



The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

May General Meeting

Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 7 p.m.

We will host a watch party at Effie Yeaw.

The speaker will be joining us via Zoom. Registration is not necessary to attend the meeting at Effie Yeaw Nature Center, located at 2850 San Lorenzo Way in Carmichael.

If you would like to attend the meeting via Zoom, you will need to register online at <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker>.

Amazing Adaptations: How Birds Cope with Hardship

Presented by Jamie Cornelius

Most of us humans are able to retreat to the safety of a building or a well-stocked pantry to wait out storms, smoke, or heat waves...but what do all the birds do? Do they also seek shelter? Do they leave? How long can they wait before they must go try to find food? Such decisions can literally mean life or death, but some amazing adaptations help them to cope with times of unpredictable food and highlight how important social interactions are for birds.

Dr. Jamie Cornelius and her lab study behavioral and physiological strategies that birds use to cope with unpredictable change. In other words, why do some birds survive better than others when the going gets tough? She'll describe field and lab experiments that help us understand their needs and what strategies might help them to cope with global change. Jamie is an assistant professor at Oregon State University in the Department of Integrative Biology and was a post-doctoral scholar at the Max Planck Institute of Ornithology in Germany and a Fulbright fellow at St. Petersburg State University in Russia. She earned a B.S. in Zoology at the University of Washington and her PhD in Animal Behavior at nearby UC Davis!



Photo provided by Jamie Cornelius

Reminder: Big Day of Giving - May 2nd

Big Day of Giving (BDOG) is on Thursday, May 2 this year.

Big Day of Giving (BDOG) is an annual online event in which local non-profits can obtain extra funds to support their missions! You can help Sacramento Audubon Society with its mission by donating online at:

www.bigdayofgiving.org/sacramentoaudubonsociety There is a \$15 minimum donation.

Starting on April 18th, if you'd like to schedule your BDOG donation prior to the event, you can. For early donations, please use the web address above. Every gift, no matter the size, makes a difference!

Golden 1 Credit Union match is back! Once again, when you use your Golden 1 credit card or debit card, Golden 1 will match your donation! Longtime BDOG sponsor Golden 1 Credit Union is offering a \$100,000 proportional match during Big Day of Giving! Gifts made both during the early giving period (April 18–May 1) and on Big Day of Giving (May 2nd) will count toward the proportional match.



Sacramento Audubon Spring and Summer Events

To volunteer for any of these events, please contact Bill Bianco biancowm@yahoo.com

Walk on the Wild Side, Beach Lake Park

Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

See event description at right.

<https://www.sacsewer.com/event/walk-on-the-wildside/>

Harvest Day, Fair Oaks Horticulture Center

Saturday, August 3, 8 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Fair Oaks Horticulture Center
11549 Fair Oaks Boulevard, Fair Oaks, CA 95628

Join the UCCE Master Gardeners of Sacramento County at Sacramento's ultimate gardening event. See the Fair Oaks Horticulture Center in all its summer glory.

Purchase your Gardening Guide & Calendar and visit the neighboring Fair Oaks Community Garden. Best of all, there are UCCE Master Gardeners on site to answer gardening questions. <https://sacmg.ucanr.edu/?calitem=572624>



Photos: SacSewer

Bufferlands: Walk On The Wildside

May 18, 2024 | 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

This free event celebrates International Migratory Bird Day and highlights local efforts in wildlife conservation and protecting and restoring native Central Valley habitat. Visitors can hike the miles of trails, or enjoy tours of restored wetlands and oak forests on SacSewer's Bufferlands. Throughout the day, visitors can get up close and personal with wild animals, listen to some great folk music, and check out conservation exhibits.

Event and Parking are FREE!

<https://www.sacsewer.com/event/walk-on-the-wildside/>

Status of Name Change

Over the past year we have explored the idea of changing the organization's name to remove reference to John James Audubon. We conducted a survey of our members with sixty percent of those responding in favor of a name change. Currently twelve other local Audubon chapters have changed their name using the words "Bird Alliance". Name recognition is critical for advocacy and the Board is in favor of changing our name to the Sacramento Bird Alliance.

However, we have decided to wait for a while to start the formal process and obtain a vote from our members. Sacramento Audubon is 100% volunteer based, and changing our name would take a significant amount of effort, so we are taking it slowly. In addition, with more and more chapters deciding to change their names there is always the possibility that National Audubon would revisit the issue. The last thing we want is having to change our name twice!

SAS strongly supports an eventual name change and are working on steps to accomplish that in the best way, and at the best time.

—Board of Directors

Sacramento Audubon Society • Slate of Officers and Directors for 2024-2025

Voting on the slate will open on May 27, 2024 and closes on June 17, 2024. You can cast your vote in one of two ways: either using the online voting link <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/board-election> (this link will become active on May 27) or by sending in a mail-in ballot. The link to vote online will also be emailed to members. As per the SAS bylaws, one must be a dues-paying SAS member in order to vote.

