

The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society



VOLUME 71 • NO. 1

JANUARY 2019

General Meeting

Thursday, January 17, 2019

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Assembly Room, 7pm

How Woodpeckers Can Save the World (Or At Least Your Local Woodland!)

Stephen Shunk

We start off the New Year with a program by Stephen Shunk speaking about woodpeckers. North American woodpeckers perform multiple keystone roles in the ecology of our forests and woodlands. More than 40 North American bird species, dozens of mammals, and innumerable invertebrates depend upon woodpeckers for their own lifestyles. However, humans need habitat, too, as well as wood products and agricultural resources. By clearing forests, felling snags, and suppressing fire, we have prevented woodpeckers from doing their jobs. Learn the basics of woodpecker natural history, anatomy, and ecology, and prepare to become new ambassadors for forest and woodpecker conservation.

Steve began birding in 1989 in San Jose, California, and he started teaching birding classes in 1992. He founded the Paradise Birding tour company in 1997, and he currently leads tours in 8 states, 12 countries, and on 4 continents. Steve now resides in Bend, Oregon, on the eastern slope of Oregon's Cascade Mountains. He co-founded the East Cascades Bird Conservancy (now East Cascades Audubon), and he served as its first president. Steve also co-founded the Oregon Birding Trails program and coordinated its flagship project, the Oregon Cascades Birding Trail. Steve's woodpecker research began in central Oregon in 1998, where 11 of



White-headed Woodpecker
Stephen Shunk

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SEVENTH ANNUAL KIDS' CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

Saturday, January 5, 2019 and Sunday, January 6, 2019

Hopefully, if you are a family with kids, you're already registered for the Kids' CBC. Registered participants will be joining citizen scientists all over the world and will gain practice finding, identifying and counting all the birds they see. Counting on Saturday, January 5, will be for the younger birders, aged 6 to 10, from 9 to Noon, and will be followed by a companionable lunch with other birder families at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center.

This year older birders, 10 years and up, and their families will meet at William Pond Park at 9 am for their count. This will occur on Sunday, January 6, with faster paced birding for more experienced young people. At noon all will assemble at a nearby restaurant to compile the results, share exciting moments of the day, and eat. Register at: effieyeaw.eventbrite.com

Space is full for both days but it's still a good idea to sign up for the wait list.

Saturday Kids Compiler: Maureen Geiger, 916-281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Sunday Teens Compiler: Wendy Money, 916-201-3914
wendydoug@msn.com

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

Field Trip Findings

Mid-Yolo County Hotspots (12/11) – Leader Dan Murphy reported: “Ten of us auto toured six mid-eastern Yolo County hotspots on a clear crisp calm morning. We saw fifty seven species of birds. Notably, we saw Burrowing Owls on CR 30b, Hooded Mergansers at the CR 103 pond, a large flock of Green-winged Teal at the east end of CR 27, a soaring Sharp-shinned Hawk on CR103, large flyovers of geese on CR 25, Bonaparte’s Gulls at the Woodland WTP, and several Ferruginous Hawks in the area around Plainfield School.”

Gull ID Trip (12/9) – Leader Ed Harper reported: “Gray overcast greeted a group of 14 enthusiastic birders that put a shine on the day as they polished their skills in gull identification. Six species of gulls were studied with care given to key field marks. The gulls cooperated affording a good study of both adult and sub-adult birds. Highlights for the gulls included good looks at both an adult and a second-year Mew Gull. Several Iceland (Thayer’s race) gulls were also noted. Eager participants arriving early were greeted with an adult Bald Eagle flying up river. Scanning the many ducks on the river revealed four Barrow’s Goldeneye. It was a fun morning and everyone left with a little better understanding of gull identification.”

