

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 71 • NO. 2

FEBRUARY 2019

General Meeting

Thursday, February 21, 2019

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Assembly Room, 7pm

Making eBird Work For You and the Birds

Chris Conard and Rich Howard

Whether you're a regular eBird user, thinking about starting, or think it's probably not for you, there's much to learn. In under two decades, eBird has grown to preserving over 100 million bird records annually, giving us an unprecedented window into bird populations and movements, and has supported many scientific studies. Through on-screen demonstrations, this presentation will discuss how to get started, how to make your checklists more useful to science, how to add photos and sound recordings, and how to search eBird for information about bird populations or specific locations of birds you'd like to see. At its best, an eBird checklist can be a scientific document and a pleasure to behold. The combined power of the millions of records gives us a new understanding of bird populations so important to conservation. Chris and Rich will also cover the eBird mobile app and GPS tracking, data quality and review, planned improvements, a brief overview of the ongoing eBird-based Sacramento County breeding bird atlas, and resources to learn more about this ground-breaking citizen science project.

Chris Conard is a volunteer eBird reviewer for Sacramento County and uses eBird data to write the Seasonal Observations column in the SAS Observer. Rich Howard teaches classes on beginning birding and on using eBird at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Assembly Room in Carmichael. The public is welcome. Visit our website www.sacramentoaudubon.org and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions. To keep up with current happenings follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon.

*Anthony Asay
Education Chair*

SAS OUTREACH, HELP OUT AND HAVE FUN!

Bill Bianco, our hard working Outreach chair, has asked for volunteers for the following events this Spring. You do not have to be an accomplished birder, just someone who enjoys birding and talking to people about our field trips and SAS. You would be working with an experienced volunteer. If you can work a 3 or 4 hour shift, please contact Bill at biancowm@yahoo.com; or at 916-372-3318. Note: All of these events are held outdoors.

Saturday, April 13: Creek Week, Carmichael Park

Saturday, April 13: Return of the Swainson's Hawk, Sutter's Landing

Sunday, April 21: Koobs Nature Area, Earth Day

Sunday, May 5: Sierra College Dino and Science Fest 2019

Sunday, May 12: Koobs Nature Area, Bird Day

Saturday, May 18: Walk on the Wildside, Beach Lake Park

Saturday, August 3: Harvest Day, UCCE Master Gardeners, Fair Oaks Park

BIRD AND BREAKFAST EVENTS AT EFFIE YEAW

Traditional Event – Saturday, March 16 at 8am

Family-Friendly Event – Saturday, March 23 at 8am

The American River Natural History Association (ARNHA) and Sacramento Audubon are once again teaming up to offer two special weekend morning birding trips coupled with wonderful breakfast fare.

This event, held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Ancil Hoffman Park in Carmichael, starts with bird walks guided by some of our best local birders. For weeks in advance, these guides scout the Nature Study Area so they will be able to point out nests and local rarities. After the walk, join fellow birders for wonderful food and hot coffee to help raise money for the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. No extensive birding experience is necessary—this event caters to all levels.

On March 16 the bird walk will be approximately 90 minutes long, followed by the traditional casserole breakfast buffet provided by some of the best cooks among ARNHA Board members and Nature Center volunteers. Participants can also bid for attractive baskets and experiences in the silent auction.

On March 23 guests can choose to join either a family bird walk, a one hour walk appropriate for children 6 and older, or a longer, 90-minute adult bird walk open to those ages 12 and above. This event features a hot pancake breakfast, cooked and served by the Carmichael Kiwanis Club.

Bird and Breakfast often sell out. Reservations are required. Call 916-489-4918 for information, questions and to make reservations, or register online at www.sacnaturecenter.net/events/bird-breakfast-weekend/.

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD COUNT THIS MONTH!

Greetings from the Great Backyard Bird Count team at Audubon, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and Bird Studies Canada! We want to remind you to mark your calendars for the 22nd GBBC, coming in just two weeks, February 15 through 18, 2019.

New! Explore Species Tool One of the coolest new tools for anyone who participates in the GBBC or uses eBird is the Explore Species feature. You'll find it at ebird.org/explore.

Also new! Become an eBird Whiz The new eBird Essentials course is perfect for new and returning GBBC participants. As you probably know, the GBBC collects its data via the eBird online reporting system. Even if you already use eBird on a regular basis, this course will help you get the most out of the program. Best of all, it doesn't cost a thing! Discover how eBird can make finding, photographing, and sharing birds more enjoyable, and how your observations help scientists understand and protect them, too. Learn more at academy.allaboutbirds.org/product/ebird-essentials/.

NOTE: SAS has several trips planned with a focus on the GBBC. Look for them on page 5, of this *Observer*, February 16 through February 18.

BUFFERLANDS EVENTS

INTRODUCTION TO BUFFERLANDS BIRDS

Sunday, February 3, 9am–Noon

The bufferlands is home to more than 240 species of birds. Some of them are large and recognizable, but many are small, secretive and harder to identify. If you are a beginning birder or are just interested in our local birdlife, come join us as we identify birds through riparian forest, grasslands and wetland edges.

The meeting location is weather-dependent, so please contact [chris conard](mailto:conardc@sacsewer.com) (conardc@sacsewer.com or 916-203-1610) to confirm your reservation and meeting location.

