 20+ seen, the only male netted was *A. agrioides*. Tule Bluet, Northern Bluet, Western Forktail, Pacific Forktail and Black-fronted Forktail. 4 Common Green Darners and 50 Giant Darners which were the main target of the trip, and they did not disappoint. The highlight of the trip was when a big male flew over our heads carrying a male White-belted Ringtail, then landed in streamside brush at eye level and proceeded to lei-

surely devour the gomphid! Dan and Zach snapped a bunch of pics at close range of a magnificent odonate that rarely lands and allows such close views. As seems typical of odes eating odes, it started on the head, then munched on the thorax, and finished by consuming the abdomen. When the only things left were wings, the giant dropped these and sailed off in what seemed like a single motion.



Giant Darner eating White-belted Ringtail

Dan Brown photo

Other species seen were White-belted Ringtail, Gray Sanddragon, Western River Cruiser, Western Pondhawk, Blue Dasher. Of the Skimmers we saw Twelve-spotted Skimmer, Widow Skimmer, Flame Skimmer-100 or so, they were everywhere, and the Pale-faced Clubskimmer. There were hundreds of the Variegated Meadowhawk (many seen along roads and highways enroute to the area,

too)—the second most common dragonfly seen all day. The Spot-winged Glider was the most abundant dragonfly in the area, by far. Not only were they common along

Findings continued on page 6

OTHER CHRISTMAS COUNTS FOR 2008-2009

Sunday, December 14, Putah Creek Christmas Count

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

Sunday, December 14, Auburn Christmas Count

Compiler: Deren Ross, 530/308-5114, e-mail: derenross@sbcglobal.net

Monday, December 15, Benicia-Napa Christmas Count

Contact: Tim Fitzer (Grizzly Island), 916/870-5207, e-mail: spskua2@comcast.net

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

Tuesday, December 30, Lincoln Christmas Count

Compiler: Ed Pandolfino, e-mail: ERPfromCA@aol.com

Thursday, January 1, Angwin Christmas Count

Floyd Hayes, floyd_hayes@yahoo.com

Friday, January 2, Sonoma Valley Christmas Count

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

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

the creek, including patrolling males, but swarms were foraging out over roads and open country enroute; we must have seen a 1000 or more all day.

We saw a Wandering Glider-I had a good look at just one for sure, but there were probably modest-to-good numbers in with the Spot-winged swarms. Black Saddlebags were in with the glider swarms.

Dan Brown posted some images of the trip at his website: <http://naturestoc.smugmug.com>. Click on the Ordonates gallery. Most of the Bear Creek, Colusa Co. pictures are on pages 1 and 2, including two pictures of variegated Meadowhawks depositing eggs. The picture shown of the Giant Darner lunching on the White Belted Ringtail can be found on page 1.

Loney Meadow (7/19) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Twenty of us enjoyed a great day of birding on this year’s Loney Meadows trip. While a few of the “usual” birds for the location were missed, we did see Pileated Woodpecker, which was a first for the SAS field trips in the 4 years I have been leading them here. Other highlights included 7 species of warbler. And at a couple of spots, there was so much bird activity that people didn’t know where to look first. 40 species total for the day. All in all, a very successful trip.”

Sailor Bar (7/13) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Fourteen birders had 48 species of birds on a trip cut short due to the heat. Highlights included Northern Rough-Winged Swallows, Western Kingbirds, Ash-Throated Flycatchers, Bullock’s Oriole, Black-Headed Grosbeak and Rufous-Crowned Sparrow.”

Mt. Judah and Roller Pass (7/12) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported these sightings: Green-tailed Towhee, Mountain Bluebird, Rufous Hummingbird, Band-tailed Pigeon, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Fox Sparrow, Pine Grosbeak, Clark’s Nutcracker, Townsend’s Solitaire and Raven.

River Bend (formerly Goethe) Park (7/6) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “On a three hour walk, ending before the heat really set in, we saw most of the common summer birds of the parkway, with good looks at Ash-throated Flycatchers, Western Kingbirds, Downy and Nuttall’s Woodpeckers, and Red-shouldered Hawks. A surprise was an active nest of young White-tailed Kites, with parents attending.”