Robinson Road (12/6) – Leader Bill Bianco reported: “A group of twelve had a clear, cool and windy day and observed 46 species. Highlights were the raptors and owls. Total of seven raptor species with Rough-legged Hawk, Ferruginous, Prairie Falcon and Merlin heading the list. Great Horned Owls, six Burrowing Owls, and one Barn Owl. Shelia Junge did a great job spotting the Barn Owl in a grove of eucalyptus trees. Other observations were Horned Lark, Tricolored Blackbirds, Loggerhead Shrike, Greater Yellowlegs, to name a few. We missed seeing Mountain Plovers, but all agreed it was a very successful birding day.”

Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (12/2) – Leader John York reported: “Ten birders set out on a beautiful day at SNWR. Duck numbers were low and we saw no Cinnamon Teal, but there were a lot of geese, especially white ones. Highlights were a Merlin and a Peregrine Falcon within 200 yards of parking lot as we started the tour. At the other end of

the day, after finding several blue morph Snow Geese, we found two blue morph Ross’ Geese. Andy Engilis verified their non-hybrid status with a run-down of field marks to look for, such as black going into the top of the head from the rear. Good to have an expert at hand. Several of the birders were new or newish to California, so several lifers were ticked. Tim tried to collect the lifer \$20 fee per bird, but I wouldn’t let him and kept the money myself.”

Bodega Bay (12/1) – Leader Ron Storey reported: “Seven of us met at 9am at Shollenberger Park in Petaluma where the skies were ominous and at about 9:05 we headed for Doran Park in Bodega Bay. Our first target species was Snowy Plover and we were not disappointed as we saw many Snowy Plovers, along with Sanderlings, Willets and Whimbrels. While at Doran Park we saw Red-necked and Horned Grebes, Common Murre and Pigeon Guillemot. We then drove to the Tides Restaurant and got great looks at Ruddy and Black Turnstones. Throughout the day driving around Bodega Bay we saw Black Oystercatchers, Glaucous-winged and Mew Gulls. The last species ending the day (about 3:30pm) was a Peregrine Falcon that circled near us and then flew over us at Porto Bodega. The weather was cooperative, the bird species seen were great, and all had a terrific time.”

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge (11/27) – Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “On arrival at Colusa NWR this morning, we were met with an annoying, yet very welcome rain. Because of the wet conditions, it was decided to forgo the viewing platform and hiking trail, and just drive the auto tour. Though raining, it was a gorgeous late fall day; just right for a drive around the refuge. We enjoyed the beautiful fall colors and the sounds of nature that one can only experience with the arrival of the valley’s winter residents. There were lots of waterfowl, several shorebird species and raptors. Though conditions contributed to a lower than usual species count (39), it was an extremely enjoyable morning at this beautiful national wildlife refuge.”

Sandhill Crane Trips (11/24 and 11/25) – Leader Mike Savino reported: “On a mostly cloudy but rain-free Saturday Alan Kilgore and Mike Savino took eleven

guests to see the Sandhill Cranes at Woodbridge Rd. The numbers of cranes were down a bit, but there were still about 40 that landed close enough to get a very good look via spotting scopes. We had the usual small number of shore birds, geese and ducks and we were treated to many views of a Red-shouldered Hawk successfully hunting for large insects. On Sunday Jackie Delu and Alan Kilgore took five guests to Woodbridge where, under partly cloudy skies, we waited until almost sunset to see about 50 cranes settle into the water near the south/east shore. Sunset colors of orange and reds with Mt Diablo silhouetted to the west made for great photos. Some guests were delighted to use the provided scopes and digiscope attachment to take pictures of cranes with their cell phone cameras. This continues to be a big hit with many guests. Geese filled the skies with Vs as they emerged after sunset. We saw 30 Sandhill cranes busily eating from the rain flooded corn fields and were graced with a fly-over of a Merlin.”

Lincoln Grasslands, Day 2 (11/25) – Leaders Scott Hoppe and Mark Martucci reported: While it was foggy to start with, and some high fog lingered well into the morning, it turned out to be a beautiful day. We had a great group that was very cooperative, and fun to be with. Highlights included many Lewis’s Woodpeckers and a very cooperative perching Merlin at the cemetery; Bald Eagle; White-throated Swifts, not easy to find on this trip; and Rufous-crowned Sparrows and Rock Wren at Camp Far West. Despite missing a couple of key species and having a couple of spots that were not productive at all, Mark’s official total was 104 species; Scott’s was 105. Either way, a phenomenal day.”

