



The Observer

Sacramento Audubon Society

General Meeting

Thursday, January 16, 2020
Effie Yeaw Nature Center
Assembly Room, 7pm

The Return of California's Golden
Beaver

Greg and Alex Kerekes

Sacramento natives, Greg and Alexandria Kerekes spent the past 10 years in Silicon Valley helping to conserve threatened habitat and wildlife populations with documentary photography, education, and citizen science techniques. Their work aims to connect people to their environment and conserve California's amazing ecologic diversity.

This January, they'll present their experiences documenting *The Return of California's Golden Beaver*. Historically, Beavers were almost extinct in California by the Gold Rush era. Today, they are returning to their ancient habitats, but not without controversy. They will explore how these water saving critters benefit the environment and what we can do to support their restoration of California's Ecosystems, and find a common ground.

In 2017, Greg and Alex returned to their hometown, Rancho Cordova, to start Rancho Roots Permaculture Farm. With their farming practices, they hope to provide examples of how to grow food sustainably. Creating bridges amongst neighbors using a combination of trade and market gardening is at the heart of their small business.

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://facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon).

Anthony Asay, Program Chair

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Education Committee Chair, Gesna Clarke Presents to Community Organizations September 18 at the Roseville Better Gardens' Club

Subject: Backyard Birding **Attendees:** 30

The club donated \$30 to SAS Education and Conservation Fund, and one club member joined Sacramento Audubon Society, shortly following the presentation.

December 6–Renaissance Society, Sacramento State University

Subject: Sacramento Audubon Mission, Education Committee Priorities, and Common Birds of the Sacramento Area. The presentation was the culmination of the Renaissance Society's 13-week seminar on Birds of North America.

8 Renaissance Society members joined Sacramento Audubon Society at the event.

THIS YEAR'S GBBC IS FEBRUARY 14–17

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 23rd GBBC, coming up this February, on the 14th through the 17th. Bird watchers of all ages count birds to create a real-time snapshot of where birds are. This annual event is open to anyone worldwide. It's part of what is called citizen science and helps scientists study the numbers and movements of birds from year to year. We invite you to participate! For at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the count, simply tally the numbers and kinds of birds you see. You can count from any location, anywhere in the world, for as long as you wish!

If you're new to the count, or have not participated since before the 2013 merger with eBird, you must create a free online account to enter your checklists. If you already have an account, just use the same login name and password. If you have already participated in another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, you can use your existing login information, too. There's more information at gbbc.bird.org.

In 2019, Great Backyard Bird Count participants in more than 100 countries counted more than 6,800 species of birds on more than 200,000 checklists! During the count, you can explore what others are seeing in your area or around the world. Share your bird photos by entering the photo contest, or enjoy images pouring in from across the globe. You can even add photos and sounds to your checklist. Understand how at gbbc.birdcount.org/adding-media-to-your-gbbc-checklist.

A helpful page that answers those differences between sparrows and between Cooper's and Sharpies can be found at birdcount.wordpress.com/learn_about_birds/.

Explore Species Tool

Begun in 2018, one of the coolest tools for anyone who participates in the GBBC or uses eBird is the Explore Species feature. You'll find it at ebird.org/explore. The eBird team rolled this out and its database includes ALL the species in the world (that we know about, anyway).

So gather friends, family, coworkers and all the birders you know and start counting. It's something simple you can do to contribute to our knowledge of the changes taking place on our home planet.

Field Trip Findings

Salt Springs Valley (12/12) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Ann Burris reported: “5 birders made the hour and a half mid week trip to Salt Springs Valley. Some of the highlights were: 6 Ferruginous and 1 Rough-legged Hawk, Prairie Falcon, many Lewis’s Woodpeckers, Adult Bald Eagle, Phainopepla, Loggerhead Shrike, Redhead, Clark’s Grebes and Hooded Mergansers. The weather held and we had a great day in this beautiful valley.”

Gull I.D. Trip (12/8) — Leader Ed Harper reported: “Unsettled weather ruled the morning’s outing with mostly overcast skies and occasional bouts of light rain. Fortunately, it was fairly calm conditions with temperatures in the upper 50’s F. It was unusual to experience such a paucity of gulls at the fish hatchery and after a study of California Gulls we moved 3/4 mile downstream to an overview where a mass of gulls were lounging on a gravel bar. A fine group of interested folks and an enjoyable trip.”

