



# The OBSERVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

## In Memorium

### DEATH TAKES PARKWAY PIONEER



Elmer Aldrich (right) being presented with the Outstanding Service Award by Glenn Olson, 2007

Sacramento Audubon lost one of its best with the death of Elmer Aldrich on May 7th, at the age of 95. At his passing, his role in “fathering” the American River Parkway was lauded in two major articles in the Sacramento Bee.

One of the first to propose a parkway, he took part in the planning from the start to the most recent update, and defended the parkway against all intrusions with bulldog determination (he even looked a bit like a bulldog!).

But that’s only part of the story, for he also made important contributions to Sacramento Audubon down through the years. For his lifetime achievements, he was awarded the Audubon California Volunteer Award for Outstanding Service at the 2008 Audubon Assembly at Asilomar in October 2007.

He established and chaired the Research and Scientific Committee, sometimes called “the scientific conscience” of the chapter, which produced the 44-page *Areas of Concern* publication, praised by National as a model for other chapters to follow. His *Code of Birding Ethics*—published after a rare black rail was trampled in a marsh by over-eager birders—was also widely praised.

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## Monterey Bay Coastal and Pelagic Trip

September 18 and 19, 2010

It’s time again to prepare for one of Sacramento Audubon’s most interesting field trips! This year’s 2-day coastal and pelagic trip will take place on Saturday, September 18 (shore) and Sunday, September 19 (boat).

Normally protected from heavy sea swells, yet geographically situated to capture an amazing diversity of ocean-going birds, Monterey Bay and the surrounding area is an exceptional place for birding. On Saturday, we will visit the key land and shoreline habitats on the Monterey peninsula that may yield many migratory and vagrant surprises. Sunday’s boat excursion will highlight the trip. Monterey Bay is perhaps one of the most accessible and productive areas to learn about and enjoy pelagic birds and marine mammals. Several species of shearwaters are usually seen, not to mention the possibility of close-ups of a variety of marine mammals.

Boat space is limited to 30 participants. The price this year is \$75/person, if we fill the boat (25 people minimum). Once again, Sacramento Audubon will be joining with Monterey Seabirds to offer this trip. To sign up, call Monterey Seabirds (831-375-4658), identify yourself as a Sacramento Audubon participant, and give them a credit card number or mail them a check. You may also sign up online at: [www.montereyseabirds.com](http://www.montereyseabirds.com). You do not need to be a member of Sacramento Audubon to participate.

Cancellation Policy: In order to receive a full refund, you must cancel 2 weeks before the trip.

Ken Hashagen’s cell phone: 916-316-8596 for questions



## General Meeting

### Tricolored Blackbird Presentation To Start Off The Fall Programs

Dr. Bob Meese will review the natural history, field identification, history of research, and population trends of the Tricolored Blackbird. The Tricolored Blackbird is a near-endemic California passerine and the most colonial songbird in North America. Bob will present a summary of the results of his own work through a multimedia presentation that includes still images, videos and digital sound files. This will be our first program of the 2010-2011 year beginning at 7pm, on September 16, at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park. The public is welcome. Visit our website [www.sacramentoaudubon.org](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org) and click on Society Info/Meetings, for further information, including a map and directions.

*Lea Landry, Program Chair*

## Field Trip Findings

**Grover Hot Springs and other Alpine County areas (6/13)** — Tim Fitzer reported: "Dan Williams was not able to lead his field trip so Dan Brown, Paul Cordero, Dan Kopp, and I were substitute leaders. 12 people enjoyed a fun day. The highlights were Calliope Hummingbird, Common Loon, White-headed Woodpecker, Cassin's Finch, Northern Goshawk, and about 10 Pinyon Jays. What a beautiful day, until we returned to the hot valley. We tallied 57 species."

**Mosquito Ridge, Placer County (6/12)** — Leader Chris Conard reported: "We had an excellent day visiting spots along Mosquito Ridge Rd, including Grouse Falls and the Placer Big Trees grove. The easy highlight of the day was a Northern Pygmy-Owl getting mobbed by a flock of Chestnut-backed Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches. We had great views of the area's breeding birds, watching singing Nashville Warblers, Western Tanagers, Brown Creepers (a pair had a nest behind a section of loose bark), Hermit Warblers, a Golden-crowned Kinglet at eye level, and close views of a pair of Red-breasted Sapsuckers. Despite periods of wind, it was a very pleasant day, with lots of wildflowers, a few patches of snow remaining at the 5,000 ft level...and we had the place mostly to ourselves."