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

ROOKERY TOUR

Saturday, March 16, 9am–Noon

Come and experience an up-close view of a nesting colony of herons, egrets and double-crested cormorants. These beautiful birds nest in communal groups, high in the riparian forest. This area has more than 150 nests. Look for more information next month.

Field Trip Findings

Sailor Bar (1/12)—Leader Mark Martucci reported: "Fifteen people saw sixty species of birds on a very nice winter morning along the American River Parkway. Highlights included Purple Finch, Lark Sparrow, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla, Tundra Swan, Barrow's Goldeneye and Bald Eagle."

Bucks Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway (1/8)—Leader Maureen Geiger reported: "Six of us had a very nice walk under cloudy skies. We tallied some interesting numbers like 19 Common Gallinules—and no Coots! Among the 45 species were also Hooded Mergansers, a handful of Purple Finches, Red-shouldered Hawks flying about calling and seemingly everywhere, and a Red-tailed Hawk carrying large sticks to a huge nest several times. Notable was the almost complete lack of crowned sparrows."

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (1/6)—Leader Scott Hoppe reported: "Challenged by wind and rain, three of us set out to see what we could see, birding mostly from the car. Highlights included many hundreds of flyover Snow Geese (one flock contained a couple of Ross's), Greater White-fronted and a single flock of more than 60 Cackling Geese. We found 2 American Bitterns skulking at the edges of the reeds, a Sora out in the open and a Virginia Rail heard. 2 Great Horned Owls were seen, one very close to the road, and at least 30 Yellow-headed Blackbirds

associating with a large flock of Red-winged. While the weather certainly hampered things, we all agreed that it was a great morning, and we were glad we came. Our species tally was 44."

Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR (1/5)—Leaders Daniel and Pam Thompson reported: "The trip was cancelled due to wind and rain."

New Year's Day at the Cosumnes River Preserve (1/1)—Leader Tim Fitzer reported: "New Year's Day was windy and very cold. Eight people ventured out but the cold wind was overpowering and most left early. Some of the highlights were 3 species of Teal, Ringed-necked Ducks, Northern Pintail, Bufflehead and Sandhill Cranes."

Bushy Lake (12/29)—Leader Darrell Mohr reported: "Four people braved the cold morning; however the sun was shining. The sparrows were common along the fences on both sides of the road. The walk along the road to Bushy Lake was very quiet. As we rounded the east side of the lake more birds started coming out of the bushes. Around the edge of the lake there were a number of Black-crowned Night Herons. As we reached the far end of the lake, the Wood Ducks came into view. When we reached the Fairgrounds Orchard a Cooper's Hawk perched on the fence and gave us all good views of its profile. We had a total of 42 species. A good day."

Sandhill Crane Trips (1/22 and 1/23)—Alan Kilgore, co-leader with Mike Savino and Jackie Delu, reported: "On Saturday, due to the federal government shut down, participants drove to Staten Island. What began as a crane viewing tour looked like it was going to be a swan tour. There were hundreds of Tundra Swans in the flooded fields. Hundreds more flew overhead with their distinctive high pitched bugle. By sundown, however, the Sandhill Cranes showed up in large numbers landing in family groups near the road. There were also Cackling Geese flying overhead in their distinctive V formations. The sunset gave our guests hot pink and rose fire clouds and golden edged horizons to create awe and give wonderful photos. On Sunday we had a similar array of birds. With Mike's digiscope set up, a tour participant was able to capture very clear photos of a Northern Harrier capturing her vole-dinner. In addition to a large number of swans, cranes, and geese, we also saw flocks of shorebirds."

Mather Lake (12/15)—Leader Wayne Blunk reported: "Excellent weather greeted an enthused group of 13 for a wonderful morning of birding. Fifty-three species plus two taxa resulted. Highlights were a Hermit Thrush, Loggerhead Shrike, American Pipits and a Rock Wren. In the mammal department, a single River Otter was spotted."

Cathie La Zier

2018–2019 Christmas Count Results by Area

WOODFORDS, DECEMBER 19

Dan Brown reported: “We had 23 participants who tallied 80 species during the SAS sponsored Woodfords Christmas Bird Count in Alpine County. Highlights were Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Rough-legged and Ferruginous Hawks, Cassin’s Finch, Red Crossbill and Woodhouse’s Jay. We missed Pinion Jay, Great Horned and Pygmy Owl.”

SACRAMENTO, DECEMBER 22

Dan Williams reported: “This was the 70th Annual Sacramento CBC, our count having been started all the way back in 1949. Our total (including count week birds) was 161 species. The record stands at 169 from 2015. Not included in that total were 3 non-established exotic species all appearing on the count for the first time (Graylag Goose, Indian Peafowl, and Rose-ringed Parakeet).

The rarest birds found were a Least Bittern at Conaway Ranch (Area 9—only the 2nd in the count’s history and the first since 1959!) A Bullock’s Oriole along Riverbank Road in West Sacramento (Area 8—first on the count since 1979), and a Barrow’s Goldeneye on Greenhaven Lake in the Pocket (Area 5—scarce in Sacramento county away from the American River). We also managed to come up with six species of owls on the count for the first time since 1990, including our first western screech owl since 1994 (Sacramento Bypass—Area 10), and our first Long-eared Owl since 2000 (Reservoir Road/Teal Bend Golf Course—Area 1).