Tonzi Road (12/7) — Leader Gary Fregien reported: “On a day of questionable weather, 7 birders traversed the back roads and plied the waters, in the form of late afternoon heavy showers, of western Amador Co. Trip highlights included early detection of Yellow-billed Magpie and two Ferruginous Hawks. We also had Phainopepla and many W Bluebirds. Large numbers of various waterfowl were observed, with 4 of the “Canada” geese being obvious hybrids, showing a lot of white. We recorded 300 Double-crested Cormorants, which ebird balked at, but we think the estimate was conservative. About a half dozen American White Pelicans were among the cormorants. There were many Acorn Woodpeckers and N Flickers, but also one Red-breasted Sapsucker, which wasn’t welcomed by an Acorn. Say’s Phoebe was another target species we saw. For variety, raptors ruled, much to our delight. Species included Osprey, Bald Eagle, N Harrier, Cooper’s, Red-shouldered, Red-tailed, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, and American Kestrel. We tallied 63 species for the day.”

Sailor Bar (12/4) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “It was rained out.”

Sacramento NWR (12/1) — Leader John York reported: “It was rained out.”

Gray Lodge SWR and Colusa NWR (11/30) — Leaders Daniel and Pam Thompson reported: “It was rained out.”

Cosumnes River Preserve (11/29) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “9 people joined me for this Black Friday trip in beautiful weather. We saw 5 species of ducks. Cranes were co-operative and we had good scope views of a Wilson’s Snipe, as well as a Peregrine Falcon on the ground eating a rodent, and another Peregrine flying away with a Coot. Species total was 42.”

Lincoln Grasslands Trip (11/23) — Tim Fitzer, co-leader with Richard Barbieri, reported: “The results of over 180 days of no rain has really affected the habitat. We had to work to find birds; they are in small numbers. Some of the highlights were Ferruginous Hawk, Merlin, Burrowing and Great-horned Owls, Tundra Swans and Hooded Merganser. We tallied 98 species, not bad for the conditions.” Ann Burris added “Tim forgot to add Rough-legged Hawk, the best bird of the day.”



Rough-legged Hawk
Linda Pittman

Lincoln Grasslands Trip (11/24) — Scott Hoppe, co-leader with Mark Martucci, reported: “Great weather, great company and great birders made for a delightful day in the field. Highlights included 2 Rough-legged Hawks (a lifer for at least one person), 2 Bald Eagles and Hooded Mergansers at two locations, not always an easy bird to get on this trip. We tallied 97 species for the day.”

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Editor’s Note: Looks like the group on the 23rd “won” by one species. What will happen next year?

Glenn Hall Park (11/19) — Leader Sally Walters Schmoltd reported: “We observed 42 species. 7 folks enjoyed sunny, calm and 55-65 degree weather. The highlight of the trip was a Ruby-crowned Kinglet aggressively chasing a Blue-gray

Gnatcatcher for several minutes between 2 willows—demonstrating interspecies behavior. Common Merganser, Common Goldeneyes and Buffleheads amused us while they were feeding—disappearing underwater frequently—and requiring patience to get good views. A single male Anna’s was doing its J-shaped territory/mating attraction flight.”

Robinson Road (11/17) — Leader Paul Cordero, with some help from Tim Fitzer, reported: “The open grasslands around Robinson Rd. looked like a desert on this overly warm and sunny day. 13 birders spent the day searching the fields and sky. Some highlights were: Burrowing and Great-horned Owls, 3 Ferruginous Hawks, 2 Rough-legged Hawks, Merlin and Kestrel. Smaller birds included Loggerhead Shrike, Say’s Phoebe, Meadowlark, Pippit, and the usual coterie of sparrows. Lifers for some, good times for all; any day you can see these birds is a good day of grassland birding.”

William Pond Park (11/17) — 6 beginning birders joined Larry Hickey, Cathie LaZier, Darrell Mohr and Craig DeMartini for a walk through this varied habitat. We had some good birds—scope looks at Red-shouldered Hawk and Cedar Waxwings, lots of Goldeneye on the river, a Least Sandpiper—a surprise to all of us—at the pond, and we ended the day with a Red-tailed Hawk circling over us.

