

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

September General Meeting

Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 7 p.m.

This meeting will be a hybrid session; our first time for this dual mode of presentation. That means participants can join the meeting on-site or in the comfort of their home. The hybrid session will resume on Zoom with ongoing registration requirements for online participants only.

Attend the Meeting in Person:

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. Effie Yeaw Nature Center, 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael, CA

Attend the Meeting online via Zoom:

If you would like to attend the meeting via Zoom you will need to register for the meeting. Registration is required because Zoom has set space limitations. You must register to attend the online Zoom meeting, but you do not need a Zoom account to join the meeting. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information on how to join the meeting. (You do not need to register to attend the meeting at Effie Yeaw.)

For more information visit www.sacramentoaudubon.org/monthly-speaker.

The Language of Birds

Presented by Nathan Pieplow

All around us, the birds are constantly telling us who they are and what they are doing. In this talk for any audience, Nathan Pieplow unlocks the secrets of their language. You'll listen in on the pillow talk of a pair of Red-winged Blackbirds, and learn the secret signals that Cliff Swallows use when they have found food. You'll learn how one bird sound can have many meanings, and how one meaning can have many sounds—and how, sometimes, the meaning isn't in the sounds at all. This talk from the author of the Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds is an accessible, entertaining introduction to a fascinating topic.

Nathan Pieplow is the author of the *Peterson Field Guide to Bird Sounds*, published in two volumes, one for Eastern and one for Western North America. An avid bird sound recordist and videographer, he is the author of the bird sound blog Earbirding.com, a board member of the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, an author of the *Colorado Birding Trail*, and former editor of the journal *Colorado Birds*. He teaches writing and rhetoric at the University of Colorado in Boulder.



27th Annual CVBC Symposium

November 16-19, 2023

The Central Valley Birding Symposium is live again! We are so happy to be able to welcome you back to the 27th annual Central Valley Birding Symposium after four long years. This year's program features two nationally known keynote speakers, as well as a full complement of field trips and short presentations highlighting the Central Valley. We would like to thank our sponsors for their continuing support, and to all of you for supporting the club the past three years. We look forward to seeing you in person in November! This year's CVBS is Thursday, November 16, through Sunday, November 19, 2023.

ONLINE REGISTRATION WILL OPEN, September 10, 2023, at 2 p.m.

For more information visit: <https://cvbirds-symposium.netlify.app/>



CVBC Symposium

Field Trips: Field Trips September 1 – October 15, 2023

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.
- All trip leaders and participants, including children 5 and up, must be vaccinated against COVID 19.
- 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.) 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.

UC Davis Arboretum Saturday, September 2, 9 a.m.

Expected length: 3-4 hours
Leader: Paul Miller 916-768-7503
pjmiller1962@me.com

Maximum number of participants: 6
Registration is required for this trip.
Please email Paul if you would like to attend.

This trip is specifically designed for beginning to more experienced birders in a location with paved trails, handicapped parking, and fully accessible restrooms. Whether you walk, use a wheelchair, or a walker, this trip is for you. We will travel along paved trails and hard-packed dirt within the UC Davis Arboretum located in the City of Davis, a short drive from Sacramento. This location offers a wonderful opportunity to see a wide variety of bird species, including the elusive Green Heron.

Bring water, a snack, and a smart phone if you have one. Directions and confirmation of exact meeting location and time will be provided upon registration.

Putah Creek and Pedrick Road Wednesday, September 6, 7 a.m.

Expected length: 3 hours
Leader: Nancy Gronert (279) 346-4790
Sacauduboncorsec@gmail.com

The UC Davis preserve along the banks of Putah Creek can be a terrific place to find migrants and resident birds this time of year. We'll take a leisurely walk along an easy dirt path trail. The path is the primary birding area along the river between Pedrick Rd and Hopkins Rd. The best birding is typically between Pedrick and the rope swings, although sometimes a culvert flowing into the creek in line with Hopkins Rd attracts birds. Besides the usual residents, we'll keep an eye out for the possible fall migrants of warblers, buntings, flycatchers, and orioles.

Meet at the Pedrick Rd access to Putah Creek. Take I-80 west from Sacramento for 17.5 miles. Take exit 67 for Pedrick Road. Turn right to go north on Pedrick Road. Go north for 2.6 miles and turn left into gravel lot after crossing Putah Creek. Meet at the parking lot. A porta potty is available.