Birds of note observed in the circle during count week (12/19–25) but not count day, included Eurasian Wigeon, Clark’s Grebe, Cattle Egret, Osprey, Red-breasted Nuthatch (which has been very scarce this winter), and Chipping Sparrow. Just missing count week but still deserving of a mention was a Lesser Black-backed Gull discovered at the Yolo County Landfill on 12/26.

New high totals for the count included Snow Goose (244,321), Western Bluebird (309), and European Starling, thanks to a murmuration over the airport at dawn, best estimated at north of 600,000 birds! We also matched our high count for Western Tanager (5).“

FOLSOM, DECEMBER 30

Chris Conard reported: “We ran the 41st Folsom Christmas Bird Count on a calm and mostly sunny day. There were a record 84 counters in a record 34 parties, and a couple of areas did some owling. In some areas it is fair to say we had nearly complete coverage. The species total was also a new record of 148, outside the historic range of 123 to the previous high of 146. As might be expected on a record count, there were several highlights, though despite excellent diversity, many observers reported fairly low numbers of many common species. Unlike counts on the flats of the Valley, this count struggles to come up with a good showing of waterfowl. Singles saved us from missing Snow Goose and Cackling Goose, while we missed Greater White-fronted Goose, but did have one flock of 22 Tundra Swans. Invasive Mute Swan numbers are growing with a record high of 33. Ducks were mixed, with misses of Northern Shoveler and Canvasback, while we did pick up two Lesser Scaup, which have been missed. Inexplicably, with so many people in the field, we reported only one Wood Duck. An impressive 57 Barrow’s Goldeneye were found, while

Hooded Mergansers, at 21, were just over half of last year’s total. The star of the show was the continuing male White-winged Scoter on the American River near the Nimbus Hatchery.

We missed Ring-necked Pheasant as we often do, but a single American Bittern and two Black-crowned Night-Herons were nice additions. On a count typically with low shorebird diversity, we missed Long-billed Dowitcher. At 14,000 total, gulls were only a quarter of typical numbers. No rare gulls were found, but four Mew Gulls were nice for a species sometimes missed. Of those identified to species, California Gulls made up 82%, while Herring Gulls were over 16%, and Ring-billed Gulls accounted for less than 2%. A Pacific Loon continuing at Folsom Point was excellent, but that only one Common Loon was reported is quite a surprise (last year there were 12).

We found one Osprey and seven Bald Eagles (including two pairs at nests), plus nine Ferruginous Hawks, and an impressive four Rough-legged Hawks. An adult Golden Eagle was a nice surprise for a species increasingly missed. Sticking with birds of prey, we found four Merlins (down from last year’s ten), two Prairie Falcons, and only one Peregrine Falcon. Three Barn Owls were good for a species easily missed, and we found three Burrowing Owls and one Western Screech-Owl. A single Northern Pygmy-Owl was an excellent find. It is yet another winter with paltry totals of Lewis’s Woodpeckers; two groups found a total of three. Five Hairy Woodpeckers is a nice total for a species missed about one-third of the time. Loggerhead Shrikes continue at low numbers, with two this year, while a Northern Shrike was found for the third time at the Peninsula portion of Folsom Lake SRA. This is the fourth for the count overall, and not a huge surprise in a season where this species has been reported from many sites in the region.

Only 35 Yellow-billed Magpies were counted, down slightly from last year’s 40, but much better than the previous year’s low of 13. At 43, Common Ravens came in just below the record of 47, though we missed Steller’s Jay as we do about one-third of the time. We found three Brown Creepers, missed Red-breasted Nuthatch, found three Golden-crowned Kinglets in a year where they have been hard to find, and turned up an impressive eight Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. A single Varied Thrush was a nice find in a season where they have been hard to come by, but we missed Common Yellowthroat as we sometimes do. A sampling of additional numbers includes 422 Anna’s Hummingbirds, 295 Black Phoebes, 622 Oak Titmouses, 662 Western Bluebirds, five California Thrashers, 71 Phainopeplas, five Orange-crowned Warblers, and two Chipping Sparrows. One of 548 Dark-eyed Juncos was Slate-colored, as was one of 35 Fox Sparrows. Three Bell’s Sparrows and two Lawrence’s Goldfinches were both nice finds. Purple Finches had a good showing with 48, while we were lucky to pick up three Pine Siskins in this non-invasion year. The most ominous number was only one Tricolored Blackbird. Much of the species’ breeding and foraging habitat within the count circle is currently being converted to residential development south of Hwy 50.

Thanks to all who participated and especially to the area leaders who do a lot of extra work organizing their teams.

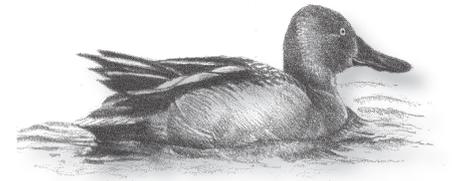
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You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

Field Trips



Redhead
Daniel Kilby

Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or to check the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. For trips through February 11, contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, offleash56@yahoo.com, 916-761-1124. For trips from February 12 through March 11, contact the scheduler Sonja Sorbo, ssgasdoc@yahoo.com, 916-390-8463.

