

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 7 PM via Zoom

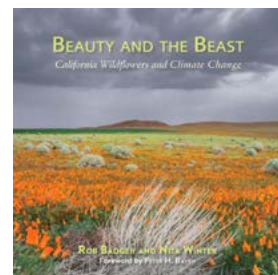
The meeting will be held online via Zoom. You must register for the meeting, but there is no cost to register and you do not need a Zoom account. Registration is required due to space limitations set by Zoom. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information on how to join the meeting. You will also receive email reminders about this event. For more information visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker.

A 27 Year Wildflower Journey: The Making of *Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change*

Presented by Rob Badger and Nita Winter

Rob Badger and Nita Winter take you behind the scenes on their 27-year journey photographing wildflowers throughout California and the West. It began in 1992 when they discovered and fell in love with California's spectacular wildflower blooms in the Mojave Desert's Antelope Valley California Poppy Preserve. Photographing these beautiful landscapes and individual flowers evolved into their documentary art project, "Beauty and the Beast: Wildflowers and Climate Change." Their beautiful, multiple award-winning coffee table book, co-published with the California Native Plant Society, focuses on California's amazing plant diversity. It is a companion to their traveling educational exhibit.

Gorgeous superbloom scenery isn't the only thing that makes this series so special. The photographers show how they create wildflower portraits in the field, lugging 80 pounds of cameras and their "natural light" studio equipment from below sea level in Death Valley National Park to 13,000-foot-high mountain passes. Rob also shares two innovative field techniques he developed to capture unique floral portraits that go beyond traditional



wildflower photography.

Internationally acclaimed conservation photographers Rob Badger and Nita Winter have been life partners and creative collaborators for more than three decades. Their work has been featured in Time, Mother Jones, and Sierra magazines, the New York Times, Washington Post, San Francisco Chronicle and the Los Angeles Times. They are the recent recipients of the Sierra Club's 2020 Ansel Adams Award for Conservation Photography.

Effie Yeaw's Bird and Breakfast

Every March, the Effie Yeaw Nature Center offers two special weekend birding walks coupled with wonderful breakfast fare. This event, held at EYNC, starts with bird walk guided by some of our best local birders and Sacramento Audubon volunteers. For weeks in advance of the walks, volunteers explore the Nature Study Area in order to be able to point out nests and local rarities. After the walk, attendees enjoy wonderful food, good coffee and a silent auction. No extensive birding experience is necessary.

Reservations are required. Visit <https://www.sacnaturecenter.net/events/bird-breakfast-weekend/> for more information, questions and to make reservations.

Bird & Breakfast Traditional Event

Saturday, March 18 at 8 AM

Attendees enjoy a bird walk that is approximately 90 minutes long, followed by the traditional casserole breakfast buffet. Participants can also bid in a silent auction for unique items. Ages 12 to adult.

Bird & Breakfast Family-Friendly Event

Sunday, March 26 at 8 AM

At our family-friendly event, you can choose to join either a family bird walk, a one hour walk with children 6 and over, or a longer (approximately 90-minute) adult bird walk open to those ages 12 and above. This event features a hot pancake breakfast prepared and served by the Carmichael Kiwanis Club! Ages 6 to adult. (Note: Child attendees must be accompanied by an adult attendee.) Bird and Breakfast often sells out quickly.



Field Trips: Field Trips March 1 – April 15, 2023

Sacramento Audubon has returned to volunteer-led field trips.

Precautions are still in place for everyone's safety. Unless otherwise noted, field trips are geared towards adults and those over age 13. With wildfires on the rise, smoky conditions may occur. Please note that a forecast of bad air quality (AQI of 100 or higher) will result in trip cancellation. If you are unsure, please contact the trip leader.

For questions regarding the trip, or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please contact the trip leader. Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ride-sharing/carpools. 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 may be helpful. Please arrive early if you need driving directions or plan to carpool as starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place.

COVID-19 Protocols

- Some trips may require advance registration. For those trips, please only sign up if you are committed to attending as field trips have a limited number of participants.
- All participants, including children 5 and up and field trip leaders, must be vaccinated.
- Additional restrictions may be required, such as proof of vaccine or face masks. It varies with each field trip. Please read the description of the field trip carefully. Do not register for a field trip if you are unwilling to comply with the stated COVID precautions.

To Register for a Field Trip, follow the instructions in the trip description or visit <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/field-trips>. If you have questions or need help, email our Registration Coordinator at sacramentoaudubonfieldtrips@gmail.com.

Beginning Birder Walk William Pond Park

Sunday, March 5

Registration for this trip is CLOSED

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's 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. Registrants will be sent the meeting time and exact location, along with other information.

Family Friendly Trip to Phoenix Park

Monday, March 6, 9 AM

Expected length: 2.5 hours

Leader: Nicole Barden (530) 304-5461
nicolembarden@gmail.com

Join Environmental Educator Nicole on a visit to this unique local park which features a winding trail through oak savannah habitat and past vernal pools. We will be looking and listening for wintering birds as well as early spring arrivals. Yellow-billed Magpies are often seen at this park, and we may even locate some of their nests! This trip is open to all birding levels and ages and will be slow paced, keeping an eBird list as we go. Beginning birders and young birders are encouraged to join. The trail is flat, with a mix of paved and unpaved sections, and travels through mixed shade and sun. There are bathrooms available at this location.