Family Friendly Trip, Sailor Bar Monday, September 11, 8 a.m.

Expected length: 2 ½ - 3 hours
Leader: Nicole Barden, (530) 304-5461
nicolembarden@gmail.com

Join Environmental Educator Nicole to explore what this popular birding location has to offer! We will be on the lookout for our late summer feathered friends like Wilson's Warbler, Western Tanager, and maybe even Black-throated Gray Warbler. This time of year also brings the possibility of seeing early returning birds like Cedar Waxwing.

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 boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. A Sacramento County Parks Pass or \$6

entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Ave, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel Ave. 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.

Sacramento Bar

Tuesday, September 12, 7 a.m.
Expected length: 3-4 hours
Darrell Mohr, (916) 225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com

Join Darrell for a morning walk checking out the local birds. Possible birds include Phainopepla and California Quail. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders. Meet Darrell at the Sacramento Bar Parking Lot. A Sacramento County Parks Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

From Hwy 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd. Turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania Ave. Follow Pennsylvania to the parking lot at the end on the right.

Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk Saturday, September 16, 10:30 a.m.

Join Audubon birding leaders Rachael Cowan and Sue Darst, 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. Please see sacnaturecenter.net for registration and other details.

Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary

Sunday, September 17, 7:30 a.m.
Expected length: 3-4 hours
Leaders: Mary Forrestal, (530) 209-0826, and Nancy Kapellas
cmforrestal@yahoo.com

Sacramento Audubon maintains over 5 miles of trails at this 430-acre National Audubon Sanctuary on the Feather River. Join Mary and Nancy as they explore these trails looking for resident and migrating birds. Expect a walk of approximately 3 miles with a restroom available in the parking area.

Meet Mary and Nancy at the Bobelaine Audubon Sanctuary. From Sacramento take 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.

Sierra Discovery Trail, Emigrant Gap

Thursday, September 21, 7:30 a.m. at meeting place, or 9 a.m. at the trailhead

Expected length: 2 hours on the trail
Leader: Paul Miller, (916) 768-7503, and Maureen Geiger
Pjmiller1962@me.com
Maximum number of participants: 6
Registration is required for this trip.
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, 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.

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Hagan Community Park – Family Friendly Trip

Saturday, September 23, 9:30 a.m.
Expected Length: 1.5 - 2 hours
Leader: Sheila Green, (916) 813-1470
raeshi@aol.com

Join Sheila for a morning bird walk at Hagan Park in Rancho Cordova geared towards children, families, and beginners. Sheila will look for birds in urban, park and riparian (river) habitats on this one and a half to two hour walk. Bring water and snacks. From Hwy 50, take Exit 15 for Mather Field Rd. Go North on Mather Field Rd. In about ½ mile, turn right on Folsom Blvd. In ½ mile, turn left on to Coloma Rd. In ½ mile, turn left on Chase Dr. Follow Chase Dr to the end to enter the park. Meet at the duck pond near the free parking area on the right just before the park entry kiosk.

Teal Bend

Sunday, September 24, 8 a.m.
Expected length: 3-4 hours
Leader: Richard Barbieri, (916) 761-1124
Offleash227@gmail.com

Join Richard in exploring the rich habitat of Teal Bend Golf Course. There is a variety of habitats, including wooded and riparian areas, supporting resident birds and attracting fall migrants. Easy walking around the golf course. Bring water and snacks.

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 Hwy 99, take Hwy 99 north. Take Exit 309 at Elverta Rd and turn left (west). Drive about three miles, then turn left onto Garden Hwy. After about a mile, turn left into the golf course.

River Walk Park, West Sacramento

Tuesday, October 3, 8 a.m.
Expected length: 3-4 hours
Leader: Bill Bianco, (916) 889-4849
biancowm@yahoo.com
Maximum number of participants: 10
Registration is required for this trip.
Please email Bill to register.

This is a newer area for Sac Audubon and should turn up a variety of passerine species, sparrows, wrens, thrushes and more. We'll bird the river from the boat landing, then walk south past the I Street and Tower Bridges and up onto the levee. The walk should end by noon.