Mid-Yolo County Hotspots (11/16) — Leader Dan Murphy reported: “11 folks came along on this road trip from the Davis WTP to the Plainfield School Vicinity. The day began quite foggy but soon brightened up. We saw 57 species along the way. The trip began with 2 Burrowing Owls and ended with 2 Ferruginous Hawks. Along the way we saw Tundra Swans, Cackling Geese, Hooded Mergansers, and lots of White-tailed Kites among others.”

Cathie LaZier

Field Trips



American Kestrel
Chris Conard

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 January 11, contact the scheduler Maureen Geiger, mkeiger@comcast.net, 916-281-6652. 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.

Saturday, December 28, 8am
River Walk Park, West Sacramento
Leader: Bill Bianco, 916-889-4849
biancowm@yahoo.com

This is a newer area for Sac Audubon and should turn up a variety of passerine species, sparrows, wrens, thrushes and more. We'll bird the river from the boat landing, then walk south past the I Street and Tower Bridges and up onto the levee. Walk should end by noon. Meet Bill at the Raley's parking lot; from Hwy 50 take Jefferson Blvd north; go left on W Capitol Ave and left on Westacre Rd to the lot.

Sunday, December 29
Folsom Christmas Count

Wednesday, 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 4, 8am
Yolo County Hotspots
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net

Join Scott for a trip to several Yolo hotspots. Yolo County always has great places to bird, and we will be visiting some of the most productive locations. Winter produces great numbers of water birds, and we will try to pick up some wintering raptors such as, Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk and Merlin. This will likely be an all day trip, so bring lunch and liquids. 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. FRS radios are helpful on this trip.

Sunday, January 5, 8am
River Bend Park
Leader: Dan Brown, 916-704-0951
naturestoc@aol.com

Meet at the 1st parking lot on your right, just past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk through the oak woodland and over to the river, looking for small woodland birds and woodpeckers. We sometimes have good looks at Red-shouldered Hawks or Great Horned Owls. Walk will end by noon, and it's a great walk for beginners. From Folsom Blvd, between Bradshaw and Mather Field Road, take Rod Beaudry Drive north into the park. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5

entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Thursday, January 9, 8am
Lincoln WWTP and Placer County Roads
Leader: Sonja Sorbo, 916-390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com

In 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. Some years there have been hundreds of Canvasbacks and Wigeons present, with an occasional Redhead or Eurasian Wigeon in their midst. Depending on the water level, we might see shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts, Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitchers, Dunlin, and Least Sandpipers. While driving on the levees around the ponds, we will search the adjacent trees, fields, and fenceposts for raptors, sparrows, woodpeckers, and other resident species. A small wetland area visible from the levees can hold rails, herons, egrets, gallinules, and Marsh Wrens. This trip will end around noon; if there is sufficient time we might drive some nearby backroads of Placer county, searching flooded fields for wintering geese. We will meet at the parking lot of Dry Creek Community Park at 9235 Walerga Road in Roseville at 8AM. FRS radios will be helpful. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Dress warmly as the weather on the levees can be cold and breezy.

IMPORTANT ADVISORY — there is currently a huge bridge construction project underway on Walerga Road near the entrance to Dry Creek Community Park. Watch carefully for signs directing traffic to the park; the usual entrance is

Field Trips continued on page 4

Field Trips continued from page 3

blocked and the new/temporary winding access road is not easily visible.

Saturday, January 11, 7:30am
Gray Lodge State Wildlife Refuge
Leader: Carla Barbaro, 916-717-8808
cbarbaro@comcast.net

Join Carla to check out this State Wildlife Refuge. She will take the vehicle driving route and also walk one of the trails. Bring snacks and water, and meet 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 \$4.25 per person charge at the refuge.