We are expecting to travel no more than 2 miles. This trip will happen rain (light to moderate) or shine but heavy rain, wind, and flooding will cancel. If you are unsure, please email Nicole to confirm the trip is happening the day before.

Meet Nicole in the Phoenix Park parking lot. From Hwy 50, take Hazel Ave north, turn right on Sunset Ave. Turn right into the park at the first stop sign. The parking lot will be straight ahead.

Ferrari Ranch Ponds, Lincoln

Thursday, March 9, 7:30 AM

(Please Note: Date and Time change for this trip.)

Expected length: 3 hours

Leader: Mary Forrestal, (530) 209-0826
sacaudubonrecording@gmail.com

The Ferrari Ranch Ponds are a series of smaller ponds bordered by a paved bike trail located on the west side of Hwy 65 in Lincoln. We will walk approximately three miles on the paved trails looking for resident species and any remaining waterfowl.

Heavy rain cancels. Contact trip leader with questions.

Meet Mary at the south-east end of the Home Depot Parking Lot. From Sacramento take I-80 west to Highway 65 north. It is about 10 miles to Lincoln. Take exit 315 for Ferrari Ranch Rod. Turn right onto Ferrari Ranch Rd. Turn right at the first stop light onto Groveland Ln. Follow Groveland Ln until it ends in the Home Depot Parking lot. Address for Home Depot is 1000 Groveland Ln, Lincoln.

Unusual Parts of the Cosumnes River Preserve

Sunday, March 12, 7:30 AM

(Note: Daylight Savings time begins.)

Expected length: 5 hours

Leader: Rodd Kelsey (916) 662-4085
rodd.kelsey@gmail.com

Maximum number of participants: 10

Registration is required for this trip.

Please email Rodd to register for this trip.

On this trip we will explore parts of the preserve that are not usually publicly accessible, covering habitats like flooded farm fields, sloughs and floodplains, and gallery valley oak forest. Given time, and to fill out the diversity of birds we see, we may also stop at some of the usual public places to see what's happening on some of the managed wetlands. This will give us great opportunities to see a nice diversity of waterbirds and land birds, including many waterfowl and shorebirds, the remaining Sandhill Cranes who have not yet begun their journey north, wintering songbirds, raptors, and possibly some owls.

This trip will also be a great way to wander around both the well-known and lesser-known parts of the area to learn about the ongoing work there to restore natural floodplains, and to manage wetlands and farmlands for the greatest wildlife benefit.

This trip will involve a significant amount of walking along roads and trails, including on some uneven ground. If rains have continued, there will likely be muddy and wet conditions. Be sure to bring water and some snacks.

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

Ancil Hoffman Park

Wednesday, March 15, 7:30 AM

Expected length: 3-4 hours

Leaders: Rich Howard (916) 203-0952 and Betty Cooper
rhowards@gmail.com

A leisurely walk along the American River should turn up many of our resident and winter visiting Oak Woodland and River birds. This trip is suitable for bird lovers of all levels. We

will have at least one scope for closer views of more stationary birds.

Parkway Pass or \$6 parking fee (buy at kiosk) required. Accessibility of Ancil Hoffman Park has not been evaluated by Sacramento Audubon at this time (<https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/accessible-birding>). Walking in the riparian area is fairly level on an unpaved trail or grass; a paved trail is available farther from the river.

Meet Rich and Betty in the farthest parking area on Tarshes Dr where the road curves right to the golf course clubhouse.

From California Ave in Fair Oaks, take the Tarshes Dr entrance and follow it all the way to the last parking lot on your left. A SAC County Park Pass, or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles. Email Betty if further directions are required: bettycooper@comcast.net

North Natomas Regional Park

Saturday, March 18, 8 AM

Expected length: 3-4 hours

Leader: Ben Graber, (916) 844-8682
bgraber984@protonmail.com

Join Ben for a leisurely morning walk. We can expect to see a wide variety of grassland species including meadowlarks, Ring-necked Pheasants, and Savannah Sparrows, along with herons, egrets, and waterfowl. Various wintering species of raptors, including falcons, are also possibilities. This trip will include approximately 2 to 3 miles of walking over flat terrain, and bringing liquids is recommended. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

Meet Ben at North Natomas Regional Park, 2501 New Market Drive, Sacramento 95835. From Sacramento, take I-5 North to Del Paso Rd, Exit 525A. Go right/east on Del Paso Rd. In 0.5 miles turn left onto Town Center Drive.

Folsom Marshes and Folsom Lake

Sunday, March 19, 8 AM

Expected length: 4 hours

Leader: Chris Conard (916) 203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

Maximum number of participants: 16
Registration is required for this trip.
Please email Chris to register.

Development in Folsom over the past 35 years has covered most of the habitat between Folsom's city core, Hwy 50 and El Dorado Hills, but small pockets of marshlands, oaks and riparian forest remain along Humbug and Willow Creeks, including an impressive array of trails. We'll look for

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Field Trips: continued

marsh birds, including rails, sparrows and other species before checking Folsom Lake and the oak woodlands near Mormon Island. Be prepared for up to four miles of fairly easy walking. Directions and confirmation of exact meeting location and time will be provided upon registration.