If you are interested in joining the Sacramento Audubon Society's Board of Directors contact Paul Miller at: sacaudubonpresident@gmail.com

President	Paul Miller
Vice President	Open
Treasurer	Eric Johnson
Recording Secretary	Open
Corresponding Secretary	Nancy Gronert
Directors	Anthony Asay, Taylor Florence, Susan Goodrich, Cliff Feldheim, and Nicole Barden



MAIL-IN BALLOT TO VOTE FOR THE SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY BOARD OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS 2024-2025

To vote, complete and mail the ballot below to: **Sacramento Audubon Society, PO Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816**

A 'yes' answer indicates your approval of all of the nominated board officers and directors for the 2024- 2025 fiscal year of the Sacramento Audubon Society. Voting will close on June 17, 2024. Please vote only once. Only dues-paying members should vote. Thank you.

Yes, I confirm the appointment of the above slate of Board Officers for the Sacramento Audubon.

No, I do not confirm the appointment of the above slate of Board Officers for the Sacramento Audubon Society.

Name:

First _____ Last _____

Your name will only be used to verify your membership.

Field Trips May 1 — June 15, 2024

Sacramento Audubon Society is proud to offer field trips to suit a variety of birders and birding abilities, and visit a large range of birding locations. Activities are organized and led by volunteers who offer their time and expertise to those who join them.

- Unless otherwise noted, field trips are geared towards those over the age of 13.
- Please ensure the safety and well being of all by not attending a field trip if you are sick.
- Please read the description of each field trip carefully to note any specific requirements.
- Some trips require advance registration. Registration opens when the trip is announced in *The Observer* or posted to the website. (Please note that receiving the electronic *Observer* means you will receive it up to 2 weeks in advance of the paper edition.) On the [website](#): click on the photo or title of the field trip to learn more about the trip and its registration requirements.
- Always check the [website](#) for any last minute updates prior to joining a field trip. Cancellations or last minute instructions will be posted to the website, even for trips requiring registration. Trips are planned up to 3 months in advance and conditions can change. If you are unsure of the status of a field trip, call or email the trip leader.

Trips leave the meeting place at the time stated. Please arrive early if you need driving directions or plan to carpool.

Leaders cannot organize ride sharing or carpools as they 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.

PLEASE NOTE: The entrance fee for all Sacramento County Parks increased as of January 2024. The new daily fee is \$7, and the annual fee is \$70. This includes many popular birding locations such as the American River Parkway, Gibson Ranch, and Mather Regional Park. For more information: <https://regionalparks.saccounty.gov/Parks/Pages/EntranceFees.aspx>

Reichmuth Park

Friday, May 3, 7:30 a.m.
Expected length: 1 – 1 ½ hours
Leader: Eric Johnson, (916) 524-4311
corporateeric@yahoo.com
Registration is required for this trip and it is limited to 6 participants. Please email Eric to register.

Join Eric on an easy walk through Reichmuth Park in the South Area of Sacramento. In his own words, "Reichmuth is the spot inside the city of Sacramento with the most different species seen, sitting pretty at 183. It's our own birding box of chocolates—you never know what'll show up next!"

Directions and confirmation of exact meeting location and time will be provided upon registration.

Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary

Saturday, May 4, 8 a.m.
Expected length: 3-4 hours
Leader: Maureen Geiger (916) 281-6652
mkeiger@comcast.net

The Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary 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 Maureen for about a 2.5 mile walk along the trails to the River's Overlook looking for resident and migrating birds, and enjoy this lush habitat along the Feather River. There is an accessible port-a-potty in the parking lot. Meet at the Bobelaine Sanctuary Parking Lot. From Sacramento, take I-5 north, then Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City. About 2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge, turn right on Laurel Ave.

Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot.

Bannister Park to Sacramento Bar

Sunday, May 5, 7:30 a.m.
Expected length: 3 hours
Leader: Stan Hunter (530) 902-8462
Stanton.hunter@gmail.com

On this morning walk through the woods to the American River, you will see and hear a nice variety of resident birds and spring migrants. Possibilities include Phainopepla and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. This is a great trip for beginning and more experienced

birders. Meet Stan in the parking lot at the end of Bannister Road. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd. Take Fair Oaks Blvd to Bannister Rd and turn left to go south toward the river. Park in the parking lot. No permit needed.

Zacharias Ranch

Wednesday, May 8, 8 a.m.
Expected Length: 4 hours
Leader: Dan Williams (714) 943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com
Registration is required for this trip, and it will be limited to 10 participants. Please email or phone Dan to register.

This morning trip to a property in southern Sacramento County provides an opportunity to bird a private ranch before its restoration to wetlands. We will primarily walk the narrow riparian corridor along Snodgrass Slough, which concentrates the bird activity for close views of spring migrants. We will also check out the adjacent farm fields and slough for other bird life. Depending on the conditions on the site, we may need to shuttle trip participants from the main road to where we'll be walking.

Directions and confirmation of exact meeting location and time will be provided upon registration.

Sierra Discovery Trail, Emigrant Gap Accessible Trip

Saturday, May 11, 9 a.m. at the trailhead
Expected length: 2 hours on the trail
Leader: Paul Miller, (916) 768-7503
Pjmiller1962@me.com
Maximum number of participants: 8
Registration is required for this trip and it is limited to 8 participants. Please email Paul to register.

This interpretive trail near Nevada City is just under a one mile loop, is easy walking and considered wheelchair and mobility accessible. A great way to experience the western Sierra conifer forest at an elevation of 5,200 ft., we will explore birds on a well-maintained, shady trail along the Bear River, see a waterfall and possibly an American Dipper in action.