Due to insurance requirements, Sacramento Audubon leaders are not allowed to organize ridesharing/carpools. Participants are, however, encouraged to voluntarily share rides. Any carpool arrangements are private agreements between the driver and the passengers. Drivers must carry adequate insurance coverage. Please be courteous and share gas expenses with the driver. FRS radios can be helpful on all trips. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader. In case of INCLEMENT WEATHER contact the trip leader for trip status.

NOTE: Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place.

Thursday, January 31, leaving at 7:30am

Gray Lodge SWR

Leader: Bill Bianco, 916-889-4849
biancowm@yahoo.com

Join Bill to check out this State Wildlife Refuge. Bill will take the vehicle driving route and also walk one of the trails. Bring snacks and water, and meet Bill at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd before the 7:30 departure time. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd; go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Road, and then turn right into the parking area. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. Note that there is a \$4.32 per person charge at the refuge.

Friday, February 1, 8am

Sailor Bar

Leader: Mark Sawyer, 916-968-1661
MarkSawyer3383@yahoo.com

Join Mark for a morning walk checking out the resident and wintering birds. This is a good trip for beginners and experienced birders too. Meet at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Saturday, February 2, 9am in Merced County

Merced and Mariposa County grasslands and foothills

Leaders: Dan Brown and Tim Fitzer
Dan Brown, 916-704-0951
naturestoc@aol.com

Join Dan and Tim for a full day birding the grasslands and foothills of Merced

and Mariposa Counties. We will bird a 35 mile route of mostly unfenced grassland roads. This area is known for big numbers of raptors, including all the winter species (Ferruginous, Rough-legged, Prairie Falcon, Merlin). On a trip to the area a few years ago, we had 10 Ferruginous Hawks, 5 Rough-legged Hawks and numerous individuals of both eagle species! Meet Dan and Tim just east of the Le Grand road exit (179) off of highway 99 in Merced County at the corner of E Le Grand Rd and Silveira Way at 9am. This exit is south of Merced, about a 2 1/2 hour drive from Sacramento. This is a long drive, so a possible strategy might be to drive down to the area and spend Friday night in Turlock or Merced. Bring lunch, water, layered clothes, scopes and FRS radios if you have them.

Sunday, February 3, 8am

Mather Lake

Leader: Wayne Blunk, 916-206-3767
Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake is one of Wayne's favorite birding locations, and he usually turns up quite a list of bird species. Join him to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron and Common Yellowthroat. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning birders.

Wednesday, February 6, 8am

William Pond Park

Leader: Larry Hickey, 916-962-0387

Larryhickey1@gmail.com

Join Larry for this morning walk looking for wintering and resident birds. Along the river mergansers, goldeneye, herons and egrets can be found in the backwaters. California Quail, Western Bluebirds and Lark Sparrows may be found in the park area and various raptors may be spotted. Trip will end before noon. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east, just under 1 mile, and it runs into the park. Meet along the first parking area on your left, just after the kiosk. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. This is a great trip for beginners and more experienced birders.

Saturday, February 9, 7:30am

Grizzly Island and Rush Ranch

Leaders: Daniel and Pam Thompson
916-799-1093
keiran247@hotmail.com

Meet Scott Hoppe at the West Sac Park and Ride for voluntary carpooling to Fairfield to meet Pam and Daniel at their home. After a quick pitstop, coffee and a bird around their back yard, they will lead a trip over to Grizzly Island where you'll visit Rush Ranch and have a bird around Grizzly Island. Please bring lunch and liquids. Hiking shoes or boots are highly recommended. We plan on birding till around 3pm. The only thing that will cancel this trip would be pouring rain. Light rain or showers . . . we are GO to bird! Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Avenue, Exit #81, turn left at the light, and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Sunday, February 10, 8am

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge

Leader: John York, 916-409-9276
Johnyork157@yahoo.com

John will be looking for the enormous flocks of ducks, geese and swans that winter in the valley or stop to feed on their way south. This is also a good place for raptors, and Bald Eagles are a possibility. There is a 3.7 mile driving route and a great viewing platform as well. This trip will last into early afternoon. Bring lunch, snacks and hydration as the refuge has no restaurants and birds poop in the water. Meet at the Bel Air shopping center on Arena Blvd. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Arena Blvd, go west (left) over the freeway. Take the first left, Duckhorn Rd, and then turn right into the parking area. Meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. Please note there is a \$6 day use fee for each vehicle at the refuge, or buy a Duck Stamp and support all our national refuges. This is a good trip for newer birders and experienced birders alike.

Sunday, February 10
Beginning Birding Field Trip for Adults
William Pond Park

These beginners' field trips are designed to introduce new birders to the fun of birding. Limited to 10 adults per trip with 3 Audubon trip leaders, it's a low-key introduction to finding and identifying birds. On this winter trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks, and look for some of our wintering birds, as well as residents. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid@earthlink.net, put Beginning Birder in the subject line.