Lincoln Grasslands, Day 1 (11/24) – Leaders Richard Barbieri and Tim Fitzer reported: “7 birders weathered an overcast misty day on day one of a two day friendly competition birding Placer County searching for the largest number of raptors and rarities. We tallied 100 species including: Burrowing, Barn and Great-horned Owls, Bonaparte’s Gull, Bald Eagle, Osprey, Prairie Falcon and Ferruginous Hawk.”

Cosumnes River Preserve (11/23) – Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “In
Findings continued on page 6

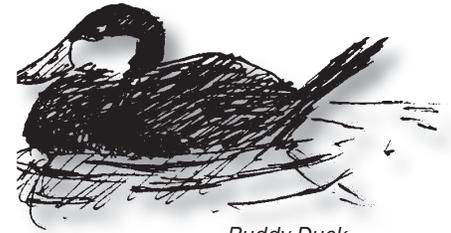
Field Trips

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. January 8, contact the scheduler Andi Salmi, Field Activities Chair, 916-508-7192, andisalmi@yahoo.com. For trips from January 12 through February 11, contact the scheduler Richard Barbieri, offleash56@yahoo.com, 916-761-1124.

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.



Ruddy Duck
Kirsten Munson

Tuesday, January 1, 9am

Family Friendly Trip

New Year's Day

at the Cosumnes River Preserve

Leader: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207

spskua2@comcast.net

Start the New Year off right; go birding! Bring the family! Wintering Sandhill Cranes, Greater White-fronted Geese and a wide variety of duck species frequent the preserve. Yellowlegs and Wilson's Snipe will be in the shallower water, and other shorebirds are possible. Tim will walk along the wetland ponds, stopping at the "Ducks In Scopes" activity and then going out to the boardwalk viewing area. Meet at the CRP Visitor Center parking lot. Bring water and snacks and dress for changeable weather. This is an enjoyable trip for everyone, and beginners and families are welcome. 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, January 5, 7am

Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR

Leaders: Daniel and Pam Thompson

916-359-3777

keiran247@hotmail.com

Join Pam and Daniel for a tour of this prime wintering area for ducks and geese. After Gray Lodge, they'll take the route back around the west side of the Sutter Buttes, looking for Sandhill Cranes, raptors and grassland birds, and then stop at the Colusa NWR viewing platform. Bring lunch, liquids, and warm clothing. FRS radios and scopes are helpful if you have

them. Meet in 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. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. There is a \$4.32 per person charge at Gray Lodge, and it's wise to bring the exact amount for the Iron Ranger.

Sunday, January 6, 8am

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

Leader: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471

shoppe01@surewest.net

Join Scott 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



Whimbrel
Stephen D'Amato

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, which is a good trip for both beginners and more

experienced birders. The trip could last into the afternoon, so bring lunch or a snack. If the bypass is closed due to flooding, the trip is canceled.

Tuesday, January 8, 8am

Bucks Creek Trail/Serrano Parkway,

El Dorado Hills

Leader: Maureen Geiger

916-281-6652

mkgeiger@comcast.net

Join Maureen for a leisurely walk through this riparian habitat and look for resident and wintering species such as woodpeckers, nuthatches, towhees, wrens, bluebirds, warblers, marsh birds and sparrows. In this varied habitat, there is always the possibility of unusual finds. Meet at the southeast corner of the intersection of Silva Valley Parkway and Serrano Parkway. To reach this spot, from Hwy 50 take Exit #31, Silva Valley Parkway, and turn left. Follow the Parkway about a mile to the first stop light, Serrano Parkway, make a U-turn and immediately park along the Parkway.