Wright’s Lake (7/5) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported the group spotted Band-tailed Pigeon, Black-headed Grosbeak, Williamson’s Sapsucker, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Steller’s Jay, a single White Pelican, Northern Flicker, Canada Goose, and Bufflehead with young.

Swainson’s Hawk Trip (6/29) — This morning 16 folks joined Audubon Society leader Mark Martucci and Friends of the Swainson’s Hawk president, Jude Lamare, in a visit to three local Swainson’s Hawk nest sites. Lots of fun and good views of both adults and nestlings.

Jude reported: “Our visit to the Port of Sacramento nest showed a failed nest site where adults were still hanging around. The adults had built a second nest on the south side of the port entrance and it appeared that the female was spending her time hanging around there. The old nest site where we had seen her sitting last was abandoned. It remains incredible that a pair is nesting here where there is constant traffic and noise, including the fire station across the street.

“On to the O Street nest. One chick in the nest on the West Sac side of the Sacramento River at O Street. The chick flapped and jumped and even branched for us. This nest site also exposed to a lot of firework activity at the River Cats stadium nearby.

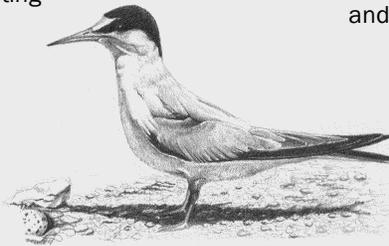
“The Sutter’s Landing/Trestle nest is harder to find, harder to see, but we got good views of two chicks. One is doing very well, clearly dominant, feeding and flapping, while the sibling sits quietly nearby. The adult dropped food at the nest and took off. We speculated that it may be very tough feeding chicks this year with dry conditions.

“We are told by biologists that this is a poor year for nesting. During our scouting of six nest sites, we found only two successful ones. Hoping for better next year.”

Farallons Pelagic Trip (6/29) — Coordinator Ken Hashagen reported: “If you weren’t on this trip you missed a very special day! A total of 35 birders traveled to the Farallon Islands, 17 miles from S.F. Water was dead flat, weather cool but great for observations. No one got seasick!

Good birds: exceptional views of Tufted Puffins, Cassin’s and Rhinoceros Auklets, Pigeon Guillemots and Common Murres as well as one Brown Booby, one Horned Puffin juvenile, all three cormorants, dark and light phase Northern Fulmar, and lots of Black-footed Albatrosses. Great marine mammals: Harbor Porpoise and Harbor Seal, lots of jellyfish, Humpback Whales, one or two Blue Whales, a Minke Whale, acres of Risso’s Dolphin and Northern Right-whale dolphin, and Steller’s and California Sea Lions.”

Mather Field (6/22) — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: “Before the heat hit, 5 of us spotted or heard 47 species. Families were the theme with multiple families of Western Kingbirds, family of Pied-billed Grebes, Canada Geese, Nuttalls Woodpeckers, Bewick’s Wrens, Tree Swallows, Bullock’s Oriole, California Quail, Black-crowned Night-Herons, Bushtits, Yellow-headed Blackbirds, and the Mute Swan family of 8 cygnets. Only two Great-tailed Grackles were seen and Yellow-headed Blackbirds were spotted in all areas of the lake, up in significant numbers from last year. One lone female Ruddy Duck was spotted and a Marsh Wren and Song Sparrows were heard. Great morning of birding.”



Daniel Kilby

Purple Martins in Old Sacramento (6/22) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “Well, this morning was just wonderful. Fifteen of us spent a magical two hours in Old Sac watching Purple Martins with the experts. Because it was early on Sunday, we were not bedeviled as we are on the weekday, noontime trips by multitudes of school buses and children and cars. The parking lot was empty and quiet, so we were able to seriously study the martins the entire time. Dan Airola and his associate Dan Kopp were there to answer all our questions about martins and Kevin (last name lost) used a light/camera device on a long pole to show us young in the nests inside the weep holes under the overpasses. We also had great looks at White-throated Swifts and saw several Swainson’s Hawks and the usual Mexican Free-tailed Bats roosting in that area. Very nice trip.”