Thursday, February 14, 8am
Lincoln WWTP and
Placer County Roads
Leader: Sonja Sorbo, 916-390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com

On this morning trip we will start by birding the Lincoln water treatment plant. There are several large ponds which can hold a variety of ducks. From the plant, we will drive some nearby backroads of Placer county, searching flooded fields for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. We will search a small riparian area for sparrows, woodpeckers, and other resident species. Several open dry fields may provide hunting grounds for raptors. Meet at the parking lot of Dry Creek Community Park at 9235 Walerga Road in Roseville at 8AM. FRS radios will be helpful.

GBBC
February 15 through 18

Great Backyard Bird Count
gbbc.birdcount.org

Count birds for 15 minutes or more in your backyard or other favorite birding locale; then post your results online and see what's happening in your area and across the country. It's fun for all ages and skill levels. Check the website above for more information, or join one of the field trips and the leader will input the group's checklist.

Saturday, February 16, 8am
Family Friendly Trip, a GBBC trip
North Natomas Regional Park
Leader: Ben Graber, 916-844-8682
Bgraber984@gmail.com

Join Ben for a leisurely morning walk around the North Natomas Regional Park. 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. Meet Ben at the parking lot on the North side of New Market Drive across from Inderkum High School. New Market Drive is off Truxel Road approximately a mile north of Interstate 80. This is a great trip for both beginning and more experienced birders.

Saturday, February 16, 10:30am
Effie Yeaw Family Nature Walk,
(and a GBBC walk)

This family friendly nature walk will be at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center in Carmichael. Acorn Woodpeckers and Wild Turkeys are abundant, but sharp eyes and ears may find Spotted Towhees or Bushtits as well. Reservations are not needed; families can simply show up and enjoy a one-hour walk in the lovely Nature Area with naturalists from the Nature Center and birding leaders Craig DeMartini and Dan Williams from Audubon. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, February 17, 8am
Wolf Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary,
a GBBC trip
Leaders: Maureen Geiger
916-281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net
Ken Poerner: 707-580-6277
kenpoe@sbcglobal.net

This is a little known 60-acre wetlands in the North area of Sacramento. Good time

of year for a variety of species in the open water and wetland perimeters which have been planted with native riparian shrubs and trees. Maureen and Ken will walk the two-mile loop, exploring different habitats along the way. This trip will last until late morning and will involve walking on a fairly good, flat trail which may be muddy. From Sacramento take I-5 north, then follow Hwy 99/70 north 1.1 miles. Take the Elkhorn Boulevard exit #525B, and turning right, continue 3.1 miles, cross Steelhead Creek, and make an immediate right turn on Sorrento into a large, unpaved parking lot. You will see a sign for the Walter S Ueda Parkway in the parking lot.

Monday, February 18, 8am
Ancil Hoffman Park, a GBBC trip
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 916-502-2699
empid@earthlink.net

We'll bird the grassy picnic area, then bird our way upstream for a change. Note that we'll be walking over a lot of cobbles. Meet in the picnic parking lot across from the golf course parking lot. From California Ave in Fair Oaks take the Tarshes Drive entrance and follow it all the way to the last parking lot on your left. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. This is a good trip for beginners.

Tuesday, February 19, 8am
Lake Solano/Putah Creek
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207
spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris: 916-947-7573
burris.nellieann@gmail.com

This is a great area to find a variety of woodpeckers, Phainopepla, Brown Creeper, Barrow's Goldeneye and many other late wintering birds. Meet at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride. From Sacramento take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd, Exit #75; turn right (north) and then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride lot a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. Meet on the south side of the parking lot in the row nearest the big round water tank. Heavy rain or high winds cancel the trip, which will end in the late afternoon, so you may want to bring lunch and water.

Saturday, February 23, 8am
Sailor Bar, American River Parkway
Leader: 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

Field Trips continued on page 6

Field Trips continued from page 5

Quail. This is a good trip for both beginners and experienced birders. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way just west of Hazel. Meet at the last parking lot on your left, just before the boat launch parking area. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, February 24, 7am–Noon
Michigan Bar and vicinity
Leader: Chris Conard, 916-203-1610
conardc@gmail.com

We will focus on Michigan Bar Road and may visit portions of Latrobe and Meiss Rds, though access will be partially dependent on road conditions and recent weather. Vast areas of open grassland and blue oak woodland interspersed with rocky outcrops and the Cosumnes River provide habitat for winter raptors, resident and winter songbirds, and perhaps a surprise or two. We'll have a mix of car birding (bring FRS radios if you have them) and short to moderate walks. Meet at the Park and Ride on Hwy 16 (Jackson Hwy) just west of Sunrise Blvd and the Folsom South Canal (7 miles east of Watt Ave). Steady rain will cancel the trip.

Tuesday, February 26, 8am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Craig DeMartini
916-599-3300
cloudwalk7@icloud.com

Meet Craig at the main CRP parking lot and we'll walk the boardwalk loop looking for Sandhill Cranes, geese and a wide variety of duck species. Yellowlegs and Wilson's Snipe will be in the shallower water, and other shorebirds are possible. Then we'll take the walking trail to the river looking for smaller passerines. This is a great trip for beginners. From Sacramento, take I-5 south to Twin Cities Road, Exit #498; go left (east) to the stop sign at Franklin Blvd; turn right (south) on Franklin and, driving through the Preserve, watch for the Visitor Center parking lot on your left. Further directions and maps are available at www.cosumnes.org.