**Granite Springs Road and Wright's Lake (6/6)** — Leaders Tim Fitzer and Mark Martucci reported: "A beautiful day in the Sierra began at 6am for 20 birders. Highlights were a Black Bear that spotted us and ran down the hill, Mountain Quail, Sooty Grouse booming in a Pine Tree, MacGillivray's, Nashville, Hermit, and

Yellow warblers, White-headed, Lewis's, and Hairy woodpeckers, Dipper, Osprey, Lazuli Bunting, Green-tailed Towhee and Pacific Large-billed Fox Sparrow. Granite Springs Rd was snowed in about 9 miles before Wright's Lake Rd. A total of 51 species was tallied. A fun time for all."

**Mather Field (6/5)** — Leader Wayne Blunk reported: "We had an excellent turnout of birders on an initially cloudy morning that turned sunny and warm. Thirty-plus species were heard or sighted but the highlights involved maternity. Right off, a floating nest with three eggs was spotted with a lingering Pied-billed Grebe mom sitting deep in the water with just her head showing. On the return to the cars, she was actually sitting on the nest. The shores and water were full of families of Canada Geese with young still yellow down to adult plumage. Common Moorhen were numerous as well as several of their fledglings. Western Kingbirds seemed to have moved to the very south end of the lake from the area at the south end of the levee. The group was treated to great looks at a Barn Owl. The first two looks were the results of swarming by numerous Great-tailed Grackles and the last was when the owl flushed from the cottonwoods on our way back. We first sighted a large Mute Swan that seemed to be displaying. It included what seemed to a direct charge across the water at our group. We continued another 50 yards and sighted another Mute Swan swimming slowly and displaying. When we turned directly south on the trail a third swan was sighted with three cygnets in early white plumage. The numbers of Yellow-headed Blackbirds were good in all parts of the lake. There also

seemed to be a large number of fledged Red-winged Blackbirds being fed by their parents. On our return trek a female turkey was spotted crouched behind a log where only the very top of her head and eye were visible. Moving in the grass near her were her chicks. Great birding morning."

**Evening Beaver Walk, American River Parkway (6/1)** — Leader Jack Hiehle reported his group saw four-plus beaver, 3-plus muskrat, Swainson's Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk, White-tailed Kite, Great Blue Heron, Black-crowned Night Heron, Pied-billed Grebe, Wood Duck with 5 young, Tree Swallow, 1 Cotton-tail Rabbit, and 1 Ground Squirrel.

**Crystal Basin (5/30)** — Leader Frank Gray reported: "Nine birders enjoyed good birding and weather conditions while visiting various locations near Ice House Road. Recent snow and uncertainty about access resulted in some people canceling. However, most of the snow had melted and all locations were accessible. Highlights included great looks at Mountain Bluebirds, Band-tailed Pigeons, Lazuli Buntings, Green-tailed Towhees, Olive-sided Flycatcher, and other species. An Osprey provided a show as it carried a fish at our last stop at the Big Hill Lookout. The recent snow and plant conditions seemed typical of what one might expect at least three weeks earlier in the season. This might help explain our difficulty locating some species we have found reliably in prior years. Such species include Calliope Hummingbird and MacGillivray's Warbler."

*Findings continued on page 6*

# Field Trips

## Field Trip Information

For questions regarding the trip or checking the status of the trip in case of unfavorable weather conditions, please call the trip leader first. If he or she cannot be reached, call the scheduler Dan Brown, 362-2458, naturestoc@aol.com, for trips through July 25th. From July 26th through August 29th, call the scheduler Scott Hoppe, 835-8471, shoppe91@earthlink.net. After August 30th, call the scheduler Mark Cudney, 987-2422, mcudney@aol.com.

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. Starting times are the actual time the trip leaves the meeting place. Try to arrive early, especially if you want driving directions or plan to carpool. Groups must make prior arrangements with the trip leader.



Kirsten Munson

**Saturday, July 3, 7am**  
**Bushy Lake/Cal Expo Floodplain**  
**Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458**  
**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. Dan will be looking for a variety of resident species and Wood Ducks are a good possibility on the lake. This will be a 1 to 2 mile hike that will take 2 to 3 hours. Bring water and sunscreen.