Martis Valley and Vicinity (6/21) — Leader Scott Hoppe, subbing for Chris Conard, reported: “It was a good day, with 13 of us in attendance. Among the highlights were: at Martis Creek, up to 4

Willow Flycatchers, most of them singing and very stationary so all could get good scope views; several singing Vesper Sparrows and one singing Green-tailed Towhee; at a small meadow a short way up Martis Peak Road, we had a Calliope Hummingbird perform a spectacular display, with several u-shaped dives, then a slow descent, then he perched on a nearby small pine for great scope views; on the walk up to the lookout, we had a pair of Golden-crowned Kinglets at eye level that came right out in the open. Later, some decided to call it a day, while the remaining half of us went to Martis Creek Reservoir and were able to watch a pair of Osprey fishing over the lake. At one point, one Osprey flew up toward the pines near the campground with something in its talons. Then, it dropped its catch and instantly a dark Red-tailed hawk came zooming over from behind us and a Kestrel came in from another direction. It was difficult to tell who got what, but afterward, the Kestrel plus an apparent mate began harassing the hawk as it flew off toward the east. As one person said to me, it was 'a nice finale to the day'."

Sierra Valley/Antelope Valley/Yuba Pass (6/14-15) — Leader Gary Fregien reported: "Eight SAS members and two guests enjoyed birding the Sierra Valley and Yuba Pass areas, while not enjoying the wildfire smoke that filled Sierra Valley while we were there. Highlights for the 2-day trip include Bank Swallow in the company of numerous Cliff and some Northern Rough-winged Swallows in Sierra Valley, and nesting Pine Grosbeaks at Yuba Pass campground. This year there were 8 species of woodpeckers and ducks, 7 species of warblers and flycatchers, and 5 swallow species. Of course, it's always nice to hear Mountain Quail, which we did again this year. The group tallied 111 species this year; that's 20 species more than last year's count. For the week in the area, I observed 140 species; 1 better than last year. I call that GOOD birding! (As it was getting late in the day, only part of the group opted to bird Antelope Valley, myself not included. I have incorporated their trip birds into the species list, though.)"

Birding Festivals and Trips

4TH ANNUAL MONTEREY BAY BIRDING FESTIVAL

Pajaro Valley's 4th Annual Monterey Bay Birding Festival will take place Friday September 26th through Sunday, September 28, 2008. Jon Dunn, chief consultant/editor for five editions of the National Geographic Society's *Field Guide to the Birds of North America* will be Saturday's keynote speaker. More than 70 activities are planned, highlighted by a new series of workshops "Honing Your Birding Skills" designed for beginning birders.

In conjunction with the festival, the City of Watsonville's Wetlands of Watsonville Nature Center at Ramsay Park invites you and your children to the free, bilingual Family Days on Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 5pm

Visit www.montereybaybirding.org for the festival schedule and complete information, including trips and trip leaders, or to register.

12TH ANNUAL CENTRAL VALLEY BIRDING SYMPOSIUM

This year's Central Valley Birding Symposium will be held at the Stockton Grand Hotel, November 20th to 23rd, 2008. Friday's keynote speaker will be Hans Peeters, the author of *Owls of California and the West*.

For more info, check the website at www.cvbs.org.

MOUNTAIN GORILLAS, SHOEBILLS, AND MARA MIGRATION

Just back from their 13th visit to East Africa, Ed Harper and Susan Scott have researched and tested a new safari route that captures some of the best wildlife viewing in all of East Africa. They were very impressed by the outstanding birding they enjoyed in Uganda along with the phenomenal experience of trekking for Mountain Gorillas. In Kenya they discovered an outstanding camp along the banks of the Talek River, optimally positioned for catching the spectacular migration of Wildebeest and Zebra into the Masai Mara. If there is sufficient interest, Ed and Susan are willing to organize a safari lasting about 15 days during late July and early August 2009, but they will need to start the process very soon. This is the ideal time of year for touring Uganda and optimizes the expected arrival of the great migration in the Masai Mara. If interested, contact Ed at 916-971-3311 or email: calidris@surewest.net for more details.