Bucks Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway, El Dorado Hills

Thursday, March 23, 8 AM
Expected Length: 3 hours
Leader: Maureen Geiger, (916) 281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen for a leisurely, 2-mile walk through this riparian habitat looking for resident and migrating woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds, warblers, marsh birds, and sparrows. Hooded Mergansers are often found. In this varied habitat, there is always the possibility of unusual finds, and river otters are seen frequently.

Meet at the corner of the intersection of Silva Valley Parkway and Serrano Parkway. To reach this spot, exit Hwy 50 at Exit 31 and turn left onto Silva Valley Parkway. Follow the Parkway about a mile to the stop light at Serrano Parkway, make a U-turn and immediately park along Silva Valley Parkway.

Teal Bend

Sunday, March 26, 8 AM
Expected length: 4 hours
Leader: Richard Barbieri (916) 761-1124
offleash227@gmail.com

Join Richard to explore the rich habitat at Teal Bend Golf Course. He will explore a variety of habitats, including wooded and riparian areas, and hopes to see a variety of migrating and resident birds.

Meet Richard at the parking lot at Teal Bend Golf Course. The address is 7200 Garden Highway, Sacramento 95837. From Sacramento, take I-5 north, then when it splits into I-5 and Highway 99, take Highway 99 north. Take Exit 309 at Elverta Road and turn left (west). Drive about three miles, then turn left onto Garden Highway. After about a mile, turn left into the golf course. Proceed to the parking lot.

Point Reyes

Saturday, April 1, 8 AM
Expected length: All day
Leader: John York (530) 320-4751
Johnyork157@yahoo.com
RSVP to John by email or text is recommended in case of change of plan due to weather, etc.

John plans a full day of birding at the usual places at Point Reyes, including the Fish Docks and Abbott's Lagoon

(weather permitting). It's too foggy at coastal spots, we will bird on shore locations.

John plans to stop for lunch at the Deli in Inverness, but bring snacks, drinks and/or own food if you choose. Dress for changeable weather.

Meet at the Park & 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 & Ride lot.

Sacramento Migration Hotspot

Sunday, April 2, 8:45 AM
Expected length: 3 hours
Leader: Kevin Thomas, (916) 217-6946
bionerdkevin@gmail.com
Maximum number of participants: 8
Registration is required for this trip.
Please email Kevin to register.

This trip will focus on a spring migration hotspot in the Sacramento area. Kevin will be scouting areas and reports the weeks prior to the trip to identify a location that has produced good migrant activity and has trails for easy walking. We will expect to see our early migrant flycatchers, vireos and warblers along with our local breeding birds returning from the south. A Sacramento County Parks Pass may be required.

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

Sailor Bar

Monday, April 3, 8:30 AM
Expected length: 2 ½ - 3 hours
Leader: Nicole Barden, (530) 304-5461
nicolebarden@gmail.com

Join Environmental Educator Nicole to explore what this popular birding location has to offer! We will be looking and listening for spring favorites, including returning Pacific-slope Flycatchers, trilling Chipping Sparrows, bright yellow Wilson's Warblers, and singing Black-headed Grosbeaks. Maybe we will even locate a nest!

Open to all birding levels, this trip will be slow-paced, and we will be taking the time to appreciate bird behavior along the way. We will be listening for birds as much as looking for them and will be keeping an e-bird list as we go. Beginning birders and young birders are encouraged to join.

The trail we will be walking on is mostly flat, though there are some uneven sections with large, smoothed river rocks. There will be an optional steep section at the end for anyone who wants to bird for a little longer. We will cover no more than 3 miles. Public restrooms are available at this location.

Meet Nicole at the parking lot at Sailor Bar. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way just west of Hazel. From Hwy 50, take Hazel Ave north, turn left on Winding Way, then turn Left on Illinois Ave. Follow Illinois all the way to the end.

Meet at the last parking lot on your left, near the boat launch area. A Sac County Park Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Foothills Birds and Flowers Hike

Wednesday, April 5, 8 AM
Expected length: 4-5 hours
Leader: Sonja Sorbo (916) 390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com
Maximum number of participants: 6
Registration is required for this trip.
Please email Sonja to register.

This amazing area north of Oroville is a result of ancient volcanic activity which created an elevated basalt mesa. The reserve is known for its spectacular wildflower displays in springtime. With adequate rain, several seasonal waterfalls and streams should be running, adding further beauty to the landscape. Our adventure will be about the hiking and wildflower viewing as much as the birding. The plan is to hike a dirt trail about 1.9 miles out and the same distance back, with an elevation gain of about 320 feet. The trail is generally in good condition, but it can get rocky, and any recent rain may result in some muddy areas. Wear sturdy hiking shoes or boots, and bring plenty of water as well as snacks, lunch, sunscreen, and hats. There is very little shade on the trail.

We can expect to see resident bird species of open land and oak woodland, including up to four wren species and four swallow species, Western Bluebirds, Western Meadowlarks, sparrows, woodpeckers, goldfinches, California Quail, and raptors. If we're lucky, we might spot an early migrant or two.

This will be an all-day trip, with about 4 hours of birding and hiking plus driving time to and from the preserve which is about 70 miles from Sacramento.

Space is limited so sign up soon. Exact meeting time, driving directions, and instructions to purchase a Lands Pass will be sent to registered participants.