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

Point Reyes

Saturday, October 7, 7 a.m.
Expected length: All day
Leader: Dan Williams, (714) 943-1266
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com

Join Dan for a full day of birding at Point Reyes and be prepared for a full day of chasing rare birds, wherever they might be! Fall at the Point is always exciting, and Dan will let the most recent rare bird reports dictate the day's itinerary. Every Fall is different and of course there are no guarantees, but this trip in the past has turned up such goodies as Broad-winged Hawk, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, White-winged Dove, Least Flycatcher, Yellow-green Vireo and just about every warbler imaginable! Bring lunch and plenty of water.

Meet at the Park & Ride off I-80 at West Capitol

Ave in West Sacramento by 7 a.m. We will plan to return by 5 or 6 p.m. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave, Exit #81, turn left at the light, and then left again into the Park & Ride lot. Meet in the southeast section of the parking lot.

Ancil Hoffman Park

Tuesday, October 10, 7:30 a.m.
Expected length: 2-4 hours
Leader: Mark Martucci, (916) 833-6722
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com
Maximum number of participants: 8
Registration is required for this trip.
Please email Mark to register.

Mark will be looking for fall migrants, as well as remaining summering birds and residents. A Sac County Park Pass or \$6 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

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

Putah Creek Preserve – Family Friendly

Saturday, October 14, 8 a.m.
Expected length: Ends early afternoon
Leader: Ben Graber, (916) 844-8682
Bgraber94@protonmail.com

Join Ben for a morning walk along Putah Creek in search of migrants and wintering riparian birds. This trip will last, along with Ben's alleged sense of humor, into early afternoon. Bring liquids and snacks. If participants so desire, Ben will include Lake Solano and Monticello Dam with lunch at Steady Eddy's in Winters. This is a good trip for experienced birders, beginners, and younger birders alike.

Meet Ben at the Park and Ride lot off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave exit, turn left at the light, then left again into the Park and Ride lot. Loaner binoculars are available upon request.

Upcoming Birding Festivals

Monterey Bay Birding Festival

October 13–15, 2023

Registration opens August 1

This year the theme is "A joyful celebration of the life and the death of birds"

With this theme, the festival wants to give space for people to learn about the human-made issues that birds face, grieve the death of all the birds we've lost, and celebrate the life of the birds that are all around us right now.

<https://www.birdschoolproject.org/festival>

Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival

November 3–5, 2023

Registration opens September 5

<https://lodisandhillcrane.org/>

California Swan Festival Marysville

November 10–12, 2023

<https://www.caswanfestival.org/>

Central Valley Bird Club Symposium

November 16-19, 2023

Online registration will open

September 10, 2023, at 2 p.m.

<https://cvbirds-symposium.netlify.app/>

A Kit for Bird Watching!

Do you know anyone who is interested in birdwatching but hasn't quite taken that first step? Doesn't have binoculars? Or a bird guidebook? Isn't sure where to go or what may be required to park? Well now they can check out a Bird Watching Kit from our very own Sacramento Public Library!

Yes, our Sacramento Public Library has a "Library of Things." Advertised as "household tools and instruments without the price tag," patrons may reserve household items with their library card.

Among those items is a birdwatching kit consisting of child binoculars, adult binoculars, two National Geographic bird guides, a tripod adapter, and a California State Library Parks Pass, all in a backpack!

Items may be reserved and then picked up at the Arcade, Fair Oaks or Valley Hi- North Laguna libraries during open hours. Walnut Grove library items are on a first come first serve basis and do not require a reservation.

Items can be borrowed for two weeks, then returned to the same location.

So reserve and pick up your Bird Watching Kit soon, then browse the Sacramento Audubon Society website for beginning birder resources as well as tons of information about bird watching in and around the Sacramento area!

<https://www.saclibrary.org/Books-Media/Specialty-Checkouts/Library-of-Things>

<https://www.sacramentoaudubon.org/beginning-birder-resources>



—Susan Goodrich

Field Trip Findings

Carson Pass, Winnemucca Loop, (8/12)

Leader Sonja Sorbo reported:

The snow finally melted from Carson Pass, and a dozen birders took advantage of beautiful weather conditions to hike a seven mile loop in a quest for birds. With blue skies and air temps in the 60s and low 70s, we were blissful. The welcome committee was a **Western Wood-Pewee** who sang from atop a tall fir near the parking lot. Our first adrenaline spike came about 20 minutes into the walk, with the spotting of a robust-looking perched raptor. We quickly adjusted our position to reduce glare while Alex scrambled up the hillside to get a photo. After observing the field marks and confirming with photos, we determined that the bird was a juvenile **Goshawk**. Next, a nearby stand of conifers teemed with a mixed flock of **Mountain Chickadees** and **Yellow-rumped Warblers**. While watching them, a **White-breasted Nuthatch** scuttled into a nest hole on a snag next to us. A lone **Chipping Sparrow** sunned itself on a high bare branch in the morning sunlight. **Dark-eyed Juncos** seemed to be everywhere. We were interrupted by loud raucous squawking from **Clark's Nutcrackers**, flying from conifer to conifer to snack on pine nuts. Also cruising the conifers were a couple of **Red-breasted Nuthatches**. An **American Robin** cackled and flew by, but despite this distraction, we noticed a **Hairy Woodpecker** who had landed on a snag down the trail. A threesome of **Green-tailed Towhees** delighted us with great looks as they popped up and down amid a field of sagebrush and small juniper trees. On approach to Lake Winnemucca, we were awed by a mountainside of myriad wildflower species in full bloom. It felt as though we were walking into a living quilt. We weren't the only ones enjoying the flowers—a feisty little **Rufous Hummingbird** buzzed all over, seemingly unable to decide which bloom to visit next. Luckily, he took some breaks and rested on a snag which was directly in our field of view. A couple of **White-crowned Sparrows** joined him. After lunch at Lake Winnemucca, we visually scoured the snowfields on Round Top, hoping to find a Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. Alas, we weren't successful, although two **Mountain Bluebirds** and a **Cassin's Finch** were added to our list for the day. The second leg of our journey was the trail to Woods Lake, and again, the hillside was bursting with spectacular fields of wildflowers. We spotted a dark morph **Red-tailed Hawk** soaring above us. Near Woods Lake, our day list jumped quickly with the observation of two **Hermit Warblers**, a **Brown Creeper**, a **Townsend's Solitaire**, and a **Pine Grosbeak**. A foraging female **Hairy Woodpecker** generously shared her tree with a family of **Western Tanagers** who were passing through. Our seven-mile trek yielded 25 bird species, with several of them being life birds for members of the group.

Folsom Point, (8/5)

Leader Rich Howard reported:

Ten folks met at the Raley's parking lot (where we got our only **Feral Pigeon** for the day!), then proceeded to Folsom Point State Recreation Area. This was a new location for several of the participants, and a first Sacramento Audubon trip for some! The trees at the edge of the boat ramp parking lot gave us good looks at **Lark Sparrows** and **Lesser Goldfinches**; scanning the lake gave more distant views of **Barn Swallow**,



Green-tailed Towhee. Photo by Ray Rozema

Belted Kingfisher, Great Egret, Greater Yellowlegs, and Spotted Sandpiper. We were disappointed to see that the area next to the boat ramp has been scraped down to bare soil; we hope this doesn't affect the cool birds seen here in winter. The inlet on the north side of the boat ramp had a **Great Blue Heron, Black Phoebe**, and a group of 33 **Killdeer** flew in. We walked from the boat ramp area to the Folsom Point picnic area, passing through Oak Woodland that did not disappoint, with **Acorn, Nuttall's and Downy Woodpeckers, White-breasted Nuthatch, Oak Titmouse, Bushtit, Anna's Hummingbird**, a flyover **American Kestrel, California Towhee, California Scrub-Jay**, and an eye-level **Red-shouldered Hawk**. The Point had both **Brewer's and Red-winged Blackbirds**, while the inlet on the east side had a **Mallard** pair in eclipse plumage and two **Common Mergansers**. A great finale was an **Osprey** soaring over the lake as we returned to our cars. Back at the Raley's parking lot, we did a quick loop down to the trail by the wetland and picked up six species not seen at Folsom Point, including a family group of **California Quail, Spotted Towhee, House Wren**, and of course **House Sparrow**. We also had a good look at an **Ash-throated Flycatcher**, which we only heard at the lake. Great day with friendly people, good spotters, and enthusiastic birders of many ages. 44 bird species total. An eBird trip report can be found here: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/149574>

Sailor Bar, (8/3)

Leader Darrell Mohr reported:

An early morning get together for a tour of Sailor Bar. We started at 7 a.m. and went up towards Hazel Avenue hoping to find a Rufus-crowned Sparrow. We did not find the bird, although we did see **Double-crested Cormorants**. Turned around and headed back to the parking lot where we met two more people. Walked to the boat ramp and had a **Say's Phoebe** trying to catch a bug or just doing a dance. One person had a camera and was able to take a photo of the bird. From the boat ramp area we proceeded down along the bank of the American River. At one point we stopped so everyone would be able to have a good view of a **Phainopepla**. After that sighting and farther down the river bank we spotted a duck in the middle of the river. We had difficulty identifying the bird, so we took a picture of the bird. It turned out to be a **Bufflehead**.

We had a total of 41 species. It was a very good day.

Yuba Gap, (7/29)

Leader Sandra Steurer reported:

The weather was cool in the mountains. The birds were quiet at first and then started to pick up with their evening feeding. Highlights were the **Common**

Nighthawks aerial displays, along with **Black-throated Gray**, and **Hermit Warblers**.

Stevens Trail near Colfax, (7/30)

Leader Ben Graber reported:

Nobody showed up so I went by myself. Highlights were **Black-throated Gray, Nashville**, and **MacGillivray's Warblers, Wrentit, Osprey**, and heard a **Pileated Woodpecker**.

Napa Wetlands, (7/26)

Maureen Geiger, co-leader with Nancy Gronert, reported:

Nancy and I spent a very nice morning with three other birders at American Canyon Wetlands. Identifying and counting as many of the literally thousands of shorebirds present was fun and challenging with highlights including a distant **Bald Eagle**, a close-in **Great Horned Owl**, hunting **White Pelicans** and great views of three species of swallows and two **Caspian Terns**. The morning overcast and cool breeze contributed to a very enjoyable morning.

Blues at the Bufferlands, (7/23)

Leader Chris Conard reported:

An early start allowed us to avoid the worst of the heat, though it was warm and muggier than is typical for Sacramento. On the way out to the Bufferlands, we made a brief stop by a few of the sewer ponds in the wastewater treatment plant. Highlights among shorebirds included several **Black-necked Stilt** family groups with adults making distraction displays. There was one **American Avocet** family as well. We saw a couple **Semipalmated Plovers, Least and Western Sandpipers, Long-billed Dowitchers, and Greater Yellowlegs**. On the Bufferlands proper, we enjoyed the active **Great Egret, Great Blue Heron**, and **Double-crested Cormorant** rookery, plus a nearby **Swainson's Hawk** nest. There were about 150 **American White Pelicans** on the wetlands and many young **Pied-billed Grebes**. Resident songbirds included very vocal and cooperative **Song Sparrows, Common Yellowthroats, and Blue Grosbeaks**.



Western Bluebird. Photo by Paul Miller

UC Davis Arboretum, (7/22)

Leader Paul Miller reported:

We had a small group of only three people for this outing. While the Arboretum is a lovely wheelchair friendly location, it can sometimes be rather deserted of birds. The typically present **Pied-billed Grebes, Green, Great Blue and Black-crowned Night-Herons** were nowhere to be seen. In total we observed nineteen species, including the ever present **Western Bluebirds** actively feeding their young. We also

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Field Trip Findings: continued

observed a floating mallard decoy, that from a distance sure looked odd. I took the opportunity and named the rare species a Miller's Mallard (*Floatus Decoyus*).

Woodland Waste Water Treatment Plant, (7/20)

Leader Maureen Geiger reported:

The North Pond at the Woodland Water Treatment Plant always has something to view and today was no exception. The light was just incredibly beautiful on the water which really enhanced the colors of birds in a crisp, wonderful way. The two of us saw the usual suspects including **phalaropes, dowitchers, stilts, avocets, Least Sandpipers, ibis** and lots and lots of ducks. At least five **Pied-billed Grebes** were sitting on nifty raised, circular nests, and there were other babies everywhere. **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** are now nesting in the growing reed areas on both ends of the pond instead of just the east side, and we saw about a dozen altogether. Also, a raptor not usually seen at this site was an adult **Cooper's Hawk** along with several **Swainson's Hawks**, frequently present.