Saturday, January 12, 8am

Sailor Bar, American River Parkway

Leader: Mark Martucci, 916-833-6722

matuchbirdman@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, with Mark sharing his expertise on identification of the birds and their vocalizations. 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.

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Field Trips continued from page 3

Sunday, January 13, 8am

Teal Bend

Leader: Richard Barbieri

916-761-1124, offleash56@yahoo.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 wintering and resident birds. Meet at the Raley's Shopping Center on Arena Blvd at 8am. 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. We will meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1.

Thursday, January 17, 9:30am

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge

**Leader: Dan Tankersley, 916-662-1951
dantank1016@gmail.com**

Approximately 1 hour north of Sacramento, the Colusa NWR is a great location to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be plenty of ducks and geese, as well as other wetland species, passerines and raptors. We will spend a good amount of time on the viewing platform, and then take an easy walk on a level trail through riparian habitat next to the main viewing pond. We will finish our outing to this wonderful NWR by taking the short auto tour. Be prepared for cold and damp weather. Bring scopes and FRS radios if you have them. Meet Dan at the Colusa NWR in the parking area near the restrooms at 9:30. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Williams; take Exit 578, Hwy 20 east to the refuge entrance, approximately 6 miles. Rain, strong wind, or thick fog cancels. No lunch break, but bring snacks and liquids. The trip will end around 1pm.

Saturday, January 19, 8am

Wintering Raptors in the Central Valley

**Leader: Craig Swolgaard
530-334-3023,
cswol@sbcglobal.net**

A published study found that California's Central Valley is one of the richest wintering areas for raptors in the country. The trip will include the whole length of Meiss Road in Sacramento County, plus a good portion of Michigan Bar Road. Many species of raptors have been found along this productive drive during the winter months,

including Golden Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, White-tailed Kite, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and Burrowing Owl. This is also a good area to find Mountain Bluebirds in winter and has potential for other vagrants. Meet at the small public parking lot on Highway 16 and Sunrise Blvd at 8AM. We will try to car pool to keep the car numbers down, as some of the route uses pullouts on a busy highway. Bring a spotting scope if possible. Trip may go into early afternoon so water and food may be a good idea.

Saturday, January 19, 10:30am

Effie Yeaw Family Nature 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 birders Larry Hickey and Gesna Clarke from Audubon. For directions, see sacnaturecenter.net. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, January 20, 7am

Yolo/Solano Big Day

**Leader: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net**

Get set for a full day of birding "hot spots" of Yolo and Solano Counties to see how many species we can tally. We have had as many as 121 species on this trip. We will begin at Lake Solano Park and Putah Creek for unique passerines and waterfowl, then head down Highway 113 to the Robinson

Road area for raptors and possibly

Mountain Plover; then to the Yolo Bypass and the Davis Landfill for more waterfowl, shorebirds and gulls. The itinerary can change depending on conditions and reports. For those interested, Scott would like to have a casual dinner nearby to tally up species and talk about what was

seen. Scopes and FRS radios are helpful. Bring lunch, snacks, and dress for changeable weather. Meet Scott at the Mace Blvd Park and Ride at 7am. From Sacramento,

take I-80 west towards Davis to Mace Blvd (Exit #75); turn right at the light, then right again at the signal light to the Park and Ride entrance, a short distance beyond Ikeda's Market. Rain cancels.

Tuesday, January 22, 8am

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area

**Leader: Craig DeMartini
916-599-3300**

cloudwalk7@icloud.com

This great seasonal floodplain is only 10 minutes from downtown Sacramento. A variety of ducks, geese and shorebirds frequent the flooded fields, and American Bitterns and White-faced Ibis are often seen. Raptors and owls are also a possibility. From Sacramento on I-80 west, take the first exit at the west end of the Yolo Causeway, East Chiles/Rd. 32A, Exit #78. 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. This trip sometimes runs into early afternoon, so you may wish to bring water and snacks. FRS radios can be helpful.