Directions and confirmation of exact meeting location and time will be provided upon registration.

Spenceville Wildlife Area

Sunday, May 12, 7 a.m.
Expected Length: 6 hours
Leader: Richard Barbieri, (916) 761-1124
offleash227@gmail.com

This scenic recreational area of rolling hillsides, streams, reservoirs, and ponds offers a variety of wildlife. This trip will include several short walks over uneven terrain. Possible birds include Yellow-breasted Chat, Lewis's Woodpecker, warblers, and more. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and dress for changeable weather.

Meet Richard at the Park & Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Rd, in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Rd offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Rd and you'll be on Taylor Rd. Turn left just past the Shell Station, and park on the right in the Park & Ride.

Fremont Weir/Sacramento River

Sunday, May 12, 7:30 a.m.
Expected Length: 4 hours
Leader: Brian Gilmore,
bgilmore71@gmail.com

This mature, riparian floodplain habitat near the Sacramento River is likely to produce good views of Western Wood-Pewee, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Bullock's Oriole and Western Kingbird with Lazuli Bunting and Blue Grosbeak possible as well as swallows, bluebirds, wrens, Common Yellowthroat, Warbling Vireo and Swainson's Hawks. The 3-mile walk is fairly flat but the trail can be uneven. This area is somewhat isolated and can be very birdy. This trip will end by lunchtime, bring water and snacks. Restrooms are not available.

From downtown, take I-5 north, cross the Sacramento River, and take the first exit to county road 22; turn right/east on 22, then take the first left onto County Road 117 for 5.8 miles. Turn left/west on County Road 16 and drive to the levee and continue up onto the levee where the leader will be.

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Riparian corridor in Roseville

Thursday, May 16, 6:30 a.m.
Expected length: 3 – 4 hours
Leader: Sonja Sorbo, (916) 390-8463
ssgascoc@yahoo.com
Maximum number of participants: 6
Registration is required for this trip.
Please email Sonja to register.
This riparian area is tucked away in a Roseville neighborhood like a secret garden. It hosts resident birds, and in the springtime, there are returning nesting birds as well as migrants passing through, such as warblers, vireos, and flycatchers. A family of wood ducks is sometimes visible if we are stealthy. Bird activity is best early in the morning, hence the 6:30 AM meeting time. We will walk for about 2 miles on a level trail (both dirt and paved sections). Bring a snack and water; the trip will last 3 or 4 hours.

Space is limited, so sign up soon.
Directions and confirmation of exact meeting location and time will be provided upon registration.

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

Saturday, May 18 10:30 a.m.
Registration is required through Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Please see <https://www.effieyeawnature.org/> for registration and other details.
Join Audubon birding leaders Cliff Feldheim and Maureen Geiger, and Nature Center docents for a family friendly nature walk at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers, Wild Turkeys, and other resident birds such as towhees and Bushtits will be active. Families and individuals are encouraged to enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists and birders who know the area and enjoy sharing their knowledge. Registration is required through Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

Beginning Birder Walk, William Pond Park

Sunday, May 19
Maximum number of participants: 10
Registration is required for this trip.
These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip, with three Audubon trip leaders, it is a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. On this trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks, and bird behavior, as we look at individual birds. Registration is required. Contact Larry Hickey at: larryhickey1@gmail.com; put Beginning Birder in the subject line. Registrants will be emailed the meeting time and exact location.

Sacramento River: Garcia Bend Park to the Infamous Water Tower

Saturday, May 25th, 7:30 a.m.
Expected length: 4-5 hours
Leaders:
Ben Graber, (916) 844-8682
bgrab984@protonmail.com
Susan Goodrich, (916) 201-6871
sacramentoaudubonfieldtrips@gmail.com
Maximum number of participants: 10
Registration is required for this trip.
If you would like to register for this trip, please email Ben or Susan.
This section of the Sacramento River is one of the more reliable spots to see the imperiled Yellow-billed Magpie. Osprey and Bald Eagles have also been seen here. We can expect to see egrets, herons, and a variety of songbirds. Directions and confirmation of exact meeting location and time will be provided upon registration.

Cosumnes River Preserve

Sunday, May 26, 8:30 a.m.
Expected length: 3-4 hours
Leader: Cliff Feldheim (916) 217-2920
sacaudubonconservation@gmail.org
The Cosumnes Preserve River Walk Trail is a flat, dirt trail on a raised levee with both shaded and open sections. Based on the desire of the group, we can walk as much as a 3 mile loop or do short walks into different areas along the slough, river, or wetlands. The walk should provide good looks within wooded riparian habitats as well as grasslands, and pockets of wetland/slough habitats. We will look for resident and migratory birds. Cliff worked with the Nature Conservancy to add conservation lands to the Preserve in 1998. He will share the history and conservation/management of the Preserve as well as the unique ecology of the area. Bring lunch, snacks, and water.