SAN JUAN ISLANDS BIRDING

Join the Olympic Peninsula Audubon Society this fall for a three-day cruise October 6-8, 2008, through the spectacular San Juan Archipelago. They will depart from John Wayne Marina aboard the MV Glacier Spirit (a 65-foot motor vessel, well-known from their many cruises around Protection Island), and cruise to Roche Harbor Resort; then touring various sites on San Juan Island for either birding or sightseeing. On day two, they will cruise onward for a mid-day visit to the Sucia Island State Park for a walk-about and picnic lunch, returning to Roche Harbor Resort on San Juan Island for the second night. On day three, they will cruise back home again to John Wayne Marina by way of dramatic Deception Pass, pausing for a close look at Smith Island for birds and sea mammals. Look for registration materials on their website www.olympicpeninsulaudubon.org. For additional information, contact 360-681-4076, or email: rcoffice@olympus.net.

News and Events

THE AUDUBLOGS

Two relatively new blogs have begun for Audubon chapters and for California Audubon. The chapter blog can be found at <http://audcalchaptersnet.blogspot.com/>. While its focus is geared toward chapter leaders it contains current happenings of concern to local Audubon members.

The CA Audubon blog is at www.audublog.org. It covers many of the same issues as the chapter blog of course, but also includes chapter events such as the Native Plant workshops mentioned below. Some of the many topics are Bird Conservation and Habitat, Birding and Nature Education, and species facing challenges such as the Condor, Tri-colored Blackbird and Western Snowy Plover. Several Audubon areas of concern and stewardship are also featured including Salton Sea, Tejon Ranch, and the Kern River Preserve.

Both sites are good for staying up on the issues, reading interesting stories or contributing your own thoughts. Check them out!

WELCOMING NATURE TO YOUR YARD WITH NATIVE PLANTS

Less water, less pollution from lawn mowers, more bird habitat...

The Sacramento Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society Invites you to a special presentation and hands-on workshop. Highlights will be a 45 minute Audubon at Home presentation covering the basics followed by a 45 minute optional native plant Propagation Class given by Jennifer Hogan of the SVCNPS.

For more information see last month's Observer or contact: Sacramento Audubon Society at education@sacramentoaudubon.org or 548-0618

Presentations will be given on the following dates at a location near you, so please join us:

- September 6**, Saturday – 1:30pm
Rancho Cordova Library, 9845 Folsom Blvd, Sacramento 95827
- September 13**, Saturday – 1:30pm
Orangevale Library, 8820 Greenback Lane, Orangevale 95662

FUTURE SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS

- October 16** – Ed Pandolfino, Hands-on Raptor ID program
- November 20** – Tim Fitzer, et. al., CBC Workshop
- December** – Merry Christmas
- January 15** – Speaker TBA, Save Our Sandhill Cranes
(Galt Festival is January 17th)
- February 19** – Speaker TBA, Wildlife Care
- March 19** – Chris Conard, *Birding Alaska*
- April 16** – John (Jack) Muir Laws, *Exploring the Sierra Nevada as a Naturalist and an Artist*. Julie Serences will be coordinating an Education Program with Jack on the 16th, prior to the General Meeting
- May 21** – Speaker TBA, Friends of the Swainson's Hawk
(SAS/FOSH Field Trip in June)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Bruce Casler, Michael Davis, Mercedes Gay, Poh Lin Gillis-Paige, G.E. Griffin, Ann M. Kohl, Patricia Matthews, Kevin McRae, Patricia Morehead, Susan Oie, June Persson, Judith Runstrom, Robert L. Smith, Beverly Spencer, Dorothy Tribbitt, Noreen Vincent, Keith Wagner, and Salli and Richard Warriner to the **General Fund**.

Valerie Brown, Terry Campbell, Bruce Casler, Bobbe Christopherson, Craig De Martini, Winifred Detweiler, Norman Eade, Maureen Geiger, Poh Lin Gillis-Paige, Betty Guff, Yoshino Hatanaka, Candy Holland, Timothy Jackson, Peggy Jenkins, DelMar Johnson, Peggy Kennedy, Mary Beth Metcalf, Joyce Mihanovich, Mark Noel, Susan Oie, Judith Runstrom, Carolyn Sandie, Ruby Valderrama, and JJ Williams, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Sara Gillespie to **Bobelaine**.