Saturday, March 2, 6:30am
Arrowhead Marsh and Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline
Leaders: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471,
shoppe01@surewest.net
Mark Martucci, 916-833-6722,
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com

Arrowhead Marsh and MLK, Jr Regional

Shoreline, encompassing much of San Leandro Bay, is an extremely productive birding area. It is well known for Ridgway's Rails, lots of wintering ducks and hundreds of shorebirds during the falling tides. It has also produced rarities and hard to find species such as Nelson's and Swamp Sparrows. We will likely spend most of the day there. However, time permitting, we may visit other nearby locations. Bring lunch and liquids, and dress for possible cold early morning temps. Meet Scott and Mark at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

Sunday, March 3, 7:30am
Mather Lake
Leader: Wayne Blunk, 916-206-3767
Wayne.Blunk@gmail.com

Mather Lake can be a hotspot for birding, with a variety of possibilities. Join Wayne to look for a nice variety of resident and migrant birds. Possibilities include White-tailed Kites, California Quail, American Bittern, Green Heron and Common Yellowthroat. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park; from Highway 50, go south on Zinfandel about 2-1/2 miles. After crossing Douglas Blvd, take the first left into the park area. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee; your Sac County Parkway pass is valid here. This is a wonderful trip for beginning and more experienced birders.

Wednesday, March 6, 8am
William Pond Park
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 916-502-2699
empid@earthlink.net

This park has a variety of habitats, river, pond, woods and mown grass. We'll walk down to some different spots on the river, then check out the heron rookery and look at the pond area. Trip will end before noon. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. From the intersection of Fair Oaks and Arden, follow Arden east, just under 1 mile, and it runs into the park. Meet along the first parking area on your left, just after the kiosk. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles. This is an excellent trip for beginners

Saturday, March 9, 8am
Tonzi Road and Western Amador County
Leader: Gary Fregien, 916-708-0636
calaveri.gary@gmail.com

Join Gary on a trip featuring the waters and back-country roads of the Sierra foothills in

western Amador County. There is a surprising variety and number of passerines and raptors in this area, with a possibility of Lewis's Woodpeckers, Hermit and Varied Thrushes, sparrows, Prairie Falcons and Ferruginous Hawks. This trip also includes stops for waterfowl and shorebirds at ponds near Sutter Creek and Ione. We may also stop at Lake Comanche, where a day-use fee is charged. There will be minimal hiking, but dress for winter conditions. Bring along hand held radios if you have them, food and water. Meet Gary at the Local Bean Cafe in the Rancho Murieta shopping center. Turn right at the 1st traffic light; junction of Hwy 16 (Jackson Rd) and Murieta Drive, and right again just past the fire station.

Sunday, March 10, 7:30–Noon
(Note: DST begins today)
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Leader: Dan Murphy, 916-541-4213
dmmurpete@gmail.com

Join Dan in this great area 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. Depending on the extent of flooded fields on the auto tour route, there may be good numbers of shorebirds and waterfowl as well as raptors. From Sacramento, take I-80 west, take the first exit (#78) at the west end of the Yolo Causeway. Turn right at the stop sign, go under the freeway, make a left up onto the levee, then drop down into the Wildlife Area. The trip begins at the first parking lot (Lot A) on your left, at the beginning of the auto tour. FRS radios and scopes are helpful on this trip.

YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS FROM CENTAL VALLEY BIRD CLUB

Hi birders, it's that time of year again.

The David Yee Youth Scholarship Fund is taking applications for the Summer 2019 camp season. If you are a young birder between 12-18 years old, or know one, check out this great opportunity.

The instructions to sign up for the scholarship (applications can be mailed or sent via email) are here: www.cvbirds.org/youth-scholarship/scholarship-instructions/

Read about the camp experiences of previous recipients at the bottom of this page: www.cvbirds.org/youth-scholarship-fund/

If you have any questions please contact me. Thanks, Clifford Hawley
Email: yellowhammerca@gmail.com

Birding and Nature Events

12TH ANNUAL WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

The **City of Galt**, in collaboration with the Cosumnes River Preserve and Galt Joint Union Elementary and High School Districts, is pleased to bring you the 12th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, February 2, 2019**. The festival guests will enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the Cosumnes River Preserve and the incredible opportunity to catch sightings of waterfowl, shorebirds and wildlife in their winter habitat. Festival headquarters will provide a starting point for exclusive preserve tours, educational presentations, wildlife shows, art displays, wine walk, hometown history and hands-on activities. This is a winter celebration you'll always remember!

Registration for the annual festival will open in December so check online or call so you don't miss any of your favorite tours. Space for tours is limited, so sign up as soon as possible at the Galt city website below. Visit ci.galt.ca.us/about-galt/special-events/11th-annual-winter-bird-festival for registration and more information or call 209-366-7180, if you have any questions.

2019 KLAMATH FALLS WINTER WINGS FESTIVAL FOUR DAYS! FEBRUARY 14-17

The 40th Annual Winter Wings Festival will be held in **Klamath Falls, Oregon**. The 2019 festival is once again loaded with birding and nature photography talent. World famous nature photographer, George Lepp, and artist, writer educator and bird rehabilitator, Julie Zickfoose, are two of the keynote speakers this year. There are numerous photography workshops and field trips including some especially for youth; many raptor and owl prowl trips, and Bald Eagle flyouts. Registration is now open and required for all activities with an associated fee. The website with the complete schedule and registration information and forms is at: winterwingsfest.org. Further information is available at 877-541-BIRD (2473).