If you would like to carpool, meet Cliff at the Elk Grove Park and Ride (8401 Harbour Point Dr., Elk Grove, CA 95758) at 8:30 a.m. Otherwise, meet at the Cosumnes River Preserve Visitor Center Parking lot at 9 a.m.
Directions to the Elk Grove Park and Ride: From Sacramento take I-5 south to Exit 508 toward Laguna Blvd. Continue east to Harbour Point Dr and turn left. You will see the Park N Ride on the right.
Directions to Cosumnes Preserve: Take I-5 south from Sacramento, exit on Twin Cities Rd Exit #498. Turn left onto Twin Cities Rd and go east, crossing Franklin Blvd across the train tracks. Turn right at the next stop sign onto Bruceville Rd. Take Bruceville Rd south to Desmond Rd. Follow Desmond Rd back to Franklin Rd and

turn left. Follow Franklin down to the main visitor parking lot on the left side of the road. (These directions are different from the usual ones due to recent road construction).

Crystal Basin, Eldorado NF

Thursday, May 30, 8 a.m.
Expected Length: 7 – 8 hours
Leaders: Phyllis Wilburn, (530) 334-3521
abirder@aol.com
Maureen Geiger, (916) 281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net
This trip will visit a variety of sites along Icehouse Road and side roads, looking for Lazuli Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee, Mountain Bluebird, warblers and vireos, and other birds of the area, including the possibility of Calliope Hummingbird, Pileated Woodpecker and Golden-crowned Kinglet. Beautiful wildflowers may also be in bloom. Bring lunch, liquids, and footwear suitable for some hiking, not more than 1/2 mile or so at several stops. Both beginners and experienced birders are welcome.

Meet Maureen and Phyllis at the Bella Bru in El Dorado Hills. From Hwy 50 east take Exit 30B; turn right on El Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the shopping center on your right. You can also meet the group by 8:45 a.m. in the Crystal Basin area. Take Hwy 50 to the Riverton/Ice House Rd. (Crystal Basin) turnoff. Turn left and drive a short distance to the large pullout on the left side of the road.

Deer Creek in El Dorado County

Sunday, June 2, 7 a.m.
Expected length: 4 hours
Leader: Chris Conard, (916) 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com
The area along Deer Creek includes oak woodlands and open grasslands, affording a variety of habitats for summer visitors and resident species. We'll follow the Placerville and Sacramento Valley Railroad tracks which have become a rails-to-trails corridor. We'll look and listen for local breeding species, including Ash-throated Flycatchers, Yellow-breasted Chats, Black-headed Grosbeaks, Bullock's Orioles, Western Bluebirds, and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. The ties of the abandoned tracks can be a bit uneven, but we'll take it slowly, covering two to three miles, round trip. It may be cool early, but it will likely be warm by the end of the walk. Bring water and snacks. Mosquitoes may be present.

Meet at the south side of the Bella Bru parking lot in the Raley's shopping center in El Dorado Hills. From Hwy 50 east take Exit #30B; turn right on El

Dorado Hills Blvd and go north under the freeway to the shopping center on your right. We will leave promptly at 7 a.m.

Indian Grinding Rock State Historic Park

Saturday, June 8, 7 a.m.
Expected Length: 5 – 6 hours
Leader: Cliff Hawley, (916) 300-2495
yellowhammerCA@gmail.com
Join Cliff for a day of birding at this State Park. The birdlife varies depending on the season, but many species are seen year round, including Turkey Vultures, Scrub and Steller's Jays, California Quail, Acorn and Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, Hermit Thrushes, Wild Turkeys, and Red-breasted Nuthatch. In summer, the bright colors of the Western Tanager, Bullock's Oriole, Calliope and Anna's Hummingbirds can be seen in the woods around the meadow. A bird list is available at the museum. Trip goes until 12 or 1 p.m., so bring water and we often end with lunch at the small picnic area. There will be some light to moderate walking.

Meet Cliff at the Starbucks parking area in the College Greens Shopping Center in the 8300 block of Folsom Blvd (near Florin-Perkins, between Watt and Howe) at 7 a.m. Alternatively, you can meet up with us at the parking lot at the park by the museum at 8 a.m.

Birding by Boat on Lake Natoma Family Friendly Trip

Wednesday, June 12, 8:30 a.m.
Expected length: 2 ½ - 3 hours
Leader: Nicole Barden, (916) 856-8952
folsomlake@ports-ca.us
Registration is required for this trip and it will be limited to 15 participants. Please email Nicole to register.
Bring your kayak or canoe and a pair of binoculars (or borrow ours by request) and let's see which birds call Lake Natoma their home! We will meet on the shores of Lake Natoma before heading out on the water to explore the edges of the lake looking for birds. Be sure to also bring water, sun protection, a towel, and items you don't mind getting wet (dry bag recommended).

All ages and birding levels are welcome. Participants MUST wear a life jacket and be comfortable and confident paddling in a canoe or kayak. Please no dogs.

Directions and confirmation of exact meeting location and time will be provided upon registration.

Thank you to photographers

Thank you to all the photographers who have contributed photos for the new species on the recently updated Checklist of Birds of the Sacramento Area. We still could use a few more but appreciate all that have been donated. Thanks go to Ray Rozema, Daniel Lee Brown, Susie Nishio, Paul Miller, Ed Harper, Susan Goodrich, Timothy Jackson, Chris Conard, Craig Swolgaard, and Larry Hickey. You can see all of the new photos by clicking on the species name on Checklist <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/sacramento-birds-checklist> or in the Gallery of Birds <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/gallery-of-birds>.