Bufferlands Birds and Blooms

Saturday, April 8, 9 AM
Join biologists Bryan Young and Shawn Petrash along with the Bufferlands docent team for a guided hike through the grassland, wetland and riparian habitats of the 2,000+ acre open space preserve surrounding the Sacramento

Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. If you would like to attend, please send an email to Bryan Young at youngb@sacsewer.com. Bryan will provide directions to a meet up location and can answer any questions that you have about the excursion.

Family Friendly trip to Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge

Sunday, April 9, 10 AM
Expected length: 2-3 hours
Leader: Paul Miller (916) 768-7503, and Maureen Geiger
Pjmiller1962@me.com
Maximum number of participants: 8
Registration is required for this trip.
Please email Paul to register.

This area is beautifully designed for those with mobility challenges, and families with small children, as it offers a wide, level cement trail that loops through the refuge. Designed to meet a wide range of mobility needs, the facility includes handicapped parking, accessible restrooms, handicap ramp access from parking lot, and wide level concrete trails. The varied habitats may produce interesting birds, including Green Heron, Sora, Belted Kingfisher, Song Sparrow, and Common Yellowthroat, as well as Red-tailed Hawks and Western Meadowlarks.

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

Traylor Ranch Bird Sanctuary and Nature Reserve Family Friendly Trip

Saturday, April 15, 9 AM
Expected length: 2 ½ hours
Leader: Mary Forrester (530) 209-0826
sacaudubonrecording@gmail.com

This morning walk among the 88 acres of recreational land located in Penryn will be specifically geared to and appropriate for families and children. Join Mary in finding interesting birds such as Western Bluebird, Tree Swallows, California Quail and Red-shouldered Hawks in this open oak woodlands area. There will be a few extra pairs of binoculars for children to use. A clean port-a-loo is available at this location. It is about a half-mile walk from the parking area.

Meet Mary at the Traylor Ranch Parking Area off of Humphrey Rd. From Sacramento, take I-80 to Sierra College Blvd in Rocklin, exit 109. Turn left and follow Sierra College Blvd 4.8 miles to English Colony Way. Turn right on to English Colony Way. In 1 mile turn right on Humphrey Rd. The parking lot is .4 miles ahead on the right.

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Field Trips: continued

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk

Saturday, April 15, 10:30 AM

Paid registration is required through Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Please see www.sacnaturecenter.net or call (916) 876-4918 for registration and other details.

Join Audubon birding leaders Dan Williams and Sandra Steurer, 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 Bush-tits 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.

Pine Hill/Kanaka Valley

Sunday, April 16, 7 AM

Expected length: 5 hours

Leader: Chris Conard

Maximum number of participants: 20

Registration is required for this trip.

Pre-registration is required and limited to 20 participants through Pine Hill Preserve contact Virginia Meyer at vcmeyer@mac.com • www.pinehillpreserve.org

The preserve was established to protect rare native plants in El Dorado County that occur only on the specialized soils of the Pine Hill area. It stretches from Folsom Lake in the north to Hwy 50 in the south and contains more than 4,000 acres. Plan to visit Kanaka Valley, with a mix of oak woodland and chaparral. Chris will look for California Thrashers, Bell's Sparrows, migrating warblers, and, on a clear day, great views of the Sierra and the surrounding geography. A botanist will be on the trip to provide background on the rare plants. Be prepared for three miles of moderate walking.

Field Trip Reports

William Pond Beginners' Walk, (2/12)

Larry Hickey, co-leader with Darrell Mohr, Cathie LaZier, and Jane van Kessel, reported:

Eleven of us enjoyed a beautiful clear morning at the William Pond Park section of the American River Parkway on Super Bowl (Superb Owl) Sunday. Although we didn't see any owls, our winter resident and year-round species were abundant. We saw and heard many **Yellow-rumped Warblers**, **Western Bluebirds**, **Oak Titmouse**, **American Crows**, and **California Scrub-Jays**. Wintering **American Coots** were on the open water in large numbers along with **Pied-billed Grebes**, **Mallards**, and **Double-crested Cormorants**. We were delighted to see three **Ruddy Ducks** near the shore and **Great Blue Herons** were on their nests at the rookery. Highlights were **Yellow-billed Magpies** actively building their dome nests, and **Red-shouldered Hawk** pairs interacting with each other and occupying a nest.

Cosumnes River Preserve, (2/11)

Leader Paul Miller reported:

The day was a bit cold and breezy, but the birds didn't mind. Six people joined Paul Miller, who birds in his power wheelchair, for a great day of birding. The flooded field next to the main parking lot was low, caused by the storm damage, but the shorebirds, including many adorable **Least Sandpipers**, were enjoying the mud flats. We moved along the boardwalk and were delighted to get a close look at two beautiful male **Ring-necked Ducks** swimming in

tandem. The **American Wigeons** proved a bit elusive, but showed up further along sunning on a small levy. **Green-winged Teals** and **Northern Pintails** were the most prevalent birds, along with large flocks of **Greater White-fronted Geese**. A handsome male **Cinnamon Teal** greeted us as we left the boardwalk area, and a few high flying **Sandhill Cranes** were beckoning us with their soulful call. The group was able to experience the wonderful Ducks In Scopes exhibit that includes a look at the tiny protein rich water creatures that our waterfowl need to survive.