CALIFORNIA DUCK DAYS

California Duck Days Festival will take place on **Saturday, February 23** at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area Headquarters. This annual event, which takes place in the heart of the Pacific Flyway, features a wide variety of field trips, workshops, and activities for people of all ages. This is a family oriented, community-based outdoor festival with activities for people of all ages. Field trips are led by some of the region's most experienced birders and naturalists. On-site activities for families include interactive exhibits, wetland themed arts and crafts, trout fishing in their ponds, and much more. Information is at yolobasin.org/californiaduckdays/ You can also volunteer with Chelsea Hopkins at Chopkins@yolobasin.org.

OLYMPIC BIRDFEST, APRIL 12-14 IN SEQUIM, WASHINGTON

Grab your binoculars and join the 16th annual Olympic BirdFest 2019, celebration at the Dungeness River Audubon Center, April 12-14.

The important dates are:

April 12-14, for guided birding trips, boat tours, live auction and raffle, the gala banquet, and more. Our featured speaker will be John Marzluff, wildlife science professor and author.

Enjoy a three-day pre-festival birding cruise of the San Juan Islands, April 9-11.

Stay on for our Neah Bay post-trip on April 14-16: two days birding the coast.

Program information and registration at www.olympicbirdfest.org.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

Winter is coming to an end and soon the wintering waterfowl and cranes will be heading north. A visit to the Cosumnes River Preserve in February is your chance to see them while they're still here. CRP docents have a row of scopes set up, including lower ones for children, giving you good views of the many colorful ducks, geese and shorebirds.

Microscopes and hand lens provide close-up looks at "Duck Soup", dishes of water dipped from the pond full of water fleas, rat-tailed maggots, scuds and other squiggly things that provide the protein the birds are feeding on.

The Preserve is a quick drive from Sacramento – south on I-5 to Twin Cities Road; left (east) on Twin Cities for 1 mile; then right (south) on Franklin Blvd. The viewing area is in the first parking lot on your right as you drive into the preserve. Steady rain or flooding cancels event.

Come any time between 10am and 2pm on the following dates:

Saturdays: 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/16 and 2/23

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2019

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sundays, January 27, February 10 and April 7

*Trips limited to 10 adult participants, and require a minimum of 3 participants: Registration required.

These outings are geared toward people who aren't yet entirely comfortable joining field trips as well as those who have birded a bit but would like to be better birders. It is not necessary to be an Audubon member to participate. The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on looking and listening. This walk, covering about a mile and a half, will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. You can sign up for just one session, or for more than one.

Register via email to Cathie at empid@earthlink.net, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 502-2699, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Bill Bianco, Bruce Bostick, Donald Brown MD, Joan L Clark, Michael Flaningam, Taylor Florence, Cathy George, Tom Graham, Larry Hickey, Maria Nicholas Kelly, Robert Klass, Len and Rita Marowitz, Brian Miller, John Payne, Beverly Sales, Sonja Sorbo, Sonia Santa Anna, Jane Steele, Patrick Wagner, and Carolyn Woodruff made donations to the **General Fund**.

Carla R Barbaro and Karen Brookhyser made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

We're very late in acknowledging Pamela Thompson's contribution last year which was part of the **UBS Matching Gifts Program**. UBS is one of many companies that have a Matching Gifts program. If you don't know if your company has one you can ask your Human Resources Department. Thank you Pamela for taking part in this program.

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 continuing restoration and management.

Programs for 2019

March: Jeffery Rich, *Bald Eagles in the Wild-A Visual Essay of America's National Bird*

April: John Sterling, *Morroco*

May: Lindsay Wood, *Nesting Grebes in the High Lakes of Plumas County*

Mission Statement Sacramento Audubon Society

The mission of the Sacramento Audubon Society is to:

- Promote the protection and scientific study of wild birds;
- Promote the enjoyment and appreciation of wild birds through community outreach;
- Provide, encourage and support environmental educational opportunities; and
- Provide proactive leadership in the conservation of open space in the Sacramento region.

Join Us For Family Friendly Field Trips!

Saturday, February 16, 8am
Family Friendly Trip and GBBC Tally
North Natomas Regional Park

Join Ben Graber for a leisurely morning walk around the North Natomas Regional Park. You 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 will be present also. See page 5 of this month's *Observer* for exact details.

Effie Yeaw and SAS Family Nature Walks 2019

Saturday, February 16, 10:30am
Effie Yeaw Nature Walk

Bring the family out for a birding and nature walk led by a Naturalist and our special guest guides, Larry Hickey and Gesna Clarke, from the Sacramento Audubon Society. Birdwatchers of all levels are welcome. No registration is necessary but you might want to arrive a little early.

These walks occur monthly at Effie Yeaw, all led by a Naturalist and 2 Sacramento Audubon leaders. The schedule through May of next year is as follows:

March: No walk because of Bird and Breakfast

April 20: With SAS leaders Cathie La Zier and Sue Darst

May 18: With SAS leaders Dan Williams and Larry Hickey

NOTE: Meeting location and other information for all trips is available in our Field Trips column, beginning on page 4, or at sacramentoaudubon.org under Field Trips.