Point Reyes, (7/15)

Leader Dan Williams reported:

10 of us profoundly enjoyed temperatures 40 degrees below those in the infernal valley on this midsummer weekend. Unfortunately, the tides did not cooperate to provide us the shorebird bounty we were hoping for on this trip, but nevertheless, we saw some cool things and a decent time was had by all. We started the day at the Earthquake Trail and Bear Valley Visitor Center near Olema. Highlights included two **Ospreys** high above clutching fish, nesting **Violet-green Swallows** under the visitor center roof and **Purple Martins** overhead, **Swainson's Thrushes** singing their spiraling ethereal songs from the lush red elderberries, **Chestnut-backed Chickadees** and **Wilson's Warblers** foraging in the fragrant bay laurels, and an unusually cooperative **Hairy Woodpecker** who allowed scope views while she preened on a low branch. Next, we stopped at Inverness Store to scan Tomales Bay, where the tide was just reaching its highest point, and consequently we saw very few birds. A few **Great Blue Herons** and **Great Egrets** on the opposite shore from the nearby rookeries, some recently fledged **Barn Swallows**, and a **Red-shouldered Hawk** soaring over the nearby ridge with an accompanying pair of ravens was about all the avian action at that location. Our lunchtime venture to Abbotts Lagoon provided more mammals than avian highlights, as the high tide continued to impede our ability to find shorebirds. Coveys of **California Quail** with young in tow, **Song and White-crowned Sparrows**, a singing **Wrentit**, and a hen **Gadwall** with four ducklings were nice, but they were quite frankly outshined by the barking, swirling, play-fighting family of river otters who briefly emerged onto the sandy shore of the lagoon and played like kittens in a litter box not 50 feet away from us. Following that experience, we soaked in a few last moments of cool, foggy shoreline before beginning the trek back to our inland blast furnace.

Cosumnes River Preserve Volunteer Naturalist Training

On August 26 – 27, Cosumnes River Preserve is holding volunteer naturalist training at the Visitor Center. This two-day training is a great opportunity to learn about the preserve's natural and cultural history, the native flora and fauna, as well as the history of the Preserve and the partners that contribute to making this place what it is today.

A few highlights of the training include:

- A bird walk by John Trochet
- A presentation about wetlands and Preserve habitats by Amy Fesnock our Preserve Manager
- A presentation by Alex on the Preserves habitat restoration projects.

To learn more or register for the training, contact the Cosumnes River Preserve Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator Maddy Barton at hillma@sacounty.gov.

Upcoming Bufferlands Events



Photo: Regional San

No Pets, Please! For all Bufferlands events, we respectfully request that you please leave your dogs and other pets at home.

Twilight on the Bufferlands Wednesday, September 20, 5 – 9 p.m.

To make your reservation for the September 20 event, please email Twilight on the Bufferlands between September 15 to September 19 at jonesro@sacsewer.com, or contact Roger Jones from at (916) 875-9174. An email confirmation, including the meeting location, will be sent to you.

Don't miss the last opportunity of the year to explore some of the Great Central Valley habitats at dusk on the Bufferlands. During the tour, participants may have a chance to see some of our nocturnal animals, like beavers, river otters, muskrats, raccoons, owls and more. These animals are typically hiding during the day. Please wear appropriate clothing for walking on trails and bring water and binoculars if you have a pair. Advanced registration is required for this free event, as space is limited. Reservations will only be accepted from.

For more information visit: <https://www.regionalsan.com/bufferlands-events/twilight-bufferlands-2>

Bufferlands Open Trail Day October 14, 2023 - 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Open Trail Day is another great opportunity to explore some of the Bufferlands. Several miles of trails will be open for hiking at your own pace. Bufferlands biologists and docents will be out on the trails to help you find your way and to answer any nature-related questions. This is a great time to see Fall colors as the forests begin to change from green to gold. The trails will span through riparian forests with trees over 300 years old, oak woodlands, and seasonal wetlands. Many species of songbirds, waterfowl and shorebirds can be seen this time of year. Event and parking are free. Please sign in at the check-in table and get your trail map. Dress for the weather and bring a water bottle. There will be no food vendors on-site, but feel free to pack a picnic or trail snacks. Wild animals are within the hiking trails.

Local Artist Spotlight—Tom Sorensen

“I’ve always been into hiking and enjoy being out in nature—it’s very restorative,” says the retired respiratory therapist. “Any time my mood is not good, if I get out and go for a hike, it makes me feel better.”

