



# The *OBSERVER*

Sacramento Audubon Society

## General Meeting

**Thursday, September 17**  
**Shepard Garden and Art Center**  
**7pm General Meeting**

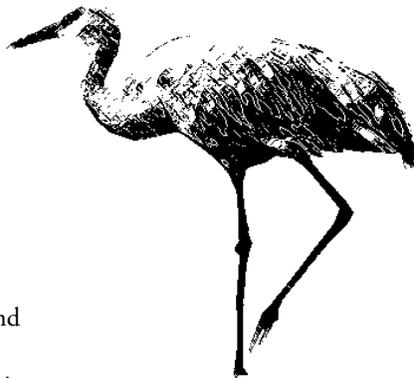
### **Sandhill Crane Workshop**

Paul Tebbel has worked with cranes for over 30 years, including 11 years as the director of Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary on the Platte River in Nebraska. More cranes gather at this sanctuary every spring than any other location in the world. Paul will present an hour-long workshop to start off our fall General Meeting program in September.

Sandhill cranes are fascinating birds to study. Large and conspicuous, they play out their lives on open fields within easy view of curious humans. This hour long presentation will teach you many of the common vocalizations, body language and other characteristics of sandhill cranes. You'll learn to recognize juveniles, tell subspecies apart, distinguish between dancing and aggression and many other details that will help you better understand and appreciate sandhill cranes.

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](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org) and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions.

*Lea Landry, Program Chair*



## **13TH ANNUAL 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 keynote speaker Friday night will be Hans Peeters with a program on "Owls of California and the West." He is the author of a field guide with the same name. Other evening programs include Murrelet Halterman on Yellow-billed Cuckoos and Stephen Shunk on "The Magic of Birding".

We have drawing and digiscoping workshops, our always popular and informative ID Panel with guest experts, programs for beginning birders, and more. The many Field Trips frequently turn up chasable goodies. 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](http://www.cvbs.org), or contact Frances Oliver at [hummer52@sbcglobal.net](mailto:hummer52@sbcglobal.net) or (209) 369-2010.

The economy may be down, but the birds are still here to lift you up with their wings. Come and enjoy them with us. See you there!

*Cheri Pillsbury*  
*Central Valley Birding Symposium*

## **THANK YOU SAS!**

What a pleasant surprise when I was presented with a gift certificate at the General Meeting in May. I needed to do some serious thinking, however, about redeeming it. I have a huge problem with neighborhood and feral cats for the last few years, so I have had to remove my bird baths. Countless feathers on the ground indicated that I was just luring birds to their doom. Cathie LaZier told me about her bird bath-in-a-tree that gives birds a good view of the surrounding area to make sure it is safe to drink or bathe.

Maybe up was the way to go? I found a terrific solution at Birds Unlimited—it was a pole system that allows the birdbath to be 6+ feet in the air, yet is easily accessible to clean. I installed the pole in the middle of a dense bush so it's protected from cats below and looks great in the garden. No bird feathers so far...

Thank you, SAS.

*Julie Serences*  
*Education Chair*

## Field Trip Findings

**Shorebirds of the Sacramento Valley** (8/9) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Twelve participants braved the valley heat to tally 63 species in all, and 14 species of shorebirds. We stopped first at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, where highlights included great looks for all of a Virginia Rail (on north side of Parking Lot B). Black-bellied Plover, still in breeding plumage, were also seen, as well as several Semipalmated Plovers. We also saw 5 Caspian Terns. Continuing on toward Davis Wetlands, we saw about 150 Long-billed Curlews in the ag fields along Road 105, and at least 20 Swainson’s Hawks in and above the fields. At the Davis Waste Water Treatment Plant oxidation ponds, we finally found some Western Sandpipers, which we were unable to find at the Bypass. Highlights here included a couple of Red-necked Phalaropes and a single Lesser Yellowlegs. At the Wetlands we saw Wilson’s Phalarope accompanied by an additional Red-necked. And Mark Martucci discovered a Peregrine Falcon perched on an island, which most were able to see well, before it flew off.”