Chestnut-sided Warbler NonBreeding.
Photo: Ed Harper



Plumbeous Vireo. Photo: Daniel Lee Brown



Summer Tanager. Photo: Paul Miller

Trip Leader Spotlight



Maureen Geiger

I fell in love with birds one winter 41 years ago, when I suddenly and absolutely needed to know what that cute little bird in my yard was. At about the same time, in the mid-1970s, while commuting from Sacramento to Stockton, I kept seeing these huge birds with long legs in ponds along Hwy. 99. So, of course, I bought a bird ID book, and we all know what that leads to! The tiny one was a Dark-eyed Junco (then Oregon), the larger, a Sandhill Crane, and the rest, as they say, is history.

I have lived and worked in Sacramento since 1961, have raised a wonderful daughter, and retired from a career with the State of California. However, after birds appeared on my radar screen, things have never been the same, and it was just natural that I would migrate to Sacramento Audubon Society.

Since joining, I've initiated or been involved in birding programs for kids, beginner birder classes, bird presentations at libraries and other venues, and a variety of other projects including membership on the SAS Education Committee and Board of Directors.

Probably the longest running, most consistent and most rewarding effort, is having served as a member of the Field Activities Committee since the late 1980s. I really cannot express how much I enjoy sharing what I have learned about birds and our natural world with others, especially if they are just beginning. That initial enthusiasm is infectious and compelling and a joy to be around. Being a trip leader is an easy way to experience that.

But life does evolve and things change, so what I am enjoying enormously right now relates to plants native to this area and the butterflies that need them. Monarchs are of particular



Maureen Geiger at Bobelaine

interest. And, of course, caring about butterflies leads to other things such as native plants. If we plant natives appropriate to our area, insects associated with those plants will come and if insects come, so do the birds!

And prominent in the mix is the wonderful SAS Preserve on the Feather River, Bobelaine. Sometime in the 1980s Bobelaine was languishing with little attention and a low level of commitment by SAS members. And then, one day, the Preserve caught fire and a large area near the center burned to the ground. I have a vivid memory of being there a couple days after the fire and seeing these huge smoking holes – the remains of giant old trees, manly oaks, that were still burning deep in the root ball and continued to do so for days. After that Bobelaine experienced renewed interest among birders, and in the years since, a cadre of hard-working volunteers has cared for the Preserve, and regular field trips are offered year-round.

I plan to keep using my time to benefit birds and nature in general. I know many SAS members feel the same and I am always hoping more people commit. For surely, we are all in this together.

—Maureen Geiger



Surf Scoter. Photo: Susie Nishio



Sanderling. Photo: Ray Rozema

Field Trip Findings

William Pond Park Beginners' Walk, 4/14

Larry Hickey, co-leader with Jane Van Kessel and Nancy Kapellas, reported: 12 enthusiastic and sharp-eyed beginning birders joined us on a chilly spring morning at the William Pond section of the American River Parkway. Along with the customary large numbers of **Canada Geese** we were able to get good looks at **Yellow-billed Magpies** interacting with their nests, **Red-shouldered Hawks**, **Great Blue Herons**, a **Snowy Egret**, several **Pied-billed Grebes**, **Double-crested Cormorants**, many **American Coots** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers** in their breeding plumage. Highlights included two active **Bushtit** nests and good scope views of a **Merlin**. Just as we were about to leave Jane spotted two **American White Pelicans** circling high overhead.

Sweetwater Creek, 4/14

Leader Richard Barbieri reported: This wasn't a day you'd normally want to go out birding with a major drop in temperature and an overcast sky however, eight of us walked up and down the Sweetwater drainage and found a total of 52 species. It seemed a bit early in the migration but, we did see a few of the normal target birds including **Black-headed Grosbeaks**, **Hammond's** and **Ash-throated Flycatchers**, **Cassin's** and **Hutton's Vireos**, **Black-throated Gray**, **Wilson's**, and **MacGillivray's Warblers**.

River Bend Park, 4/13

Leader Dana Miller-Blair reported: Trip canceled due to weather.

Lake Solano County Park, 4/13

Leader Paul Miller reported: Trip canceled due to weather.

Sailor Bar, 4/11

Leader Darrell Mohr reported: What a morning! Five people were already birding at 7:30 a.m. The day was clear and cool. As we gathered in the parking lot there were birds moving around in a nearby tree. There were a number of different species, including two different **Oriole** species, a couple of **Western Kingbirds**, **Brown-headed Cowbirds**, **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, and **House Finches**. From the parking lot we went up to the "overlook" to view the Fish Hatchery. **Tree Swallows** and **Double-crested Cormorants** were perched on the crossing wire. We then went down the trail along the American River. Out on the river were **Wood Ducks**, plus various other water birds. Farther on a couple of **Great Blue Herons** were roosting in a tree. We went inland to view a **Great Horned Owl** nest. There were two or three young owls in the nest, still covered with down feathers. From there we went to the pond area and all we saw were turtles. Then proceeded back to the starting point and saw a **Black-throated Grey Warbler** perched in a tree. Our total count for the day was 55. A very good day.