Tom Sorensen is a retired respiratory therapist who has been painting landscapes, seascapes, and birds for 16 years. He learned under the teachings of the renowned Bill Parsons at the Parsons Gallery in Benicia. Tom’s passion for painting has come from his love of nature, and he strives for realism in his works. About eight years ago Tom started going on “raptor hikes” at Lynch canyon with Larry Broderick and that started him on his love of birds and birding. When Sacramento Audubon resumed field trips Tom started joining them and has thoroughly enjoyed these outings. All of this exposure has led to his picking up his paint brush and painting birds.

“That’s the thing about art—you can take something in a photograph and make it your own thing,” Sorensen says. “If you took a photo of a mountain but the weather wasn’t good that day, you can change the weather. I’ll even incorporate several different photos into a single scene, the sunset from one photo, the foreground from another, a mountain from another, and put them together. Well, and the same goes for painting birds.”

Sorensen sells paintings at festivals up and down the coast, and has won several awards, including an Award of Merit at the 2019 California State



Fair. No matter the accolades, Sorensen does it for the love of the art form and the great outdoors.

“There’s lots of beauty out there to see,” he says.

You can view Tom’s artwork at: sorensenfineart.com.

—Paul Miller

Seasonal Sightings July 1 – 31

More than anything, July is a month to be anticipated for its shorebird migration. It’s best to get out early before the heat makes the day uncomfortable and heat shimmer makes it hard to clearly see the birds you are looking for. Songbird migrants begin to trickle through by month’s end, and unexpected birds can turn up any time of year. Up to eight **Snow Geese** spent the month at the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant (SRWTP) Bufferlands, with two seen at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP). Up to 250 **Snow Geese** were reported to the north at the Sacramento NWR, establishing what must be a local record for the summer. A lingering **Canvasback** and up to nine **Redheads** continued through the month at the Woodland Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Among the shorebird highlights was a **Marbled Godwit** at CRP on 7/28; there were several godwits reported from Yolo County, where the species is more often encountered. A **Sanderling** was found at the Lincoln WTP on 7/28, and one was also found at CRP on 7/29. A **Snowy Plover** was a nice find southeast of Dixon along Robben Rd on 7/1 and 7/2. Among the regular Western and Least sandpipers, a **Baird’s Sandpiper** was reported at the Yolo County Central Landfill Pond, visible from Yolo County Rd 28H. This species is typically found later in the season. Also quite early was a **Pectoral Sandpiper** along County Rd 104 on 7/31. The only **Semipalmated**



Wilson’s Warbler. Photo by Ray Rozema

Sandpiper report in July was at the SRWTP on 7/31. A **Solitary Sandpiper** was found at the Anatolia Vernal Pool Preserve from 7/19 to 7/24. A **Least Bittern** family group with at least two young was seen throughout the month at the Davis Wetlands and accounted for the only reports of this species for the region this month. The **Yellow-crowned Night-Heron** seen for one day in May (5/11) in Natomas was refound at the nearby North Natomas Regional Park on 6/11 and continued through at least 7/2. Songbird migration didn’t produce anything unexpected, but did begin to pick up before month’s end.

While at least two **Yellow Warblers** continued near the Accidental Forest at CRP, a small breeding outpost for the species in our region, migrant **Hermit** and **Wilson’s Warblers** were reported in the last few days of the month. As early as the second week of July, reports of migrating **Western Tanagers** were widespread.

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: Max Brodie, Aidan Brubaker, Lyann Comrack, Konshau Duman, Justin Dunbar, Andy Engilis, Jr., Joshua Greenfield, Cliff Hawley, Jim Holmes, Scott Hoppe, Jeri Langham, Manfred Kusch, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Roger Muskat, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Ron Pozzi, Steve Scott, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, and Lynette Williams. Thanks to everyone for their reports—without them, this column would not be possible.

—Chris Conard

SAS New Members

Please welcome these new members:

Catherine Bacon-Davis
Michael Funk
Jennifer Jasper
Claire Lehman
Jan Lightfoot
Alegra Schmidt
Cynthia Taurone
Phillip Wister

Thank You For Your Generous Donations!

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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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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.

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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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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, September 26, 2023.

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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September General Meeting

The Language of Birds

Presented by Nathan Pieplow

Thursday, September 21, 2023 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.