**Saturday, July 10, 6am**  
**Loney Meadow**  
**Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471**  
**shoppe01@earthlink.net**

Come join Scott for this July trip. Loney Meadows is a beautiful mountain meadow north of Grouse Ridge near Bowman Lake at about 6000' elevation. The area can have some excellent birding. Scott has seen 8 species of woodpecker there (including Pileated, Black-backed and Williamson's Sapsucker); also Townsend's Solitaire, Calliope Hummingbird, Willow Flycatcher, 7 species of warbler and previous trips have produced Bald Eagles. We will be hiking about 2-3 miles over fairly level terrain with only short, moderate inclines. Meet Scott at the Park and Ride on Horseshoe Bar Road in Loomis, Exit 110 off I-80, at 6:00 a.m. The meadow is about an hour and half's drive from there. Bring water and lunch or a snack.

**Sunday, July 11,**  
**Farallons Pelagic Trip**

Trip information can be found in the May-June *Observer* or online at [www.sacramentoaudubon.org](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org). Please call

Ken Hashagen at 316-8596 to see if there are any available spaces left.

**Sunday, July 17, time TBD**  
**Dragonfly trip, Location: TBD**  
**Leader: Tim Manolis, 485-9009**  
**Ylightfoot@aol.com**

Since the weather will affect the best location to see a variety of dragonfly species, Tim will scout his favorite haunts and choose the exact meeting location as the date approaches. Call or email Tim the week before the trip to get the time and meeting place. With his expertise as the author of a field guide to California dragonflies and damselflies, you can be sure that he will lead you to the best possible site. Bring your binoculars and wear shoes that can get wet - just in case!

**Sunday, July 18, 7:30am**  
**Point Pinole Regional Shoreline,**  
**Contra Costa County**  
**Leaders: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804**  
**mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net**  
**Ken Poerner, 707-580-6277**  
**kenpoe@sbcglobal.net**

This great park may be new to local birders. At the confluence of the San Francisco and San Pablo Bays, it is a good place to hike in the summer due to its proximity to the water which tends to keep it cool and breezy, not to mention the stunning views of the Bays. Join Maureen and Ken on a four mile, fairly level hike along the shoreline, through the eucalyptus stands and meadows, past the historical munitions areas, and onto the 1,250' fishing pier to find resident species, especially shorebirds. There is a \$3 parking fee; restroom facilities are available in several park locations. Bring

liquids and lunch as this trip will last until mid-afternoon. Meet Maureen by 7:30am for a prompt departure from the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. There is a secondary meeting place at the Safeway on Waterman Boulevard in Fairfield - call for details.

**Saturday, July 24th, 7am**  
**Carson Pass and Lake Winnemucca**  
**Leader: Dan Williams, 714-943-1266**  
**jaegermaestro@yahoo.com**

This trip is limited to 10 participants to help preserve the habitat in this high foot traffic area. Join Dan on this high elevation, 3 mile hike in search of Clark's Nutcracker, Rufous Hummingbird, Green-tailed Towhee and with luck, Sooty Grouse and Gray-crowned Rosy Finch. At peak wildflower time, there are fields of flowers in dazzling variety. Contact Dan for reservations, meeting time and place. Bring lunch and liquids, wear sturdy shoes and be prepared for changeable Sierra weather.

**Sunday, July 25th, 7:30am**  
**Mather Lake**  
**Leader: Wayne Blunk, 876-0457**

Mather Lake and its surrounding grasslands host a wide variety of birds. Wayne knows this area well. This is a good trip for beginners and enjoyable for all. Meet in the parking lot of Mather Regional Park at the corner of Douglas Road and Eagle's Nest Road. There is a \$5 entrance fee per car if you don't have a County Parks Pass.

*Field Trips* continued on page 4

**Saturday, July 31, 6am**

**Truckee to Tahoe Mountain Birding**

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

We will be exploring some interesting, lesser known locations between Truckee and Tahoe. Possible locations include Coldstream Canyon, Page Meadows, Lake Forest and Pomin Park. Among the possible bird species are White-headed and Black-backed Woodpeckers, several warbler species, Pine Grosbeak, Evening Grosbeak and Red Crossbills. Hiking will be up to 2 miles at a time. Bring lunch and liquids. FRS radios are helpful. Meet Scott at 6am at the Park and Ride on Horseshoe Bar Road in Loomis, exit #110 off I-80.