Sunday, January 12, 8am
Lincoln Grasslands/West Placer Co.
Leader: Richard Barbieri
916-761-1124, offleash56@yahoo.com

Western Placer County can often rival the great wildlife refuges in numbers and diversity of waterfowl, and it is also known for large concentrations of raptors. Besides the expected species, Eurasian Wigeon, Bald Eagle, Ferruginous and Rough-legged Hawks, and Lewis's Woodpecker are all possible. Join Richard for a full day of exploring this diverse area and bring liquids, lunch and FRS radios if you have them. Meet at the Park and Ride by Brookfield's Restaurant, 1817 Taylor Road in Roseville. From Sacramento on I-80, take the Eureka Road offramp (Exit 105A) and continue straight through the signal light at Eureka Road and you'll be on Taylor Road. Turn left just past the Shell Station and park on the right in the Park and Ride.

Sunday, January 12
Beginning Birding Field Trip
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 trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks and bird behavior as we look at individual birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid77@gmail.com; put Beginning Birder in the subject line.

Monday, January 13, 8am
Mormon Island to Brown's Ravine,
Folsom Lake @ Sophia Pkwy
Leader: Rich Howard, 916-203-0952
rhowarda@gmail.com

On this half day trip Rich will explore Folsom Lake for both woodland and water birds. Rich covers this area for the Folsom Christmas Count and will be looking for any specialties to be found. A known pair of nesting Bald Eagles may be present. Other possibilities are Hairy Woodpecker, Audubon's and Myrtle Yellow-rumped Warblers and Rufous-crowned Sparrows. Water birds could include gulls, five species of grebes, and Common Loon. Park on Sophia Parkway down from the Arco Station at 300 Green Valley Road. Meet Rich at the Arco Station.

Saturday, January 18, 8am
Sacramento Bar
Leader: Darrell Mohr, 916-225-3999
mohrdd@gmail.com

On this morning walk along the American River, you will see, and hear, a nice variety of resident and wintering birds. Possibilities include Phainopepla and Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. Goldeneye and mergansers should be on the water. This is a great trip for beginning and more experienced birders. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania. A Sac County Park Pass or \$5 entry fee is required for all vehicles.

Sunday, January 19, 8:30am
Cosumnes River Preserve
Leader: Cathie LaZier, 916-502-2699
empid77@gmail.com

Walking the 1-1/2 mile wetlands/boardwalk loop, we'll check out the wintering waterfowl, including a variety of duck species, Greater White-fronted Geese, and Sandhill Cranes. Dowitchers, Wilson's Snipe and yellowlegs should be present, and there are always some passerines and raptors. Spotting scopes are helpful if you have them. This is a great trip for beginning birders. 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 Heavy rain cancels.

Thursday, January 23, 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 before taking the 3.2 mile 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 9:30am. From Sacramento, take I-5 north to Williams; take Exit 578, Hwy 20 east, and go approximately 6 miles to the refuge entrance on the right. Rain, strong winds, or thick fog cancels. No lunch break, but bring snacks and liquids. This trip will end around 12:30pm.

Saturday, January 25, 8am
Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area
Leader: Scott Hoppe, 916-835-8471
shoppe01@surewest.net

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.

Family Friendly Walk!!!
Saturday, January 25, 10am
Clarksburg Branch Line Trail,
West Sacramento
Leader: Maureen Geiger
916-281-6652
mkgeiger@comcast.net

Families are invited to join Maureen for a morning walk along a section of West Sacramento's Clarksburg Branch Line Trail. This paved trail is suitable for children and people with mobility issues as well as beginning birders, and the adjacent pond provides lots of good habitat for a variety of birds. Meet Maureen in the parking lot east of Nugget Market off Lake Washington Blvd. Note: Time permitting, an optional add-on to nearby Bridgeway Island Pond,

a winter hotspot for Blue-winged Teal, is possible.

**Sunday, January 26, 8am
Bobelaine Sanctuary
Leader: Brian Gilmore
bgilmore71@gmail.com**

Join Brian for a 3 mile walk along the trails of this 430-acre National Audubon Sanctuary on the Feather River, managed by Sacramento Audubon. He'll be looking for resident and wintering birds such as Hermit Thrush, Fox Sparrow, crowned sparrows, both towhees and various raptors. If there has been rain, the trails may be wet and muddy. This trip will end by noon. 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 Road, and then turn right into the parking area. Meet on the north side of the parking lot between Wells Fargo and Golden 1. To meet at Bobelaine, from Sacramento take Hwy 99 north toward Yuba City and about 2 miles north of the Feather River Bridge turn right on Laurel Avenue. Follow Laurel to the dead end at the Bobelaine parking lot. The group will probably arrive there about 8:30am.