**Evening Beaver Walk** (8/5) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported 1-plus beaver, 1 plus muskrat, a turtle, and 2 distant, unidentified, water mammals. Among birds seen were Green Heron, Cooper’s Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Western Bluebird, and Nuttall’s Woodpecker.

**Yolo Basin Wildlife Area** (7/26) — Leader Dan Williams reported: “Shorebird migration was in full swing, but we were only able to scope 10 species, perhaps due in part to the intimidating presence of a Peregrine Falcon at the east end of the wetlands. We were however able to study a few Long-billed Dowitchers, Greater Yellowlegs, Least and Western Sandpipers, and Semipalmated Plovers. There were also a few dozen American White Pelicans that put on quite a show, as well as a couple of Caspian Terns. At the southern end of the loop Swainson’s Hawks, of just about every age and morph, were working a field that had just been tilled, which was a great opportunity to study their variable plumage. The corner just north of Lot B had its normal cluster of swallows, which on that day contained quite a few Bank Swallows for us to pick out. Blackbirds were of course plentiful, and everyone got to see some Tricoloreds, Yellow-heads, and Great-tailed Grackles.

The day was capped off by a gorgeous close American Bittern fly-by.”

**Carson Pass and Lake Winnemucca** (7/25) — Leader Dan Brown reported: “Twelve hearty participants endured warm weather and a 4.5 mile hike to Lake Winnemucca in Alpine county. The wildflower display was spectacular and at its peak! We observed 30 species of birds, highlights being Western Tanager, Cassin’s Finch, Mountain Bluebird, Green-tailed Towhee (with an unusual yellowish white base to the tail!), many Clark’s Nutcrackers, one Bald Eagle (seen by a few) and the birds of the day spotted by Linda Pittman, several Gray-crowned Rosy-Finches way up in the snow drifts above and a bit west of the lake!”

### **Dragonfly Trip** (7/19)

— Leader Tim Manolis reported: “Six folks joined me on a trip to Bear Creek along Bear Valley Road, just north of the intersection of Bear Valley Road and Highway 20 in Colusa County. The highlight of any trip to this spot is the Giant Darner, North America’s largest dragonfly, here at the northernmost limits of its range (it is found in the American Southwest, Mexico, and northern Central America). We had excellent looks at Giant Darners in flight and one nice male was caught with a net, examined and photographed in the hand, then released. We also had wonderful looks at a number of other species of dragonflies and damselflies, including Gray Sanddragons, Belted Ringtails, and Pale-faced Clubskimmers.”

**Paige Meadows and Lake Tahoe Area** (7/18) — Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Richard Barbieri, reported: “Seventeen birders enjoyed this visit to a new locale for Sacramento Audubon Field Trips. We tallied 38 species, including numerous Evening Grosbeaks, a Hermit Warbler and juvenile Williamson’s Sapsucker. We also saw Downy, Hairy and White-headed Woodpeckers. Hermit Thrushes seemed to be singing everywhere with their beau-

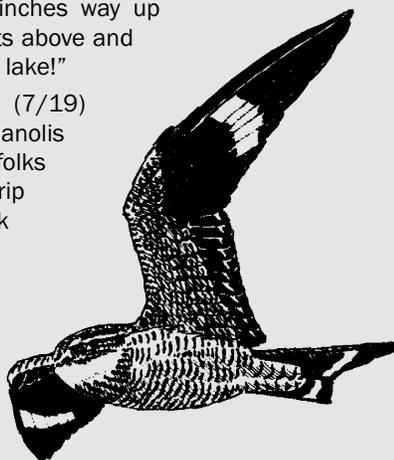
tiful, haunting songs. We finished out the day with a visit to Sugar Pine Point State Park and a walk along the shore of Lake Tahoe where we saw a couple of Spotted Sandpipers and several Common Mergansers.”