Sailor Bar, (2/8)

Leader Mark Martucci reported:

Nine birders detected 66 species of birds on a cool early February morning along the American River Parkway. Highlights included two **Bald Eagles**, **Osprey**, **Hooded Merganser**, **Barrow's Goldeneye**, **Lark Sparrow**, and **Rufous-crowned Sparrow**.

Bodega Bay, (2/4)

Leader Dan Williams reported:

Ten of us had an exciting whirlwind of a day at Bodega Bay, with many species seen in a short time, capped off with a nice lunchtime rarity, before we were chased off by an afternoon rainstorm. We started at Doran Regional Park where the King Tide had relegated many shorebirds to the beach for easy viewing. A crowd of hundreds of **Marbled Godwits**, **Dunlins**, **Sanderlings**, and **Western Sandpipers** made for a great start to our trip, while also on the beach was a nice mixed flock of gulls giving us great comparisons between **Ring-billed** and **Short-billed**, **Herring**, and **Iceland**, and **Western** and **Glaucous-winged**. At the Doran Jetty we were treated to **Black Oystercatchers**, **Surfbirds**, and **Black Turnstones** on the rocks, **Surf Scoters**, **Brants**, and **Red-breasted Merganser** in the turbulent waters, and an **Osprey** overhead. Next up, the back deck at The Tides Wharf provided its typical amazingly close views of diving **Common Loons**, **Eared** and **Horned Grebes**, **Western** and **Clark's Grebes**, and various bay ducks, while the pilings just north of the parking lot gave us awesome looks at both **Black** and **Ruddy Turnstones**, a trio of **Whimbrels**, and a Harbor Seal. We stopped at Diekmann's Bay Store to pick up some provisions and scan the wooded slope below the parking lot which, besides the usual bevy of hummingbirds, kinglets, wrens, and sparrows, often hosts an overwintering rarity or two. And sure enough, it wasn't long before this winter's gem emerged from the foliage: a **Tennessee Warbler**, which eventually gave us stunning views from very close range. We headed down to Campbell Cove where we intended to continue birding after lunch, but the increasing rain convinced us to call it a day and head for home. All told we had 76 species on our rather brief but terrific outing.

Lincoln Wast Water Treatment Plant, (2/1)

Leader Sonja Sorbo reported:

This gem of a birding site supports a nice variety of winter waterfowl and resident birds; today eleven birders were fortunate enough to spend a lovely morning there, viewing 55 bird species before lunch time. The avian welcome committee comprised a **Say's Phoebe** and a hovering **White-tailed Kite**. More than 100 **House Finches** sailed through the air and perched on berry bushes to soak in the morning sun. **Western Meadowlarks** patrolled a grassy field,

while a towering oak hosted two **Red-tailed Hawks**. To our delight, an **American Bittern** appeared out of some reeds, and we enjoyed prolonged looks at it, watching it stalk, capture and swallow a tasty morsel for breakfast. In nearby settling ponds, we feasted our eyes on numerous species of ducks, including **Norther Pintail**, **Ruddy Ducks**, **Gadwall**, **Shovelers**, **Mallards**, **Green-winged Teal**, **Ring-necked Duck**, **Bufflehead**, **Common Goldeneye**, and **American Wigeon**. Perhaps our favorites for the day were a dozen **Canvasbacks** and a **Eurasian Wigeon**, whose crown seemed to glow like gold in the sunlight. In addition to ducks, we noted numerous **Greater White-fronted Geese** onshore and flying overhead. At one point, several hundred geese took to the sky from an adjacent property, spooked by an unknown entity. The **Bald Eagle** we had been keeping an eye on hadn't moved from the top of a tree, so we couldn't place blame there for the ruckus. A few shorebirds were present—one **Greater Yellowlegs**, two **Killdeer**, and a dozen **Least Sandpipers** moved back and forth along the shore of one pond. Twenty or so **White-faced Ibis** glided overhead, and 50 **Long-billed Curlews** picked at the ground in one of the surrounding fields. **Western Bluebirds**, **California Quail**, **American Pipits**, **Lesser Goldfinches**, **Savannah Sparrows**, **Black Phoebes**, and **Yellow-rumped Warblers** went about their routines in fields, shrubs, and trees surrounding the ponds.

Nimbus Fish Hatchery, (1/29)

Leader Kevin Thomas reported:

It was a well attended field trip to the Nimbus Fish Hatchery and surrounding area, with 15 people showing up this winter morning. We were lucky the weather cooperated with a cool overcast morning but no rain. The clouds never cleared for us but spirits were high for this loop walk past the hatchery, down the river, and then looping back around through the oak woodlands. We started at the overlook just downstream of the old fish ladder and were treated to a flock of **Tricolored Blackbirds** that flew quickly over and across the river. We had great views of **Belted Kingfisher** and **Glaucous-winged Gull**. We continued down the path in between the hatchery and river and were treated to **Great Egret**, **Great Blue** and **Green Herons**, and **Black-crowned Night-Heron**. Across the river we spotted two **Peregrine Falcons** flying upstream, a rare sight to see. A little further down at the hatchery outlet ponds we saw the continuing **Northern Pintail** that has been hanging around the area for almost a year now, it paired with a female **Mallard** last year and appears to be trying to do the same thing this year. We walked down the bike trail stopping to scan and listen every few minutes, at one stop someone called out "swan," and we all turned to get good looks at a **Tundra Swan** flying downriver. At the picnic benches down by the parking lot we scoped and picked out a few **Barrow's Goldeneye**, along with multiple **Common Goldeneye**, and **Bufflehead**. We also had an early or overwintering lone **Tree Swallow** foraging over the river at the picnic bench location. The loop back through the oak woodlands was a bit slow but we did finally run into a small group of **White-crowned Sparrows**, **Spotted** and **California Towhees**. As we made our way back down to the river towards the hatchery parking lot we picked up a nice dark morph western **Red-tailed Hawk** and **American Kestrel**. Over the course of three hours we saw 60 species and spent time talking