**Wednesday, January 29, 8am
Lincoln WWTP and
Placer County Roads
Leader: Sonja Sorbo, 916-390-8463
ssgasdoc@yahoo.com**

In 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. Some years there have been hundreds of Canvasbacks and Wigeons present, with an occasional Redhead or Eurasian Wigeon in their midst. Depending on the water level, we might see shorebirds such as Black-necked Stilts, Greater Yellowlegs, Dowitchers, Dunlin, and Least Sandpipers. While driving on the levees around the ponds, we will search the adjacent trees, fields, and fenceposts for raptors, sparrows, woodpeckers, and other resident species. A small wetland area visible from the levees can hold rails, herons, egrets, gallinules, and Marsh Wrens. This trip will end around noon; if there is sufficient time we might drive some nearby backroads of Placer county, searching flooded fields for wintering geese. We will meet at the parking lot of Dry Creek Community Park at 9235 Walerga Road in Roseville at 8AM. FRS radios will be helpful. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Dress warmly as the weather on the levees

can be cold and breezy.

IMPORTANT ADVISORY: there is currently a huge bridge construction project underway on Walerga Road near the entrance to Dry Creek Community Park. Watch carefully for signs directing traffic to the park; the usual entrance is blocked and the new/temporary winding access road is not easily visible.

**Saturday, February 1, 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 be hitting many productive locations, targeting the best mix of waterbirds, raptors and passerines. Some likely spots include Lake Solano County Park, Lagoon Valley and Yolo Bypass. For all those wishing to attend, please plan on a full day in the field. We will be making a lot of stops at a wide range of locations, and it helps to have as few vehicles as possible. 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.

**Sunday, February 2, 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.

**Tuesday, February 4, 8am
West Yolo County Raptor Ramble
Leaders: Tim Fitzer, 916-870-5207**

**spskua2@comcast.net
Ann Burris, 916-947-7573
burris.nelliann@gmail.com**

On this trip we'll travel to rural Western Yolo County. Meet in the parking lot behind the Jack In The Box along I-5. Take I-5 north to Road 102, Exit #536; turn right (north) on 102 and take the next right turn onto East Main Street, and turn right into the Jack In The Box parking lot. The trip will last into the late afternoon so bring lunch, liquids and warm clothing. Bring FRS radios and scopes if you have them. Rain cancels.

**Saturday, February 8, 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.

**Sunday, February 9, 8am
Bushy Lake
Leader: Dan Brown, 916-704-0951
naturestoc@aol.com**

Meet Dan 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. He'll 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.

**Sunday, February 9
Beginning Birding Field Trip
William Pond Park**

Field Trips continued on page 64

Field Trips continued from page 5

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 trip we'll talk about habitat, field marks and bird behavior as we look at individual birds. Registration is required. Contact Cathie LaZier at empid77@gmail.com; put Beginning Birder in the subject line.

Monday, February 10, 8am

Sailor Bar

Leader: Mark Sawyer, 916-968-1661

Marksawyer3383@gmail.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.



FIELD TRIPS FOR BEGINNING BIRDERS 2020

Location: William Pond Park, American River Parkway

Dates: Sundays, January 12 and
February 9, 2020

*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.

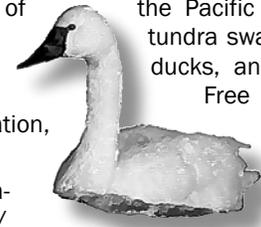
The field trips will focus on finding and identifying common birds in a variety of habitats, with an emphasis on looking and listening. This walk, covering about a mile and a half, will last about 3 hours and will be led by two or more friendly and experienced Sacramento Audubon trip leaders. You can sign up for just one session, or for more than one.

Register via email to Cathie at empid77@gmail.com, (put "Beginning Birder" in the subject line), and give your name, phone number and email address, or phone Cathie at 916-502-2699, and leave your name and phone number. Following registration you will receive additional information regarding the field trip.