**Farallones Trip** (7/12) — Leader Ken Hashagen reported: “With the help of experts Tim Fitzer, Mark Martucci, Dan Williams, and Alan Hopkins, 29 folks braved the choppy waters off the Golden Gate Bridge on Sacramento Audubon’s annual trip to the Farallon Islands. Susan Sherman, our naturalist, gave a great talk before boarding the Salty Lady and circulated throughout the trip,

providing interesting information and answering questions. Bird and mammal totals for the trip included, 3 species of cormorants, 2 species of auklet, Tufted Puffin, 2 species of shearwater, Black Oystercatchers, Black-footed Albatross (15 behind the boat at one time, some as close as 3 feet!), 3 species of gulls, Pigeon Guillemot, and Common Murres. Mammals included Blue Whale (first one seen this season), Humpback Whale, Risso’s and Pacific White-Sided Dolphin, California Sea Lion, and Harbor Seal.”

**Loney Meadows** (7/11) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “The meadows and wildflowers were beautiful as usual, as 16 participants enjoyed a pleasant day of birding. The highlight of the day was Mountain Quail, with everyone getting great views of this often elusive species. It was a life list bird for a couple of people in the group. We also had good looks at an Olive-sided Flycatcher singing its ‘Quick-Three-Beers’ song. We tallied 32 species for the trip, including Townsend’s Solitaire and 4 species of Warbler.”

**Evening Beaver Walk** (7/10) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported that in addition to 4-plus beaver, his group saw a muskrat, two Black-tailed Hares and 2 Cottontails. Birds included Western Bluebird, Northern Mockingbird, Black Phoebe, Tree Swallow, Downy Woodpecker and White-tailed Kite.



Stephen D'Amato

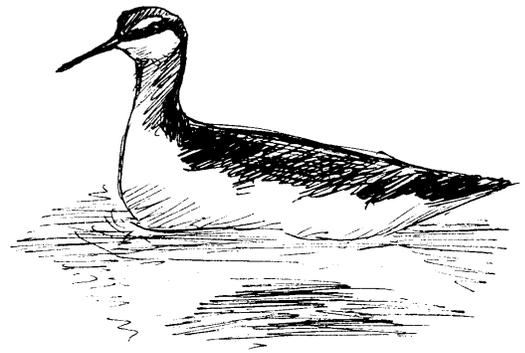
*Findings* continued on page 6

# 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 Scott Hoppe, 835-8471, [shoppe01@earthlink.net](mailto:shoppe01@earthlink.net) for the two August trips. After September 1st, call the scheduler Mark Cudney, 987-2422, [mcudney@aol.com](mailto:mcudney@aol.com).

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.



Kirsten Munson

### **Saturday, August 29, 7:30am Bodega Bay Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216 [andisalmi@yahoo.com](mailto:andisalmi@yahoo.com)**

Join Andi for a day of birding, exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. This is a fun coastal birding area, with many gulls, waterfowl, songbirds and raptors to see, in addition to possible shorebirds returning from their breeding grounds. Meet Andi at the Park and Ride off Highway 80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave. Exit #81, turn left at the light, then left again into the Park and Ride lot on the north side of the freeway. Bring food, water and warm clothes.

### **Sunday, August 30, 7:am – 11am SRCSD Bufferlands Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942 [conardc@gmail.com](mailto:conardc@gmail.com)**

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands are 2,650 acres surrounding the wastewater treatment plant between Sacramento and Elk Grove. They are not typically open to the public. Habitat types include riparian forest, seasonal wetlands, grasslands, wildlife-friendly agricultural lands, and many habitat restoration sites. This is a good time of year to look for migrating songbirds. Be prepared for 2 miles of easy walking. From I-5 south of Sacramento, exit at the Meadowview/Pocket Rd exit (the first exit north of Laguna Blvd, and the first exit south of Florin Rd). Head east on Meadowview, then turn right (south) on Freeport Blvd. In one mile, just before the town of Freeport, turn left on Stonecrest and follow it over the freeway and south to a locked gate.

### **Thursday, September 3 Evening Beaver Walk Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

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

### **Saturday, September 5, 7am Riverbend Park Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882 [empid@earthlink.net](mailto: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. There is a \$5 entrance fee to the park.