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Field Trip Reports continued

about different aspects of bird biology. There was great conversation and smiles all around as we shared our experience of birding this morning, thanks to all for coming out.

Delta Shores Ponds, (1/28)

Leader Maureen Geiger reported:

This is just a fabulous place to bird! 47 species seen by 15 of us is surprising for a short (less than two mile) walk! It didn't hurt that it was a beautiful morning, not raining and not too cold either. Hard to decide which were the "best birds" so a long list: **Green Heron, White-tailed Kite, Common Gallinule, Common Goldeneye, Common Yellowthroat** but probably the most exciting were the 22 **Horned Larks** feeding in the short grass open space where 5,200 houses will soon be built. It was especially nice to have about 8 brand new or new-ish birders to share all this bounty with.

Putah Creek South Fork Preserve, (1/23)

Leader Nicole Barden reported:

Despite the wind and cold, 12 birders showed up at the South Fork Preserve, and so did the birds! We set off down the path along the creek and stopped at the viewing platform, overlooking the water, where we saw a beautiful group of **Hooded Mergansers**. There were also several **Great Blue Herons, Great Egrets**, and one **Snowy Egret**, along the shoreline of the creek. A little farther down the trail we saw five **Common Mergansers** fly past our group, low over the water and heading upstream. We also heard and then saw a female **Belted Kingfisher**, who flew past us and then landed in a tree. The creek was not only popular for the birds, otter tracks in the mud were also found. Clearly a good place to hang out! The award for the most common bird of the day was a tie between **White-crowned Sparrows** and **Mourning Doves**, which both seemed to be in every direction we looked. Towards the end of our walk through the oak savannah section, we were surprised to see three **Long-billed Curlew** fly low overhead. Soon after, we saw a hawk land in a tree at a distance and after some debate we determined it must be a **Red-shouldered Hawk**. We had a great time despite our frozen fingers, with a count of 32 species total. To see the full list of species, see our ebird list here: <https://ebird.org/checklist/S127240475>

Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, (1/21) (postponed from 1/7)

Leader Sonja Sorbo reported:

After almost three weeks of nonstop stormy weather, a beautiful sunny day provided the perfect setting for exploring the wonderful Gray Lodge Wildlife Area. Once again, Gray Lodge delivered, gracing our six birders with 68 species of birds and an entertaining show by a family of river otters. Scoping the ponds from Parking Lot 14 revealed a nice variety of ducks including **Cinnamon and Green-winged Teal, Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintail, American Wigeon, Ring-necked Ducks, Mallards, Buffleheads, Ruddy Ducks, and Gadwall**. A dozen **Black-necked Stilts** threaded their way through the shallows, passing by sleeping **Greater White-fronted Geese**. We started down the hiking trail and spent almost an hour at the next pond; the heron/egret families were well represented, with three **Green Herons**, a couple of **Great Blues Herons**, several **Snowy and Great Egrets**, and a two **Black-crowned**

Night Herons (one a juvenile). Two **Common Gallinules** paddled back and forth in front of the rules, while a nearby **American Bittern** stood as if frozen. A **Sora** whinnied but never showed itself. Meanwhile, a family of four river otters started cavorting in the pond, displacing a pair of **Hooded Mergansers** and a **Pied-billed Grebe**. One of the islands in the pond had a nice snag on it, and a half dozen **Double-crested Cormorants** commandeered it, spreading their wings to take advantage of the sun's warmth. Land birds were not to be outdone by waterfowl; a covey of at least 30 **California Quail** skittered around in an off-trail grassy area, accompanied by **White- and Golden-crowned Sparrows**. Woodpeckers included a **Downy, Nuttall's**, and several **Northern Flickers**. Near the overlook platform, our attention was drawn to an oak tree where a **Phainopepla** and a **Northern Mockingbird** were engaged in an aerial tussle; they withdrew to separate trees to sulk. Raptors were enjoying the clear sky and sunshine; we noted six **Red-tailed Hawks**, a **Red-shouldered Hawk**, an **Osprey**, and a **Northern Harrier**. Of course, the star of the raptor gang is the **Bald Eagle**, and there were a couple of them keeping the hordes of **Snow Geese** flustered. **Belted Kingfishers** were out in force, with four separate birds viewed during the hike and auto loop. Another delightful surprise on the auto tour was seeing two **Loggerhead Shrikes** zipping around between perches. After a satisfying day at Gray Lodge, we headed for home via the round-the-Buttes route. It was well worth it—in addition to beautiful scenery, we spotted a **Kestrel** and two **Great Horned Owls**.