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

Witness the sheer splendor of migratory birds of Saturdays this January. Focal species include ross's geese, white fronted geese, ibis and bald eagle in the rice fields north of Marysville. caravan style, are through advance registration, DFW naturalist at 9:30-11:30am and 1-3pm.

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



the Pacific Flyway on most tundra swans, snow geese, ducks, and an occasional Free guided tours, in and are led by a

Tundra Swan
Photo Illustration
Sharon Wisecarver

LOCAL BIRDING TRIPS OF INTEREST

These are not Sacramento Audubon field trips, but are great opportunities for birders and are all Family Friendly.

**Birding for Families at Effie Yeaw Nature Center
January 18, Saturday, 10:30am**

Bring the family out for a birding and nature walk led by a Naturalist and our special guest guides, Dan Williams and Craig DeMartini from the Sacramento Audubon Society. Birdwatchers of all levels welcomed. Make sure to bring your binoculars or borrow a pair from us.

Cost: General, \$5. Ages 4-11, \$3. 3+Under FREE.

Members receive \$1 off each admission.

These family-friendly weekend programs fill quickly, so please CALL TO REGISTER and save your spot 916-489-4918. Programs start promptly at stated time and run 30-60 minutes depending on content and are offered only once per day.

Effie Yeaw Nature Center is in Ancil Hoffman Park. Directions can be found at www.sacnaturecenter.net. There is a \$5 per car parking fee or you can use your ARNHA membership card or County Parks pass.

**Sandhill Cranes and Other Wintering Birds
January 25 and 26, Saturday and Sunday, 4:20pm**

Free trips in the delta to view the Sandhill Cranes coming in to roost for the evening are run by Save Our Sandhill Cranes, Inc. Of course they also look at the wintering waterfowl and other birds in that habitat. They begin at either Woodbridge Road or Staten Island and meet in the late afternoon on the last weekend of each month. Current information is at soscranes.org/visit-the-cranes/free-tours/. The Coordinator is Mike Savino, yogoombah@yahoo.com.

**DUCKS IN SCOPES AT THE COSUMNES RIVER PRESERVE
Every Saturday in January and February, anytime between 10am and 2pm.**

It's the height of the winter season and an excellent time to see all the wintering waterfowl, plus Sandhill Cranes, shorebirds and raptors which use the seasonal wetlands at the Cosumnes Preserve. CRP docents have a row of spotting scopes set up, including lower ones for children, giving you excellent views of the many colorful ducks, other waterfowl, shorebirds and more.

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.

Birding and Nature Events

24TH ANNUAL MORRO BAY WINTER BIRD FESTIVAL

Morro Bay's 24th Annual Winter Bird Festival will be held **January 17–20, 2020**. 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. Saturday's keynote speaker is Stephen Shunk speaking about *How Woodpecker's Can Save The World*. The Sunday keynote speaker will be Krisztina Scheeff, known as the 'Grebe Whisperer' to friends and colleagues presenting *Dancing With The Grebes*. Online registration will close Tuesday, January 7th 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 21st Annual Snow Goose Festival will be held in **Chico** on **January 22-26, 2020**. 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.

The Keynote Speaker will be Naturalist and Environmental Educator, Karen Amstutz. She's is an exceptionally gifted speaker and her programs are renowned in Yosemite National Park. Working as a naturalist for 30 years, Karen has lived her life with connection and attention to the natural world in professional and personal capacities. Her presentation is titled *The Gift of Watching Birds*.

Further information 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. Registration will open soon, but since many of the trips fill up fast, it is best to get on their mailing or email list, available on their website, or stay in touch on their facebook page at facebook.com/SnowGooseFestival.

13TH 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 13th Annual Winter Bird Festival, **Saturday, February 1, 2020**. 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.

DID YOU KNOW ?

The third year Sacramento Audubon Society began in October 1952, with Bruce Swinehart, an undergraduate student at Sacramento State College, as President.