### **Sunday, September 6, 5pm Yolo Basin Wildlife Area Evening Trip Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804 [mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net) Cathie LaZier, 457-6882 [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net)**

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

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

### **Saturday, September 12, 7:30am Reichmuth Park Leader: Tim Manolis, 485-9009 [yflightfoot@aol.com](mailto:yflightfoot@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.

### **Sunday, September 13, 7:30am Sailor Bar, American River Parkway Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722 [matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com)**

Join Mark to explore this part of the parkway. Returning winter species such as the crowned sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers, and Common 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

*Field Trips* continued on page 4

parking area at the very end of the entrance road.

**Thursday, September 17  
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 meeting time and place.

**Saturday, September 19, 7am  
Point Reyes for Vagrants  
Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942  
conardc@gmail.com**

There will be two trips to Pt. 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 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, September 26, 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 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 and Sunday  
September 26 and 27  
Monterey Bay Pelagic and Land  
Birding Trip  
Coordinator: Ken Hashagen  
316-8596 or 635-4435**

This trip is sold out! If you'd like to be put on a waiting list in case there are any cancellations, call Monterey Seabirds (831.375.4658), identify yourself as a Sacramento Audubon participant, and give

them your name. You may also put your name on the waiting list online at: [www.montereyseabirds.com](http://www.montereyseabirds.com).

Ken Hashagen's cell phone is 916-316-8596 for any questions also.

**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 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 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 both beginners and experienced birders.

**DUCK STAMP 2010  
NOW AVAILABLE**

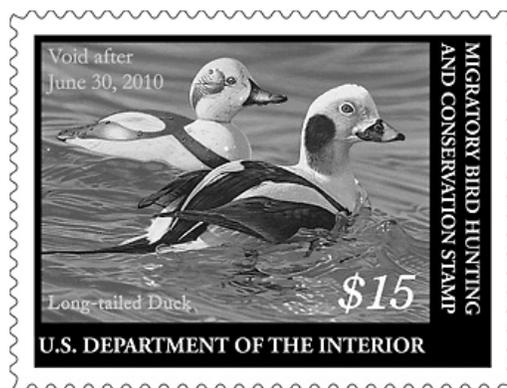
**"Take a Duck Birding"**

Actually, take a "Duck Stamp" birding. The Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp) is a wonderful and inexpensive opportunity for birders to help protect critical habitat needed by birds and other wildlife. Purchasing an annual \$15.00 stamp entitles you to unlimited admission to any of our 540 national wildlife refuges open to the public throughout the United States. Just make sure you have it with you (hint: they work well as a bookmark in your field guide). The stamps are issued July 1 of each year and are valid to June 30 of the following year. The 2009/2010 stamp depicts a pair of Long-tailed Ducks. Because the stamps change each year, they are fun to collect and are a wonderful gift for the nature lover in your life.

Originally created in 1934 as the federal license required for hunting migratory waterfowl, Duck Stamps have a much larger purpose today. Federal Duck Stamps are a vital tool for wetland acquisition and conservation. Ninety-eight cents (yes ninety-eight cents!) out of every dollar generated by the sales of the stamps goes directly to the purchase, lease and maintenance of wetland habitat within the National Wildlife Refuge System. In addition to waterfowl, numerous fish, amphibian, reptile, bird and mammal species have benefited from the acquisition of more than 5.2 million acres of habitat. However, additional acreage must be preserved as more than 58,000 acres of wetlands are lost due to human encroachment each year. Also, existing national wildlife refuges must be maintained. Please do your part to keep this program doing what it does by joining many of your fellow Sacramento Audubon Society members who already purchase the Duck Stamp annually.

The stamps are, dollar for dollar, one of the best investments one can make in the future of America's wetlands. Birders can purchase the stamp on-line at [www.duckstamp.com](http://www.duckstamp.com) or [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com), at post offices, and at most of the national wildlife refuges' headquarters including Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge. Additional information on this remarkable program is available at [www.fws.gov/duckstamps/Info/Constituents/birder.htm](http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/Info/Constituents/birder.htm).

Please purchase your stamp soon, and "take a Duck Birding!"