North Natomas Regional Park, 4/7

Leader Ben Graber reported: This was one for the "you shoulda been there" category of Sacramento Audubon field trips. We had near-perfect weather and a large, diverse, and enthusiastic group that included everything from absolute beginners to Sacramento



Yellow-crowned Night Heron.
Photo: Mary Forrestal

area birding legends. The highlight was some beautiful views of the rare **Yellow-crowned Night Heron** in the rookery with **Black-crowned Night Herons** and **Snowy** and **Cattle Egrets**. The **Yellow-crowned Night Heron** was a lifer for many people in the group. Other highlights included **Swainson's Hawks**, **Savannah** and **Lincoln's Sparrows**, **American Pipits**, a pair of **Gadwalls**, **Ring-necked Pheasants**, **Eurasian Collared-Doves**, two **Western Kingbirds**, and an **Orange-crowned Warbler**. Early arrivals were treated to a **Red-breasted Nuthatch** in a small, skinny pine tree that may have been the park's only conifer.

Ancil Hoffman Park, 4/6

Leader Dan Williams reported: Fourteen of us had a lovely, sunny—though at the outset rather chilly—morning of birding at this treasured Carmichael golf course and park. The picnic grounds kicked us off with raucous nest-building **Yellow-billed Magpies** and what was for many of us our first **Bullock's Oriole** of the year. As we crossed to the riverside trail, a quartet of **California Quail** ran ahead of us, and **Golden-crowned** and **White-crowned Sparrows** worked their way out of the berry thickets into view. As we reached a clearing, a **Peregrine Falcon** burst across the sky, giving us fantastic, albeit brief views of its sleek form barreling toward the river, followed by the panicked piercing cries of a **Greater Yellowlegs**. Down by the river, where the salmon restoration has left behind reconfigured gravel bar habitat to explore, a **Great Blue Heron**, two **Spotted Sandpipers**, a flock of **American Pipits**, and the aforementioned yellowlegs gave us great scope views, while the **Cliff Swallow** colony busily attended to their mud nests on the old water tower along the shore. There were also plenty of **Tree Swallows** wheeling overhead, among which we were able to parse out a couple of **Violet-green** and **Northern Rough-winged Swallows**. Continuing south along the trail, we paused on the lawn between the river and the driving range to enjoy several **Western Bluebirds** and **Acorn Woodpeckers**, when I realized I thought I was hearing a **Chipping Sparrow** singing...it turned out there were at least SEVEN **Chipping Sparrows** foraging in that area among the bluebirds and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. Quite the total for one spot at this park any time of year. On the walk back along the driving range, the **Peregrine** put in a second appearance, a **Swainson's Hawk** drifted high overhead, at least two **Cooper's Hawks** coursed over with their white vent feathers flared, and we got to watch a pair of **Red-shouldered**



Beek's Bight trip. Photo: Nicole Barden

Hawks constructing their nest near the clubhouse. All told we had 62 species on our 3 hours and approximately 1.25-mile walk.

Beek's Bight, 3/30

Leader Nicole Barden reported: The road into Beek's Bight is currently closed to cars due to construction, but because leader Nicole works for State Parks the group was able to gain special access through an alternate route. We started our walk at the Beek's Bight parking lot and headed north along the shoreline. Right in the parking lot we already started hearing singing birds. As we were standing there preparing for our walk, a **Green Heron** flew overhead. We found two **Lark Sparrows** who were visiting a puddle along the trail and as we were watching suddenly a **Chipping Sparrow** made an appearance. It stayed in the area and everyone got to see it through their binoculars or the scope. Continuing down the trail, one of the people in the group asked "are those ALL **Turkey Vultures**?" and indeed they were! As we looked through our binoculars and counted, more than 150 **Turkey Vultures** flew past, all heading North! What a surprise! In fact, the day was very raptor heavy! We saw overhead **Osprey**, distant **Red-tailed Hawks**, glimpses of **Cooper's Hawks**, and three **Red-shouldered Hawks** who were circling and shouting at each other. Along a narrow and grassy part of the trail, someone asked about the likelihood of finding ticks so we stopped and talked about it. Nicole looked at the tips of grasses and found two species of ticks, American Dog Ticks and Pacific Coast Ticks hanging out and waiting for a chance to catch a ride on a passing animal.

We got to a rocky outcrop with a beautiful view and looked out on the North Fork of the American River and found 3 **Western Grebes** and 2 **Common Loons**, starting to look handsome with their summer plumage. Throughout the walk we enjoyed spring songs from **Orange-crowned Warblers**, **Oak Titmice**, **House Wren**, **House Finch**, and **Lesser Goldfinch**.

Overall, we found 39 species, and our full list can be seen here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S167444246>

Teal Bend, 3/24

Leader Richard Barbieri reported: With a group of 10 people we started out on a crisp morning to see what spring migration may have brought to this area. The **House Wrens** were singing and seemed to be

continued on next page

Field Trip Findings

Continued from previous page

everywhere along with **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. It was a very birdy morning however, with a few highlights and very little spring migrants to show. We did have a **Red-breasted Sapsucker**, a **Red-breasted Nuthatch**, a few **Swainson's Hawks**, and an **Osprey** carrying a fish to its nest. We had a total of 54 species.