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The benefits of getting the *Observer* by email are several. You will help us save printing and mailing costs that we can otherwise use for our Mission; save tree resources; get the *Observer* earlier so you can plan your field trips sooner; and have a pdf version on your phone, tablet and/or pc! If you prefer to keep getting the printed *Observer* in the mail, you don't need to do anything.

Seasonal Observations

January 1 to January 31
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports
www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

After the fires of last month, rains came and this December might be called fairly typical in the Sacramento area, but there are always a few surprises. The highest total of **Blue-winged Teal** at Bridgeway Island Pond in West Sacramento this month was a careful count of 250. A cooperative male **White-winged Scoter** first found on 12/13 along the American River near the Nimbus Hatchery was seen by many into January along with reports of nearly 60 **Barrow's Goldeneyes**. A **Pacific Loon** was a nice find on Folsom Lake near Folsom Point on 12/22, continuing into January.

After years of alarming declines, **Mountain Plovers** appear to be absent this season from their typical haunts in Solano County south of Dixon, so it was a pleasant surprise to find up to 58 reported along Hwy 45 in Yolo County, just south of the Colusa County line, from 12/30 into early January. A **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was found at the Yolo County Central Landfill pond along County Rd 28H from 12/26 into January. A winter roost of about ten **Long-eared Owls** at a closed portion of Cosumnes River Preserve was found on 12/29 and continued into January, and a male **Costa's Hummingbird** was reported on the ARNHA Wildlife Count at Paradise Beach on 12/1. **Lewis's Woodpeckers** have been extremely scarce in their typical locations in eastern Sacramento County,

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome these new members:

Donald W. Brown, MD
Charles Donaldson
Cathy George
Susan Just
Maria Nicholas Kelly
Katherine M. Marsi
John Payne
Kirtan Sorgen
John Sullivan

Sacramento Audubon Chapter Board Meetings

Board Meetings of the Sacramento Audubon Society are held the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting will be on February 26, 2019, at 7pm. This Board Meeting will be held at Carmichael Library, 5605 Marconi Sacramento, 95608. Please NOTE the change in meeting place.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to 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. Please include your email address if you would like to be added to our Action Alert List for letter/email writing on conservation issues.

Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

sacaudubonmembership@gmail.com
P.O. Box 160694, Sacramento, CA 95816-0694

Date _____

The Observer Newsletter \$25 per address (1 Year) _____

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

Name _____ Telephone _____

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

Observations continued

but dozens were reported in the Dunnigan Hills in northern Yolo County. A **Greater Roadrunner** was found in the Dunnigan Hills on 12/1, and another was reported from ag lands west of Arbuckle along Lodi Rd on 12/2.

There were seemingly unprecedented numbers of **Northern Shrike** reports throughout the area this season. The bird found near Yolo County Rds 25 and 103 on 11/15 continued in the general area through at least 12/20, with likely a second bird in the area based on plumage. Other **Northern Shrike** reports came from near Plainfield Elementary on 12/1, a closed construction zone at the Sacramento Regional WTP from 12/4-11, and the Peninsula portion of Folsom Lake SRA on 12/30. A **Brown Thrasher** was an excellent find along Woodbridge Rd near the Ecological Reserve from 12/1

through at least 12/18. Additional interesting reports include a **Pacific-slope (or Western) Flycatcher** found along Putah Creek downstream of Pedrick Rd on 12/28, a **Steller's Jay** at Ancil Hoffman Park on 12/7, a **Clay-colored Sparrow** southeast of Winters on Gaddini Rd in Solano County on 12/17, and a **Yellow Warbler**, very rare in December, was found by an experienced observer in a Rosemont yard on 12/15. And finally, a **Lapland Longspur** was reported among an impressive flock of over 1,000 **Horned Larks** on 12/20 along Yolo County Rd 103 near Rd 27.

We feature photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recentsightings.html).

The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy

12 to the south, and the 1000' contour to the east and west, plus all of Sacramento and Yolo Counties. Many reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club listserve (cvbirds.org) and in eBird (ebird.org). It is impossible to list everyone, but I want to thank the following for their reports:

Dan Airola, Stuart Angerer, Keith Bailey, Max Brodie, Dan Brown, Leo Edson, Gil Ewing, Stephen Fettig, Robert Furrow, Steve Hampton, Jim Holmes, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Sami LaRocca, Andrew Lee, Mark Martucci, Michael Perrone, Steve Scott, John Sterling, Michele Swartout, Kirk Swenson, John Trochet, and Dan Williams.

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

Chris Conard

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White-tailed Kite Dan Brown

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Program Chair: Anthony Asay, e-mail, cend86@gmail.com

Editor: Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, sawise7@sbcglobal.net

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.

The Observer is published by the Sacramento Audubon Society, monthly, January through December, except June and August, when we publish abbreviated editions.

ATTEND THE NEXT SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM

Thursday, February 21, at 7pm
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Chris Conard and Rich Howard,
*Making eBird Work For You and
the Birds*



Burrowing Owl
Chris Conard