2009-2010 Federal Duck Stamp

Long-tailed Duck  
by Joshua Spies

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Carolyn Broeren, Valerie Brown, Nancy Earl, Gary Fregien, Mercedes Gay, Maureen Geiger, Denise Gonzales, Georganna Griffin, Ed Harper, Yoshino Hatanaka, Marie Heid, John Huls, Timothy Jackson, Kathleen Knight, Peggy Kraus-Kennedy, Kevin McRae, Mary Beth Metcalf, Joyce Mihanovich, Susan Oie, Paul Prewitt, May Jean Ralph, Barbara Smith, Robin Thompson, Christie Vallance, John White and Susan Wilson, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Bobbe' Christopherson, Denise Gonzales, Marie Heid, Kevin McRae, Patricia Morehead, Barbara Smith, Stuart Walthall and John White, to the **General Fund**.

### 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.

### Audubon Outreach

Harvest Day at the Fair Oaks Horticultural Center was the most recent venue for our SAS Outreach table. Using native plants, reducing water use and eliminating pesticide use in our gardens was the main topic, but we also helped many people identify some of the birds of their backyards, and encouraged them to come on a field trip.

Upcoming functions include the Lodi Crane Festival and the Central Valley Birding Symposium in November, and the Galt Winter Bird Festival in January. If you'd like to participate in any of these, or know of another function where the Audubon Outreach Table might be a participant, please contact Cathie LaZier at [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net), or 457-6882.

## Birding and Nature Events

### NATURE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILY EVENT

#### Raptor Rapture: Birds of Prey and the Sport of Falconry Saturday, September 26: 1:00pm – 4:00pm

Mather Field is one of the best places in the Sacramento area to view birds of prey, also known as raptors. From tiny American Kestrels to majestic Golden Eagles, nearly a dozen different species of raptors can be seen at Mather. This will be an especially good day to see raptors at Mather because falconer and raptor rehabilitator Bill Corbett will bring several live birds of prey to this presentation! You'll have the chance to get "up close and personal" with spectacular live raptors, including Tesla, a huge Golden Eagle, and Bob, an adorable little Western Screech Owl.

The first part of this program will take place in the Splash Education Center, where Bill will show his birds, tell the stories of how he obtained each one, and discuss the sport of falconry. You'll get a close look at the unique and amazing adaptations that make raptors some of nature's most efficient hunters. Following the indoor portion of the program, we'll venture into the field to watch Bill fly one of his trained birds and to look for wild raptors in their favorite habitats!

Binoculars provided or BYOB (bring your own binoculars) and wear good walking shoes for the field portion of this program. Reserve your spot early!

#### Important Information

- You may reserve a spot for this program by calling Splash at 916-364-2437.
- The Splash Education Center is located at 4426 Excelsior Rd., Mather, CA 95655.
- Suggested donations are \$10.00/adult and \$5.00/child (5-18). Children must be accompanied by an adult.

### 5TH ANNUAL MONTEREY BAY BIRDING FESTIVAL

The fifth annual Monterey Bay Birding Festival is being held September 24-27, 2009. Home to one of the most spectacular birding and wildlife venues in North America, from Golden Eagles to California Condors, Snowy Plovers to Sooty Shearwaters, few places can match the diversity of habitats as Monterey Bay.

The festival offers a unique opportunity to explore world class habitats such as the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, Elkhorn Slough National Marine Estuary, and Pinnacles National Monument. Specially designed field trips will take participants to Big Sur and the Ventana Wildlife Society to witness the return of the California Condors. Join a pelagic trip to one of the world's most productive regions for albatrosses, shearwaters, storm-petrels and more. Jump into a kayak and get closer to nature. All field trips are lead by top quality, friendly leaders.

The festival theme, "Bridging the Americas Through Birds and Birding," will feature bilingual speakers from North, Central and South America. Evening speakers will bring to life the birds of Chile and Panama.