Sacramento Audubon Society: Second Twenty-Five Years

Education Report continued from page 1

Bird Club: Student Internship Proposal

One 2019-20 Education Committee goal is to establish a local youth birding club in our area. Committee Chair Clarke reached out to CSUS Environmental Studies Professor Michelle Stevens to explore establishing a student internship to begin the process. Professor Stevens will join committee members at their January 6 meeting to further discuss the proposal for a student internship to begin as early as Spring Semester 2020. Anyone interested in joining in on the discussion may attend the January 6 meeting, 9:30am at La Bou-Cal Center, 8887 Folsom Blvd (at Watt Ave). Questions? Contact education@sacramentoaudubon.org

Environmental Education Program for Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps

December 11 kicked off the 2019-20 program. Three students and their teacher arrived at Cosumnes Preserve who with



help from SAS field leaders observed many birds including sparrows, marsh wrens and hundreds of geese and ducks. Students also spent almost an hour using microscopes and investigating some of the many aquatic creatures that live in the waters that surround the Preserve. The students told the leaders they enjoyed their morning and had seen some interesting things.

CONSERVATION TIP OF THE MONTH

Clean with natural products like vinegar and water or use essential oils to kill germs. Avoid cleaning products with toxic chemicals.

Using natural cleaners contributes to a healthier environment. They help reduce pollution to waterways and air. Conventional cleaners can easily seep into a water supply, and water treatment plants have a hard time treating a large volume of such chemicals.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Marcia Cooper, Charles Donaldson, Carole Girard, K Globus & B Klass, Georganna Griffin, David Harlow, Maria Nicholas Kelly, Dr J M Langham, Diane Luke, Beverly Moon, Bob & Becky Norris, Robert & Muriel Parker, David Rial, Kimberly Steinmann, Robert Stuart & Rosemary Hoskinson, Carol A Sughrue, Jane G Taylor and Fred Turner made donations to the **General Fund**.

Jean Alford, Gesna Clarke, Georganna Griffin, Donna Haight, Robert & Muriel Parker, and Jane G Taylor made donations to the **Education and Conservation Fund**.

Jean Alford, Mike Cruikshank, Mary L Flint, Georganna Griffin, Charlotte Newcomb, Robert & Muriel Parker, Robert Stuart & Rosemary Hoskinson and Jane G Taylor made donations to the **Bobelaine Sanctuary**.

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.



SEE THE LATEST SAS ACTION ON FACEBOOK

[facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon](https://www.facebook.com/SacramentoAudubon)

You can enjoy the photos and commentary without joining Facebook

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.

SAS OUTREACH HELP OUT AND HAVE FUN!

Bill Bianco, our hard working Outreach chair, has asked for volunteers for the Galt Winter Bird Festival on Saturday, February 1, 2020. 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.

VOLUNTEER AT BOBELAINE HELP IS NEEDED

To keep up with the trail and caretaker duties SAS is requesting some volunteer help. We will keep a list of helpers and when work load requires we will contact volunteers. We are designating the second and fourth Wednesday of each month as Bobelaine work days.

If you would like to help out, provide your contact info to: Bill Bianco; biancowm@yahoo.com; 916-372-3318. Bill will contact you for help as needed.

Typical duties will be cutting brush and overhead growth along the trails, Removing invasive plants, mowing weeds and cleanup around the equipment shed. Be aware that poison oak is prevalent in the sanctuary.

CHOOSE TO RECEIVE THE COLOR OBSERVER BY EMAIL

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

INCREASE IN ANNUAL DUES THE FIRST IN 18 YEARS!

On August 27, the Sacramento Audubon Society Board of Directors approved a \$10 increase in annual membership dues. Effective January 1, 2020 dues will increase from \$25 to \$35 annually. This increase will support the chapter's mission, programs and goals, and support ongoing service improvement. One example is the current project to rebuild and redesign the website by moving it to a more contemporary and user-friendly platform.

The Board is grateful to chapter members for generous donations beyond their dues, and we appreciate your support for this increase.

Seasonal Observations

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

Dry weather continued through most of the month with warm, calm, and sunny days. While many took advantage of the beautiful weather to get out in the field, much-needed rain finally came at month's-end, easing fears of another round of devastating fires. A **Brant** at the Woodland WTP and environs on 11/6-7 was a first Yolo County record. A hybrid **Blue-winged Teal x Northern Shoveler** male was found for the second year in a row at the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 11/9, and two **Redheads** at CRP's Lost Slough Wetlands were a nice find for Sacramento County, where they are far less regular than in Yolo County.