Morgan Oaks Eternal Preserve, 3/21

Susan Goodrich, co-leader with Mary Forrestal, reported: Six birders (and two leaders) made sunrise drives to the Lincoln Grassland area and were rewarded with a beautiful morning amid oak woodlands, blooming California poppies, and green fields swarming with **Western Meadowlarks**. The coming of spring was evident in the pairing up and nest-hunting of **American Kestrels**, **Tree Swallows**, and **Red-shouldered Hawks**, and the singing of **House Wrens**, **Red-winged Blackbirds**, and a distinctive **Common Yellowthroat**. A beautiful male **Western Bluebird** showed off his electric blue plumage in the sun, while **Lewis's Woodpeckers** displayed their rosy pink bellies at the tops of the oaks. An astute birder noted near the end of the walk that we had seen or heard five different species of woodpeckers: **Lewis's Woodpecker**, **Acorn Woodpecker**, **Nuttall's Woodpecker**, **Downy Woodpecker**, and **Northern Flicker**! A big thank you to Jane T. for sharing scope views. A lovely walk, and 43 bird species, listed here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S165501843>



Red-shouldered Hawk. Photo: LarryHickey

William Pond Park Beginners' Walk, 3/17

Larry Hickey, co-leader with Nancy Kapellas and Jane Van Kessel, reported: Ten of us enjoyed a perfect spring morning on our March beginning birder field trip at the William Pond part of the parkway. A singing **American Robin** and **Yellow-billed Magpies** carrying nesting materials to their large nest right by the parking lot were the first spring signs. **Lark Sparrows** foraging in the grass, spectacularly colored **Western Bluebirds**, **White-crowned Sparrows** and enthusiastically singing **Northern Mockingbirds** entertained us. We spent some time looking at what appeared to be a unique looking, partly leucistic **California Towhee**. Highlights included two active **Bushtit** nests, a **Red-shouldered Hawk** on a nest, many **Great Blue Herons** on nests in the rookery, and a **Great Horned Owl** occupying one of the rookery nests.

Cosumnes River Preserve, 3/17

Leader Paul Miller reported: Two participants attended a meandering and enjoyable accessible birding trip at the Cosumnes River Preserve. One of the attendees is a volunteer at the Preserve with extensive knowledge of habitat, birds and ongoing volunteering efforts. The weather was spectacular with no wind and pleasant temperatures. While the Sandhill Cranes and Northern Pintails had already left for their northern breeding grounds there were

plenty of birds still using the flooded habitat. Some of the standout species included; **Swainson's Hawk**, **Common Goldeneye**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Bufflehead**, **Least Sandpiper**, and **Common Yellowthroat**. We heard but did not see a **Sora** and **Marsh Wren**. For the first time I noticed a **Mute Swan** and hope this doesn't become a growing trend.

Rossmoor Bar, 3/16

Leader Kevin Thomas reported: It was a beautiful sunny almost start of spring morning as the six participants arrived in the Rossmoor Bar parking lot. The birds sure knew it was spring as we heard singing **American Robin**, **Oak Titmouse**, **White-breasted Nuthatch**, and many other of our breeding birds as we stood listening for the first few minutes of the trip. We made our way down the path to the trail that runs along the river's edge and were greeted along the way by a calling **Phainopepla**; it didn't hang around long as it took flight and headed off in a southern direction. Along the water we picked up a pair of **American Wigeon** hanging out in the pond across the river at Sacramento Bar, not a common bird for the American River Parkway. We gathered up the other usual suspects on the river, **Common Goldeneye**, **Bufflehead**, **Common Merganser**, and **Double-crested Cormorant**, among others. As we meandered along the trail we spotted a pair of **White-breasted Nuthatches** carrying nesting material into a cavity on an oak tree, wishing them a successful nesting season as we moved along. A little further along we came across a pair of **American Kestrels** perched in a dead cottonwood. I had hoped they would be nesting at the location as they had for the last few years; we never saw them go to a nest but my guess is they will or already are nesting in the area. We made our way down the trail that loops through the oak woodland forest that is a bit set back from the river's edge. We hit our only real flock of birds here, a group that had singing **Purple Finch**, **Pine Siskin**, **Lesser Goldfinch**, and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. The **Lesser Goldfinch** will stick around to breed here but the rest will be on their way soon to the mountains to breed. We made our way back to the parking lot and reminded ourselves just how special a place the American River Parkway is, miles of habitat and trails for both the birds and us to enjoy.



Purple Martins. Photo: Chris Conard

Purple Martins: Where Can I Find Them in Sacramento?

Researchers have been carefully monitoring Sacramento's Purple Martins for over 20 years. They nested in tree cavities and buildings throughout the Central Valley until the 1970s, when competition from non-native European Starlings eliminated them as a local breeder except in Sacramento, where their unique adaptation to overpasses and elevated freeways allowed them to persist. Unfortunately, they have declined by over 85% since 2004 presumably due to poor reproduction resulting from reduced insect populations following increased use of neonicotinoid pesticides. Luckily, it is still possible to see these beautiful birds in the Sacramento area and well worth the time.

The best time to observe Purple Martins in Sacramento is in early May when they are nest-building, and June and early July when parents are busy feeding young. Since 2019, only 22-25 pairs of martins have nested at five sites in Sacramento, some of which are not very safe to visit. Currently, Purple Martins can generally be found and safely viewed in the following locations in and near downtown Sacramento:

Sutterville Rd overpass, east of Sacramento City College

Ramona St. under Highway 50

A great big thank you to Dan Airola for helping us keep this information up to date. You can find links to these locations and directions at www.sacramentoaudubon.org/city-of-sacramento/#purple-martins

The Sacramento Audubon Society has been a long-time sponsor of the Purple Martin Project, coordinated by Dan Airola and Dan Kopp, by funding the expenses of participating volunteers monitoring Sacramento's Purple Martins and supporting publication of Dan's 2020 book *Life Under the Fast Lane: Ecology and Conservation of the Bridge-nesting Purple Martins in Urban Sacramento* (available at cvbirds.org). This ongoing study and the recommendations that follow will help conserve this vulnerable population.