Headquartered at the Watsonville Civic Plaza, this year's festival has expanded to four days, featuring over 100 presentations, workshops, lectures, and half-day and full-day guided walks and field trips. Registration for each birding event is offered a la carte, so that participants can mix and match outings according to personal interests. Online registration is now available at [www.montereybaybirding.org](http://www.montereybaybirding.org). Purchase and print your tickets at home. Registration is \$40 for the weekend. Activities costs range from \$5 to \$130. Most field trips depart from the Civic where parking is free. Check the program for your particular field trip, as some meet at the site.

**Point Pinole Regional Shoreline, Contra Costa County** (7/5) — Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Ken Poerner, reported: “The trip to Point Pinole Regional Park, a new venue for Sacramento Audubon trips, was quite wonderful. We had cool, over-cast skies and 13 of us walked a 4-mile loop through eucalyptus, past marshes and open meadows and onto a fishing pier jutting out into the Bay. The variety of habitat resulted in some great sightings such as Osprey, Heerman’s Gulls, Black Oystercatchers, Caspian Terns, many Forster’s Terns, including begging, young Willets, Brown and American Pelicans, plus bluebirds, goldfinches and woodpeckers. Nice day and a nice trip.”

**Swainson’s Hawk Trip** (6/28) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Nine birders showed up on a very hot Sunday morning and were rewarded with great looks at three Swainson’s Hawk nests with two chicks apiece. Other highlights included a Burrowing Owl at Yolo Grasslands Park on Mace Blvd and Tremont Rd by the Archery range and hundreds of Snowy Egrets, Great Egrets, Cattle Egrets and Black-crowned Night-herons at the rookery on Road 103. A special thanks to Jude Lamare for putting this trip together and Jim Estep for locating the Swainson’s Hawk nests.”

**Wright’s Lake** (6/27) — Leaders Tim Fitzer and Phyllis Wilburn reported: “Escaping the valley heat, 30 birders recorded these highlights: Pine Grosbeak, MacGillivray’s, Yellow, Wilsons, Nashville and Yellow-rumped Warblers, Chipping and Fox sparrows, White-headed Woodpeckers, Western Wood-Pewees, Olive-sided Flycatchers, and Western Tanagers. We heard many Mountain Quail calling. After a nice day in the mountains we returned to 108 degree heat in the Valley. Fun time meeting people and birding for all.”

**Purple Martins in Old Sacramento** (6/27) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “Environmental firm researcher, Dan Airola and his fellow researchers, Dan and Kevin joined today’s trip. As a result, five of us enjoyed hearing them talk about the ecology of the martins and, of course, had wonderful looks as well. Kevin artfully wielded a high-tech camera he used in research. When lifted on a long pole into the martin nest holes, it afforded a short look on a phone-like screen at the young martins. It was wonderful and sad at the same time since the martin breeding population in Old Town is down to 5 pairs. We also had great looks at White-throated

Swifts zipping by low and close, and a Swainson’s Hawk circling overhead.”

**Sierra Valley/Antelope Valley/Yuba Pass** (6/20-21) — Gary Fregien, co-leader with Mark Martucci, reported: “On a mid-June weekend, an enthusiastic group of birders from the Sacramento Valley, Sierra Nevada, Bay Area and Manhattan (as in NY) covered the Sierra Valley and Yuba Pass vicinities day and night to record 115 species of avifauna. The short list of night observations included calling Northern Saw-whet Owl, Common Nighthawk and Common Poorwill. Just before dark, a close-encounter with the poorwill for those lucky enough to be on the night outing prowl was begun with the distinctive calls, followed shortly by a surprise visit to within a few feet of us, and capped-off with a fly-by within arms length. And the best part of the experience was—NO coaxing required! The Sierra Valley lived up to its reputation as nesting grounds for Willet, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Wilson Snipe and Canada Goose, and also included Wilson’s Phalarope, Greater Sandhill Crane, American White Pelican, White-faced Ibis, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet and Redhead duck. In the drier regions of the valley, we found target birds including Gray Flycatcher, Townsend’s Solitaire, Brewer’s, Vesper, Chipping and Savannah sparrows, Green-tailed and Spotted towhees, Sage Thrasher, Western Kingbird, Swainson’s Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Bullock’s Oriole, Clark’s Nutcracker, Black-billed Magpie (less abundant now than in the past) and Mountain Quail; actually seen! At and in the vicinity of Yuba Pass, target birds observed included Calliope and Anna’s Hummingbird, Williamson’s and Red-breasted sapsuckers, Downy and White-headed woodpeckers, Northern Flicker; flycatchers represented by Olive-sided, Western Wood-Pewee, Hammond’s, Dusky and Pacific-slope; Warbling Vireo; swallows including Tree, Violet-green, Northern Rough-winged, Cliff and Barn; Mountain Chickadee; all three nuthatches: Red-breasted, White-breasted and Pygmy; Brown Creeper; Bewick’s and House Wren; American Dipper; Golden-crowned Kinglet;