Thursday, January 24, 8am

Lincoln WWTP and Placer County Roads

**Leader: Sonja Sorbo, 916-390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com**

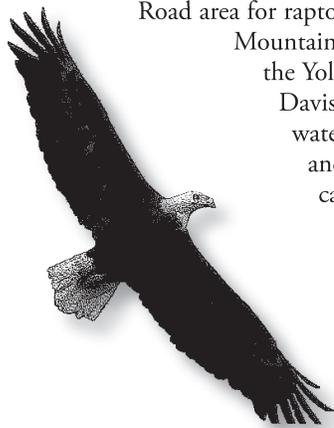
On this morning trip we will start by birding the Lincoln water treatment plant. There are several large ponds which can hold a variety of ducks. From the plant, we will drive some nearby backroads of Placer county, searching flooded fields for wintering waterfowl and shorebirds. We will search a small 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.

Saturday, January 26, 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.

Saturday, January 26

**Sunday, January 27, 4pm till sunset
Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering
Birds, Cosumnes River and Delta area
A trip by Save Our Sandhill Cranes, Inc
Coordinator:**

Mike Savino, 916-446-1392

View Sandhill Cranes and the wide variety of waterfowl, shorebirds and raptors which feed in the flooded fields and marshy areas of the delta. Dress for changeable weather and bring binoculars, snacks and water if you wish. Meet on the deck of the Visitor Center at 4pm. 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. NOTE: A new photography option is available; a digiscope allowing those with smart phone cameras to attach them and use the scopes to take pictures. Join us and try it.



Sunday, January 27, 8am

Bushy Lake

**Leader: Darrell Mohr, 916-225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com**

Meet Darrell in the cul-de-sac at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Darrell will be looking for a variety of resident and wintering species. With most leaves fallen from the trees, there will be better views of the lake, and Wood Ducks are a good possibility. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. You may want to bring water. This is a good trip for beginners and more experienced birders.

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

Field Trips continued on page 6

**SAS OUTREACH
HELP OUT AND HAVE FUN!
GALT WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL**

Bill Bianco, our hard working Outreach chair, has asked for volunteers for the Galt Winter Bird Festival on **Saturday, February 2**. 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.

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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.

Findings continued from page 2

spite of heavy rain forecast, one person turned up for the walk. Previous heavy rains had deepened the seasonal ponds, and many waterfowl and shorebirds were missing. Peter, from the eastern US, enjoyed close up looks at American Pipits, and a White-throated Sparrow was a nice find."

Salt Springs Valley (11/18) — Leaders Ann Burris and Tim Fitzer reported: "The trip was almost cancelled, then after a second thought, since we'll be at 2000 ft elevation, maybe the smoke won't be too bad. Well, only 4 of us ventured to Salt Springs Valley for a day of birding. Some of the highlights were: 4 Bald Eagles, Western and Clark's Grebes, Ross's Goose, Hooded Mergansers, 3 Ferruginous Hawks and many Lewis's Woodpeckers. The smoke was not too bad in the valley but very dry. We had a fun day."

Sacramento Wildlife Refuge (11/17) — Leaders Mark Martucci and Paul

Cordero reported: "Trip was cancelled due to excessive smoke pollution."

Robinson Road, Rd 113 and Birds Landing (11/15) — Leaders Tim Fitzer and Ann Burris reported: "The air was smoky and the roads dry and dusty as 8 birders joined for a day of birding on rural roads of southern Solano County. Some of the highlights were: Ferruginous Hawks, Prairie Falcon, 6 Burrowing Owls, 10 Loggerhead Shrikes, 3 Great Horned Owls and too many to count Say's Phoebes. In spite of the smoky conditions we had a great day."

Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area (11/12) — Leader Craig DeMartini reported: "53 species, 5 hours, 5 miles (driving), 7 participants. We endured moderately smoky conditions from the 'Camp' fire, but it was still a great birding day. Blue-winged Teal, Virginia Rails, Soras, American Bitterns, Great-horned Owls, a Peregrine Falcon, and only one European Starling!"