Effie Yeaw Nature Center, Family Friendly Walk (1/21)

Rich Howard, co-leader with Betty Cooper, reported: We had 17 participants for this cool brisk morning walk. Everybody got scope views of **European Starling, Acorn Woodpecker, Red-tailed Hawk, and Herring Gull**, plus close views of **Western Scrub-Jay, Mallard, Turkey Vulture, Common Merganser, and Common Goldeneye**. We had a very vocal flyover from a **Red-shouldered Hawk**, too. One family found a **Spotted Sandpiper**, and some college kids who stayed later got to see **Lesser Goldfinches** on the cliff through the scope and **Wild Turkeys** flying across the trail. They were interested and knowledgeable about the fungi and lichen. **Oak Titmouse, Bewick's Wren, and Yellow-rumped Warbler** were around but hard to show everyone. Betty also discussed soaproot, horehound, and mugwort, and we had good discussion of the various oak species at the preserve, recent losses of granary trees, and the effects of climate change. Many folks expressed interest in returning on their own.

Ancil Hoffman Park, (1/18)

Leader Nancy Gronert reported:

On a cool January morning, three birders showed up at Ancil Hoffman Park. Since the wood chipper was loud at the golf course parking lot from downed trees and storm damage, the group headed up the river. Plenty of species gave us practice on bird calls with **Bewick's Wrens, Acorn Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, White-breasted Nuthatch, Western Bluebirds, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Anna's Hummingbirds, Killdeer, Oak Titmouse, and Spotted Towhees**. We spotted a **Merlin** on a snag, several **Red-shouldered Hawks**, a **Red-tailed Hawk**, as well as **Common Goldeneye** and **Common Mergansers** on the river.

Bufferland Events



Upcoming Bufferland Events

Signs of Spring

Saturday, March 11, 9 AM – 12 PM

Join us for a two-mile guided hike on mostly even ground (a mix of gravel, dirt, and short grass). Location on the Bufferlands to be determined based on access from recent storms.

For reservations, contact Chris Conard via email at conardc@sacsewer.com

Bufferlands Birds and Blooms Walk Saturday, April 8, 9 AM – 12 PM

Join biologists Bryan Young and Shawn Petrash along with our Bufferlands docent team for a guided hike through the grassland, wetland and riparian habitats of the 2,000+ acre open space preserve surrounding the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. It's a great time of the year to identify a wide variety of plants that are in bloom and to see a number of the 245 different bird species that have been recorded on the property.

If you would like to attend, please send an email to Bryan Young at youngb@sacsewer.com. Bryan will provide directions to a meet up location and can answer any questions that you have about the excursion. We have a new rally point that we are excited to utilize for this event. From the meeting location we will caravan to the trailhead.

Be prepared for a cool morning but rapidly warming day. We plan to cover 1 to 2 miles of trails. Binoculars and cameras are encouraged. Please leave your pets at home.

Walk on The Wildside

Saturday, May 20, 10 AM – 4 PM

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 the miles of trails, or enjoy tours of restored wetlands and oak forests on Regional San'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.

For more details and info on our full schedule of planned events, including Open Trail Day and Twilight Tours, check <https://www.regionalsan.com/bufferlands-calendar-events>

Seasonal Sightings January 1 – 31

Although the second half of January wasn't particularly rainy, flooding from storms in the first part of the month continued to limit access to places like Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). Waterfowl had many options, with standing water well distributed, so they weren't necessarily found in high concentrations at typical locations. Three **Trumpeter Swans** near the junction of Yolo County Rds 27 and 103 were a nice surprise. Most of the reports of this species in the Sacramento Valley are to the north of the area usually covered by this column. While missed on count day for the Folsom CBC, a male and a female **Red-breasted Merganser** were on Lake Natoma on 1/4. A **Greater Roadrunner** was found along Rd 81 in the Capay Valley on 1/22. This species is becoming increasingly hard to find in the region.

Mountain Plovers continued along Hwy 45 in Yolo County, just south of the Colusa County line, with up to 45 reported. This has been the only location where they have been found in the Sacramento area this winter. The old stronghold south of Dixon did not produce any reports. A first-cycle **Glaucous Gull**, always a treat, was found on 1/24 through the end of the month along Yolo County Rd 104 west of the Yolo County (Davis) Landfill. Another **Glaucous Gull** was at Beals Pt, Folsom Lake, on 1/29.

Least Bitterns are hard to find, especially in winter, so a report from Yolo County Rd 25, near Rd 103, is notable. The **Long-eared Owl** wintering in the Wildhorse neighborhood of Davis continued into February.

Lewis's Woodpeckers have been found in excellent numbers this season, but a report of 288 from an all-day outing to a private ranch in southeastern Sacramento County was the most impressive yet. The **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** found on 12/26 near the Elkhorn Volunteer Fire Dept (close to the Elkhorn boat ramp) continued into February. Two different **Cassin's Vireos** were found in Davis and one was also found in Woodland. Typically exceedingly rare (Eastern) **Winter Wrens** continued from November, with one at the end of Payen Rd, just into El Dorado County, continuing to 1/3, one at the Putah Creek Fishing Access #2 continuing to 1/17, and the one at Lake Solano Park continuing to at least 1/21. **Townsend's Solitaires** were well-represented in Sacramento, with the one found at the old City Cemetery on 12/24 continuing through 1/2, the bird at Sacramento City College continuing into February, and a third along S Land Park Dr, to the south of Sutterville Rd, found between 1/3 and 1/21. There were scattered reports of **Evening Grosbeaks** from Fair Oaks, Lincoln, Davis, and Woodland. A **Grasshopper Sparrow** along Scott Rd, south of White Rock Rd, on 1/1 was a nice surprise, and a **Bullock's Oriole** in Woodland on 1/25 was even more surprising. A **Nashville Warbler**, first detected on 1/19, appeared to be spending the winter in a dry area of CRP, and the **Summer Tanager** that was found east of Slide Hill Park in Davis on 12/6 continued to at least 1/16.