thrushes including Western and Mountain Bluebird, Swainson’s and Hermit, and American Robin; warblers including Orange-crowned, Nashville, Yellow, Yellow-rumped, Hermit, MacGillivray’s and Wilson’s; Western Tanager; Fox, Song and Lincoln’s sparrows, and Dark-eyed Junco; Black-headed Grosbeak, Lazuli Bunting; Cassin’s Finch, Pine Siskin and Lesser Goldfinch; and Evening Grosbeak. A very enjoyable and rewarding trip.”

**Evening Beaver Walk** (6/19) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported his group saw two-plus beavers, a River Otter, a muskrat and three turtles. Bird species included White-tailed Kite, Red-shouldered Hawk, Western Kingbird, Black Phoebe and Tree Swallow.

**San Mateo County Coast/Half Moon Bay** (5/16) — Leader Dan Williams reported:

“Undisputed highlight was an Eastern Kingbird that put in an appearance at the very end of the trip, flying over the parking lot at Venice State Beach and allowing relatively close views in a small sea-side wetland. Other highlights included lots of lingering Brants, migrating Pacific Loons, and terrific views of Black Oystercatchers at Pillar Point. In



Stephen D'Amato

the estuary across from the Pillar Point parking lot was a Red-necked Phalarope and some folks got to see a California Thrasher. Along Pilarcitos Creek were lots of singing Swainson’s Thrushes and Wilson’s Warblers as well as some nice looks at Pygmy Nuthatches, Western Tanagers, and Purple Finches. McNea Ranch State Park afforded stunning views of the coastline and gorgeous wildflower displays, but only modest bird activity at best. However, singing Wrentits, a Pacific-slope Flycatcher, and views down at swimming Pigeon Guillemots and Surf Scoters were enjoyable.”

Pete Hayes

## SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these  
new members:

Gorham, Robert      Lum, Anita  
Johnson, Mary J      Topozada, Geilan  
Jones, Heather      Wilson, Susan C  
Knight, Kathleen

### 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 September 29, at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

### ANOTHER THANK YOU

This was received from Jeri Langham, Field Station Chair and founding member of Neotropical Grassland Conservancy, which was a recipient of the funds we made from this year's annual book sale held in May. The funds were donated in the name of 2008 SAS Board Member Sheila Martignetti Deaner.

Jeri writes: "A few days ago I returned from a month in Chicago, Iowa and Manitoba and am just now getting around to opening all the mail that piled up here and at CSUS. I cannot tell you how surprised and honored we are to receive this donation to NGC from Sacramento Audubon Society. This is especially true for me since Sheila (Martignetti Deaner) was a very special friend for so many years. She worked at CSUS with me, took several of my VENT tours, was a member of NGC and often joined me for birding in the American River Parkway behind my home. I know we all miss her contagious enthusiasm and delightful personality.

Please thank for me all who were responsible for the decision to help NGC. In these down economic times, donations have dropped and we need them more than ever. Thank you again.

*Jeri M. Langham, Ph.D.*  
*Neotropical Grassland Conservancy*  
*www.conservegrassland.org*

## JOIN THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY

Your membership supports the SAS mission of conservation, environmental education and protection of the region's natural ecosystems and diverse wildlife populations. Please include your email address if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List for letter/email writing on conservation issues.

### Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

Date \_\_\_\_\_ *The Observer* Newsletter \$25 per address \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Observations* continued from page 8

Other interesting finds include a **Yellow-billed Cuckoo** that was brought to a wildlife rehabber in Shingle Springs in late June. Apparently it sustained minor injuries from a house cat. This species is now very rarely reported in the Sacramento area, though it does breed in small numbers farther north in the Valley along the Sacramento River. A **White-winged Dove** was a nice find north of Lincoln on 7/4. **Red-breasted Nuthatches** were found out of season, with one in Davis on 6/7 and at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 7/12. A **White-crowned Sparrow** was a real surprise in West Sacramento on 7/8, and a **Yellow-rumped (Audubon's) Warbler** was similarly unexpected at CRP on 6/26. Once again there was a large **White-faced Ibis** breeding colony at YWA, visible from the Yolo Causeway, and a pair or two of **Dark-eyed (Oregon) Juncos** continue to breed at CRP, the only confirmed location in the Central Valley.

Beginning with January 2009, we are now featuring photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (<http://sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings>).

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit [www.cvbirds.org](http://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:

Steve Abbott, Roger Adamson, Dave Bell, Tom Cadle, Margaret Crawford, Chris Dunford, Todd Easterla, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Dave Feliz, Steve Hampton, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Tim Manolis, Kurt Mize, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Phil Robertson, John Sterling, John Trochet, Bill Wade, Jim Weigand, 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

June 1 to July 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

[www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

After an unremarkable spring, what is usually considered to be the slow season was quite interesting, as the list of highlights below will attest. Migrants are typically few until the shorebird migration really kicks in by mid-July (with the first showing up in late June), but the slow times are often punctuated by a big surprise or two. One of these came on the first day of June in the form of a singing **Ovenbird** where Strong Ranch Slough crosses Alta Arden Expressway, just west of Watt Ave. The bird was heard by many and seen by some through 6/8. This is only the third record for Sacramento County.

Other marquee finds for the period included a **Brown Pelican** seen flying over I-5 north of Laguna Blvd on 7/6 for Sacramento's third record (the first was in 1976), and a **Franklin's Gull** at the Davis WTP on 7/30, continuing into early August. A **Red-eyed Vireo** at North Pond in Davis on 7/18, like the **Ovenbird**, was easier to hear than see, but gave plenty of opportunities to look as it stayed well into August. Also at North Pond, a **Northern Parula** was found on 7/29 and continued into August; another **Northern Parula** was found in Vacaville on 6/17. A male **Rose-breasted Grosbeak** was photographed at an Orangevale backyard feeder on 7/8-9, and a male **Indigo Bunting** was found east of Auburn on 6/4, and stayed long enough, singing vociferously from the hillside above Old Auburn Rd, for many people to see it.

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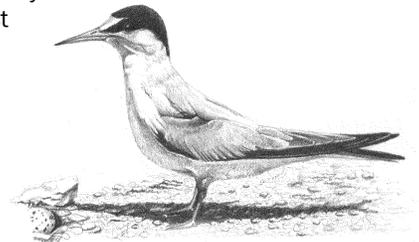
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The first "fall" shorebirds for the region, **Western and Least Sandpipers**, were reported on 6/28, with excellent habitat and numbers noted at Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA) in July. On 7/10, four **Willetts**, eight **Marbled Godwits**, and two **Semipalmated Sandpipers** were found there. At the Galt WTP on 7/11 there were six **Marbled Godwits**, which are much harder to come by in Sacramento County than in Yolo.

On 7/24 at the Davis Wetlands, a **Snowy Plover** and four **Willetts** were found, with another 11 **Willetts** at YWA. Last year, Sacramento County's first



**Least Terns** attempted to nest at the Sacramento Reg. WTP. The pair returned this year on 5/29, and succeeded in fledging two young on 7/13. This normally coastal species has expanded its range in recent years into the Delta at the Montezuma Wetlands in Solano County. There has been a general positive trend with the protection of breeding colonies in the state: in 1973 there were an estimated 624 pairs, and by 2006 there were over 6,700—good news on the conservation front is always welcome. It will be interesting to see if they continue to move inland in the coming years.

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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 7