Eleanor Grenfell made donations in memory of her husband, Bill Grenfell, and in memory of Richard Lindquist.

Randy Ubry made a donation in memory of Bill Grenfell.

Tim Fitzer, and Jan and Dan Tankersley made donations to the **Purple Martin Fund** in memory of Dorothy Harvey.

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.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these
new members:

Michael Davis

G E Griffin

Sarah F Phelan

Ray Rozema

Violet J Vaira

Ruby E Valderrama

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 September 30, 2008 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

Observations

continued from page 10

the Yolo Causeway at YWA. A "ratty-looking" male **Common Goldeneye** was found along the American River near Gristmill on 7/27 and continued into August. At least one **Common Nighthawk** returned to Meiss Rd in eastern Sacramento County, as they have since 2005.

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit www.cvbirds.org and click "Listserv" for details. With 150 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want to thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Roger Adamson, Dan Brown, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Scott Hoppe, David Johnson, Dan Kopp, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, John Luther, Ed Pandolfino, Ann Pellegrini, Andy Pfeffer, Deren Ross, Mary Schiedt, Stefan Schlick, John Sterling, John Trochet, Charley Walker, Dan Williams, and Stan Wright.

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

Chris Conard

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

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

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Seasonal Observations

June 1 to July 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

While often considered the summer doldrums, June and July typically produce a few interesting records. Sometimes these are in the form of a late migrating vagrant songbird. A male **Bobolink** on 6/1 at the Granite Reg. Park in south Sacramento was just the type of record we look for in June. Harder to explain was a gorgeous **Brown Thrasher** at the Stone Lakes NWR that was mist-netted on 7/10 and heard singing on 7/11. Another big surprise was the first recorded **Least Terns** in Sacramento County. Two were found at the Sacramento Reg. Wastewater Treatment Plant (SRWTP) on 6/27. A nest was found on 7/1, though the eggs failed to hatch and the terns were last seen on 8/5.

Shorebirds are always a highlight for the period, with migrants starting to arrive in late June, and building in numbers through July and into August. The shorebird highlight of the period was of two **Stilt Sandpipers**, still partially in breeding plumage, with **dowitchers** at the Davis Wetlands from 7/31 to 8/2. Another nice surprise was a molting adult male **Ruff** (sporting a ruff) at the Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA) on 7/15. Other shorebird highlights included an adult **Pacific Golden-Plover** and two **Marbled Godwits** on Sherman Island near the Antioch Bridge on 7/28. Up to ten **Marbled Godwits** were reported from various Yolo County locations. The Woodland WTP hosted a **Snowy**

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Plover on 7/29, a **Willet** on 7/26, and a **Semipalmated Sandpiper** on 7/31. Single **Willetts** were also found at SRWTP (7/25) and Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 7/30. A **Solitary Sandpiper** was found at CRP on 7/27.

Cassin's Kingbirds were reported from two different locations on Sherman Island on 6/26, with one carrying food, indicating a possible nesting attempt. Unfortunately, they were not refound on subsequent visits. A male **Northern Parula** was found at CRP on 7/26 and continued well into August. Additional reports included a **Hammond's Flycatcher** in north Davis on 6/6, an immature male **Indigo Bunting** at CRP on 6/22, a very late **Lincoln's Sparrow** from Granite Reg. Park on 6/3, and **Red-breasted Nuthatches** reported on 7/27 from both CRP and Davis. The only **Bank Swallow** report in Sacramento County was one from SRWTP on 7/9, but over 80 were found in July at YWA.

A **Band-tailed Pigeon** was an interesting find, especially for the summer, at River Bend Park (formerly Goethe Park) on 7/2. There has been continued expansion of **White-faced Ibis** breeding in the Sacramento area. A large rookery was visible from I-80 in the tules just south of

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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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Observations continued on page 9