In contrast to recent months, unusual shorebird records did not steal the show despite good numbers where habitat was available. A few **Western Sandpipers**, rare after mid-October, did linger through the end of the month at the Woodland WTP and at the Sacramento Regional WTP, with a high of seven toward the end of the month. First-cycle **Glaucous** and **Lesser Black-backed gulls** were reported at the Yolo County Landfill, beginning on 11/16, while a first-cycle **Lesser Black-backed Gull** was reported near the Nimbus Hatchery on 11/29. Approximately ten **Long-eared Owls** were found at a communal roost on 11/30 at the same location as the previous winter on a portion of CRP with restricted access.

One of the month's highlights came in the form of a **Tropical Kingbird** found along Sherman Island East Levee Rd on 11/23.

SAS NEW MEMBERS

Please welcome these new members.

Brad Anderson	Linda McCauley
Amber Beckler	Kaia McLaughlin
Catherine Cardozo	Paulette Natura
Ann Cunningham	Carol Purin
Jeannie Gardner	Kimberly Steinmann
Carole Girard	Sandra Steurer
Jan Jones	Fred Turner
Nancy Kniskern	Lucy Whitson
Fred Lopez	Tammy Winston

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 28, 2020, at 7pm. This Board Meeting will be held at a **new** location, Turley Associates, 2431 Capital Ave, Sacramento, CA 95816.

Minutes of Board Meetings can be found online at sacramentoaudubon.org/societyinfo/archives.html. Scroll down to Board Minutes.s

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

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

Date _____

The Observer Newsletter \$35 per address (1 Year) _____

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

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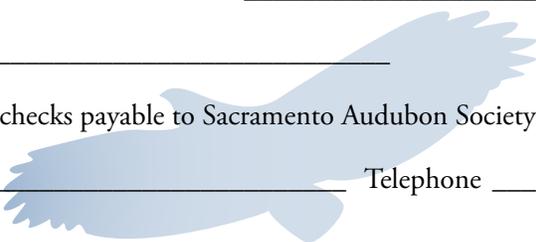
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Send address changes to our Membership Chair to help keep down our costs.



Observations continued

Only the third record for Sacramento County, and the first seen by many observers, viewing was still difficult because of a lack of parking and private property concerns at the remote location. Greater access difficulty surrounded a more unexpected species: Yolo County's first **Pygmy Nuthatch** was found in West Sacramento on 11/21 where it persisted for a few days along a railroad line behind the police station. The young male **Vermilion Flycatcher** found at Tanzanite Park in Natomas on 10/30 continued to at least late November. Other interesting finds included a "**Western Flycatcher**" (Pacific-slope Flycatcher expected) at CRP's Lost Slough on 11/2; a **Cassin's Vireo** along CRP's River Walk on 11/9; the returning **Swamp Sparrow** at the Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area, and a

long-overdue first **Swamp Sparrow** at the Sacramento Regional WTP Bufferlands on 11/26; an **Evening Grosbeak** in Carmichael on 11/26; and calling flyover **Red Crossbills** near the Gristmill access to the American River Parkway on 11/1, east Davis on 11/3, and the Arden neighborhood in Sacramento on 11/4. The **Worm-eating Warbler** found in southeastern Davis on 10/27 at San Marino Park continued through at least 11/16.

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

The Sacramento Area is roughly defined as lying between Hwy 20 to the north, Hwy 12 to the south, and the 1000-foot contour to the east and west, plus all

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

Max Brodie, Suzanne Day, Lily Douglas, Todd Easterla, Gil Ewing, Stephen Fettig, Steve Hampton, Cliff Hawley, Terry Hodapp, James Holmes, Scott Hoppe, Jeri Langham, Mark Martucci, Michael Perrone, Zane Pickus, Jim Rowth, Mark Sawyer, Steve Scott, John Sterling, Kirk Swenson, John Trochet, and Dan Williams.

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

Chris Conard

Sacramento Audubon Society
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916-203-1610, e-mail preferred: conardc@gmail.com

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 FIRST SACRAMENTO AUDUBON PROGRAM IN 2020

**Thursday, January 16, 2020, at 7pm
At the Effie Yeaw Nature Center**

Greg and Alex Kerekes, *The Return of
California's Golden Beaver*