Cathie La Zier

SAVE FEBRUARY 15-18 FOR THE GBBC

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 up 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.

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/.

DUCKS (AND MORE) IN SCOPES

Winter wetlands at the Cosumnes Preserve host a wide variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, and other surprises. Here's a great opportunity to work on your wetland bird identification; it's a great trip for families, youth groups and newer birders.

"Ducks In Scopes" is set up at the Cosumnes River Preserve, where from 10am to 2pm CRP docents have a row of scopes set up, including lower ones for children, giving you good views of the many colorful ducks (up to 10 different species!). Other possibilities are stilts, dowitchers, yellowlegs, snipe and other "peeps". Greater White-fronted and Snow Geese and various hawks may also be seen.

Microscopes and hand lens provide close-up looks at "Duck Soup", dishes of water dipped from the pond full of sand fleas, dragonfly nymphs, 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. Check www.cosumnes.org for updated schedule.

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

Saturdays: 1/12, 1/19, 1/26, 2/2, 2/9, 2/16 and 2/23

Sunday: 1/6 And Tuesday, January 1, New Year's Day!

Birding and Nature Events

23RD ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 23rd Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 18-21, 2019**. Every Martin Luther King weekend over 500 California bird festival lovers visit Morro Bay, a Globally Important Bird Area, to see, photograph, and learn more about birds. Morro Bay is located halfway between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the Pacific Flyway. The area offers pristine beaches, beautiful state parks, an excellent natural history museum, panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and, best of all, thousands of birds. Over 200 species are usually sighted during the Festival weekend. Online registration will close Tuesday, January 8th at midnight. After that you can only register at the site (in the Community Center). Some events fill up fast so hurry to the Festival site at morrobaybirdfestival.org or call 805-234-1170.

SNOW GOOSE FESTIVAL OF THE PACIFIC FLYWAY

The 20th Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 23-27, 2019**. Choose from over 70 field trips and workshops that are sure to appeal to a wide variety of interests and ability levels. In addition to numerous bird-watching field trips for waterfowl, cranes, raptors and songbirds, you might choose to take a guided tour of a nature preserve, visit a local vineyard, or hike the scenic Sutter Buttes in search of lofty views and resident wildlife. The workshops offer something for everyone! Learn about nature photography, bird carving, how to record nature sounds, how to identify those backyard birds, and much more. Free nature activities are offered for youth as well as armchair adventures for all.

Further information and registration can be found at snowgoosefestival.org and if you have any questions, you can reach them at info@snowgoosefestival.org, or by calling the Festival Office at 530-592-9092.

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.

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.

General Meeting

continued from page 1

the 22 North America woodpeckers breed each summer. His first book, *The Peterson Reference Guide to Woodpeckers of North America* was published in May 2016.

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/Sacramento Audubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

*Anthony Asay
Education Chair*



*Cedar Waxwing
Kirsten Munson*

FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2019

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sundays, January 27 and February 10

*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!

Dan and Jan Tankersley and Jane G Taylor made donations to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Dr JM Langham, David Rial and Jane G Taylor made donations to the **Bobelaine Sanctuary**.

Thank 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.

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 January 29, 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.

CHOOSE TO RECEIVE THE OBSERVER BY EMAILED PDF

If you are interested in switching from a paper Observer to an emailed pdf version, please contact Jane Van Kessel at sacaudubonmembership@gmail.com and let her know. Please make sure you are emailing her from the address with which you want to receive your Observer pdf. The pdfs are usually between 1 and 2 MB each.

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.

SWAN TOURS WITH THE CA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE (YUBA COUNTY)

Witness the sheer splendor of migratory birds of the Pacific Flyway on most Saturdays this November through January. Focal species include tundra swans, snow geese, ross's geese, white fronted geese, ibis and ducks, and an occasional bald eagle in the rice fields north of Marysville. Free guided tours, in caravan style, are through advance registration, and are led by a DFW naturalist at 9:30-11:30am and 1-3pm.

Registration and contact information is online at www.wildlife.ca.gov/regions/2/swan-tours.