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 is roughly defined as lying 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: Dan Airola, Joseph Atkinson, Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Brent Campos, Hugh Cotter, Lyann Comrack, Lily Douglas, Leo Edson, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Frank Fabbro, Stephen Fettig, Cliff Hawley, Jeri Langham, Sami LaRocca, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Adam Panto, Nora Papian, Michael Perrone, Steve Scott, Sean Smith, Cameron Tescher, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, Violet Wu, Bart Wickel, Rick Williams, and Wentao Yang. Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

—Chris Conard



Evening Grosbeak. Photo: Daniel Brown

Camp Pollock

Some of us have been around long enough to remember the Boy Scout Camp called Camp Pollock, on the north bank of the American River. Just off Northgate Boulevard and Hwy 160, to reach the Camp, one drove by an old trailer park that always seemed fairly decrepit and was prone to flooding over the years.

The Boy Scouts are long gone, but the Sacramento Valley Conservancy has managed this 11-acre property since 2013 and has made amazing improvements. For those who love birds, plants, and a riparian habitat, this is a great site. In addition to a very nice, refurbished lodge available for weddings, conferences and other events, there is a native plant nursery and quiet trails through the site for enjoying nature and views of the beautiful American River. Camp Pollock is open every day from sunrise to sunset with free parking. The lodge is ADA-compliant, but only open during scheduled events or private rentals. The picnic area and trails are decomposed granite, wide and pretty smooth & level.

Camp Pollock is just one of many properties and projects managed by SVC. Deer Creek Hills Preserve, 4,600 acres of wonderful, rolling foothills in eastern Sacramento County, is definitely worth a visit. Guided birding outings are offered the third Saturday of the month, February through May. Groups are small, and led by experienced docents. Each month's outing will visit a different area of the preserve to explore the diversity of bird species on the property. More information and registration can be found in the Events calendar at: <https://sacramentovalleyconservancy.org/events/>

A great recent addition to SVC's offerings is an Environmental Speaker Series at Camp Pollock which began in February and will cover topics such as Bushy Lake, butterflies, local bird populations and Bald Eagles in our area.

For details on the programs and to find more activities and information about the Conservancy, go to sacramentovalleyconservancy.org.

—Maureen Geiger

Outreach Volunteers Needed

We have upcoming spring events on the calendar where we will need volunteers to help staff our table. You do not have to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding and talking to people about our field trips, birding, and SAS. You will be working with an experienced volunteer.

If you can work a few hours in the morning or afternoon please contact Bill Bianco and he can send you the spring list of events. Contact Bill at: biancown@yahoo.com, or call 916-372-3318.

Sacramento Audubon Pin

Show your support for Sacramento Audubon. Order your SAS pin today! \$10 online at <https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/store/lapel-pin> or pick one up at outreach events for \$5



SAS New Members

Please welcome these new members:

Patricia Baron
Angela Boyle
Lacy Lilly
Janis Mayse
Juliet Scheuer
Julie Synder

Thank You For Your Generous Donations!

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James Bennett, Jim Coate, Betty J. Cooper, Jodie L. Crandell, Bruce Forman, Lisa Foster, Mary Gaspari, Vickie J. Griffin, Lynne & Larry Moore, Joseph Piette, Roberts & Robin Rogerson, Harriet Saecck, Lynn Saxelby, Julie Snyder, Paul Veisze

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Bobelaine Sanctuary

Sharon Aikens, James Bennett, Virginia Gardner, Mary Gaspari, Lynne & Larry Moore, Lynn Saxelby, Zane & Sara Vorhes

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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Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

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, March 28, 2023.

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

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. Members receive our online newsletter, *The Observer*; so be sure to include your email address.

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Mail this form with your check payable to Sacramento Audubon Society to the address shown above. You can also use your credit card or PayPal account on SAS website:

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New members will receive *The Observer* in color via email. Please provide your email address above. If you would prefer a black & white, paper copy mailed to you instead, please email sacaudubonmembership@gmail.com.

If you would like to be added to the SAS Action Alert list, check here _____.

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White-tailed Kite Daniel Brown

Sacramento Audubon Society Information

Correspondence: P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Internet Address: www.sacramentoaudubon.org

Membership/Subscriptions: Jane Van Kessel
sacaudubonmembership@gmail.com
P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Seasonal Observations: Chris Conard
2405 Rio Bravo Circle, Sacramento, CA 95826
(916) 203-1610, e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

Program Chair: Anthony Asay, e-mail: sacaudubonmeetings@gmail.com

The Observer Editor: Carla Resnick, e-mail: carlaphoto@gmail.com

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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March Program

Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 7 PM

A 27 Year Wildflower Journey: The Making of *Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change*
Presented by Rob Badger and Nita Winter