Seasonal Sightings March 1 – 31, 2024

One could argue that March has some of the best birding of the year. There are many fine days and there is as much diversity in the Valley in March as any time of year. Yet, after months of winter, most of us really long for the springtime that won't arrive until mid-April. But March does mean **Western Kingbirds** and **Bullock's Orioles** before the month ends. The last of our regular swallows, Purple Martins, arrive—this year on 3/17 at the Sutterville Rd overpass near Sacramento City College. The big **Red-breasted Merganser** season continued, with at least three seen from Beals Point at Folsom Lake. An early **Calliope Hummingbird** visited a private yard near Galt on 3/18 and, for another season, a private yard in rural Yolo County to the southwest of Clarksburg hosted **Allen's Hummingbirds**. Ranging a little farther south than usually covered here, a **Broad-billed Hummingbird** was found on 3/4 in Stockton and continued through at least 3/9. This species is extremely rare in California, and is one typically looked for in southeastern Arizona, though one was found in Davis in early 2021.

Good numbers of expected shorebird species began moving through in migration. A **Pacific Golden-Plover** was a nice find on 3/19 along Woodbridge Rd. They can sometimes be found among large flocks of **Black-bellied Plovers**, although those large flocks have been increasingly hard to come by locally in recent years. **Mountain Plovers** continued in the fields along Hwy 45 in Yolo County, just south of the Colusa County line, through at least 3/16. A first-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found at the Yolo County Central Landfill on 3/4. A **Red-throated Loon**, likely the continuing bird from last month, was reported on 3/8 along the Deep Water Channel adjacent to Bridgeway Island Pond, and a **Pacific Loon** was seen on 3/6 on Folsom Lake from Folsom Point.

The only site in the area this season with **Short-eared Owl** reports was along Sankey Rd to the west of Hwy 99. A **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** was found downstream of the Mayhew Drain along the American River Parkway on 3/14 through at least 3/19. The continuing **Winter Wren** was reported from Putah Creek Fishing Access #1 on 3/3. There were no reports of a more expected **Pacific Wren** this month. A **Green-tailed Towhee** was a nice find on 3/16 in the vicinity of the Tall Forest at Cosumnes River Preserve. The **Orchard Oriole** found at the UC Davis Arboretum on 10/11 quite impressively continued into April. An **Orchard Oriole** also spent a couple of days during the first week of March along Putah Creek between Davis and Winters. The **Ovenbird** first found on 1/24 continued at William Land Park through at least 3/10, and the nearby **Summer Tanager** continued through at least 3/5.

To view photos of some of the highlights, visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/bird-sightings, and then click on the highlighted eBird checklists.

The Sacramento Area as covered here lies between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000-foot contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo counties. Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club listserv (groups.io/g/centralvalleybirds) and in eBird (ebird.org). It is impossible to list everyone, but we thank the following for their reports: Steve Abbott, Dan Brown, Lyann Comrack, Konshau Duman, Andy Engilis, Jr., Gil Ewing, Susan Goodrich, Joshua Greenfield, Cliff Hawley, Scott Hoppe, Adam Kucharek, Manfred Kusch, Jeri Langham, Mark Martucci, Frances Oliver, Zane Pickus, Linda Pittman, Ron Pozzi, Rene Reyes, Samuel Schmidt, Steve Scott, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, Tom Uslan, Lynette Williams, and David Yee. Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

—Chris Conard



Western Kingbird. Photo: Daniel Brown



Calliope Hummingbird. Photo: Daniel Brown



Pacific Wren. Photo: Daniel Brown

SAS New Members

Please welcome these new members:

Melanie Hewett
Bryson Korsboen
Trish Lo Duca
Arlene Lockett
Victoria Lee & Kendall Elfstrum
Kathleen Les
Rose Miller
Deanna Rhoades
Elizabeth Stewart

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Many thanks to all of you for your continued support of Sacramento Audubon and its work in the community. Donations to the Bobelaine Sanctuary are encouraged to help defray the cost of management.

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The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:



- Promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds.
- Foster the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach.
- Encourage, support, and provide environmental educational opportunities.
- Advocate for the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Please contact President, Paul Miller, at sacaudubonpresident@gmail.com to find out how the Board Meeting is being held. Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month, except for June, July, and December when no meetings are held.

The next board meeting is: Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found at sacramentoaudubon.org/board-minutes.

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White-tailed Kite Daniel Brown

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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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May General Meeting

Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 7 p.m.

Amazing Adaptations: How Birds Cope with Hardship

Presented by Jamie Cornelius

We will host a watch party at Effie Yeaw.

The speaker will be joining us via Zoom. Registration is not necessary to attend the meeting at Effie Yeaw Nature Center, located at 2850 San Lorenzo Way in Carmichael.

If you would like to attend the meeting via Zoom, you will need to register online at <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker>.