Join Us For Family Friendly Field Trips!

New Year's Day at the Cosumnes River Preserve

Saturday, January 1, 2019, 9am

Start the New Year off right; go birding! Bring the family! Join SAS leader, Tim Fitzer, on this walk and look for wintering Sandhill Cranes, varieties of ducks and geese and take a stroll by the very informative 'Ducks and Scopes'. This activity is set up with scopes for the small and tall and SAS leaders will help you identify all the ducks. Then Tim will lead everyone out to the boardwalk viewing area.

Effie Yeaw and SAS Family Nature Walks 2019

Saturday, January 19, 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:

February 16: With SAS leaders Dan Williams and Craig DiMartini

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 3, or at sacramentoaudubon.org under Field Trips.

Seasonal Observations

November 1 to November 30 Rare and Unusual Bird Reports www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm

November is typically one of the most pleasant times to be in the field in the Central Valley. This month stood out because of a ten-day period where it could be painful to breath as thousands of homes and many thousands more acres burned to our north in the state's most catastrophic wildfire. Yet the birds were there in the wetlands and forests and grasslands to be seen through the smoke or once it cleared. **Blue-winged Teal** continue to be reported in impressive numbers at Bridgeway Island Pond in West Sacramento, with 100+ regularly found, and with high single digits from many locations where one or two used to be a

highlight.

A **Pacific Loon** on the Sacramento River in Old Sacramento near the Delta King on 11/7 was an excellent find for the Valley floor where records are few. Presumably the same adult **Western Gull** returned for at least its 10th winter along the American River near Effie Yeaw Nature Center on 11/13. A **Long-eared Owl** was found in a closed portion of Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 11/20 where this species has been found on occasion. The few late season empids included a **Hammond's Flycatcher** on 11/10 at Fishing Access #1, west of Winters, and single **Pacific-slope (or Western) Flycatcher** at the Gristmill access to the American River Parkway on 11/2 and CRP on 11/3.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome these new members:

Tom Biglione
Alice Cantelow
Erika Espinoza
Jesse Grijalva
Jeanette Hess
Molly Keller
Mary Robinson
Karin von May

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 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

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Check if you would prefer to receive the Observer in PDF form by email []

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



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon

You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

Observations continued

A **Northern Shrike** near Cruiser Haven Marina north of Discovery Bay from 11/1-10, a little outside of our typical area of coverage, seemed a harbinger of a good season for this species in the region. Another **Northern Shrike** was found near Yolo County Rds 25 and 103 on 11/15 and continued in the general area. A **Cassin's Vireo** was reported 11/2-6 at CRP, with another in Davis on 11/30. Two **Steller's Jays** were found at Fishing Access #1 on 11/6 through at least 11/10, and another was a bit of a surprise at Folsom Point on 11/13. The **American Dipper** first reported for the season on 10/26 continued at the traditional location below the Hwy 128 bridge in Putah Creek Canyon. Other interesting finds included a black-backed **Lesser**

Goldfinch (a plumage typically found in the southeastern portion of their range) seen sporadically at a feeder in the River Park neighborhood of Sacramento, a **Grasshopper Sparrow** at CRP on 11/9, a **Red Fox Sparrow** at the Sacramento Bypass on 11/8, and a late **Wilson's Warbler** near the Tall Forest at CRP on 11/11.

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:

Julie Bryson, Lily Douglas, Chris Dunford, Andy Engilis, Gil Ewing, Stephen Fettig, Robert Furrow, Maureen Geiger, Steve Hampton, Ed Harper, Joan Humphrey, Emmett Iverson, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Jose Martinez, Mark Martucci, Dan Murphy, Michael Perrone, Mark Sawyer, Steve Scott, Shannon Skalos, John Sterling, Kirk Swenson, John Trochet, Sally Walters, 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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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, January 17, at 7pm

At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center

Stephen Shunk, *How Woodpeckers Can
Save the World (Or At Least Your Local
Woodland!)*