**Sunday, August 1, 7am**

**Sailor Bar**

**Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722  
matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Join Mark for an early morning walk while it's still moderately cool, and find what birds stay with us through the hot summer. This walk will end by 11am, or possibly earlier depending on the heat. Sailor Bar is at the south end of Illinois Avenue, off Winding Way, just west of Hazel. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee, if you don't have a County Parks Pass. Meet Mark at the boat launch parking area at the very end of the entrance road.

**Sunday, August 8, 7am**

**Shorebirds of the Sacramento Valley**

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

August is a great time to view shorebirds in the Sacramento Valley on migration from their Arctic breeding grounds. Since ideal conditions change depending on water levels, we will visit areas with the best shorebird habitat. This may be in Yolo, Placer, or Sacramento County--or all three. This is a good chance to brush up on the common species and possibly find something unexpected. If you have a spotting scope, bring it, along with water and a snack. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

**Tuesday, August 10**

**Evening Beaver Walk**

**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack for this summer evening walk to an area where beavers are active. Occasionally an otter or muskrat is seen as well, and Black Phoebe, herons and egrets may also be seen. As always, Jack will share his knowledge of the local plants to round out the evening. Trip is limited to 8 people, with a minimum age of 7 years, so call him to sign up and find the meeting time and place.

**Saturday, August 14, 7:30am**

**Hidden Falls Regional Park, Placer Co.**

**Leader: Scott Dietrich, 208-4976  
sed25@csus.edu**

Explore this relatively new County Park near Auburn, acquired through the Placer Legacy Open Space Program. This is a great representation of local Blue Oak Woodland and Riparian habitat. We will see many foothill bird species such as Chipping Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Hutton's Vireo, Western Bluebird, Rufous Crowned Sparrow and maybe even some Yellow-breasted Chats, plus possibly Western Kingbird and several raptor species. Meet Scott at 7:30am at the Hidden Falls parking area. Take I-80 east to Auburn and exit at the Hwy 49 off ramp going north toward Grass Valley. After about 2.8 miles, turn left onto Atwood Road. Atwood eventually becomes Mt. Vernon. At about 4 miles from Hwy 49, turn right onto Mears Rd and follow to Mears Place and the park. There are signs for the park along the way to help guide you. The trip will likely end by mid-day, but bring lunch and liquids.



Kirsten Munson

Take I-80 east to Auburn and exit at the Hwy 49 off ramp going north toward Grass Valley. After about 2.8 miles, turn left onto Atwood Road. Atwood eventually becomes Mt. Vernon. At about 4 miles from Hwy 49, turn right onto Mears Rd and follow to Mears Place and the park. There are signs for the park along the way to help guide you. The trip will likely end by mid-day, but bring lunch and liquids.

**Saturday, August 21, 7am**

**Marin County Shorebirds**

**Leader: Dan Williams, 419-9495  
jaegermaestro@yahoo.com**

Join Dan for this trip to the varied wetlands of Marin County in search of shorebirds. Possible locations include Novato Airport Ponds, Bolinas Lagoon, and/or Abbott's Lagoon at Point Reyes, depending on

conditions and bird reports leading up to the trip date. Be aware, a visit to Abbott's Lagoon involves a 2.5 to 3 mile hike. Meet at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave. Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

**Sunday, August 22, 7:30am**

**Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area/Davis Wetlands**

**Leader: Frank Gray, 723-5249  
fgray4birds@aol.com**

Join Frank for a trip mainly to wetlands. We will bird at the Yolo Bypass and then at the City of Davis wetlands and sewage ponds. Of particular interest is the possibility of seeing several species of migrating swallows, in addition to raptors, phalaropes and other types of shorebirds. Meet Frank at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot. Both beginning and more experienced birders welcome. Frank plans to bring a scope but extras will help. Trip likely will be over by noon.

**Tuesday, August 24**

**Evening Beaver Walk**

**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Here's another chance to watch the interesting evening activities along the river. In addition to the beaver, other mammals, birds and riparian plants are there to be enjoyed, and Jack will share his extensive knowledge of the parkway riparian life. Trip is limited to 8 people, with a minimum age of 7 years, so call him to reserve a space and find the meeting time and place.

**Saturday, August 28, 7:30am**

**Bodega Bay**

**Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216  
andisalmi@yahoo.com**

Join Andi for a day of birding, exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. This is a fun coastal birding area, with many gulls, waterfowl, songbirds and raptors to see, in addition to possible shorebirds returning from their breeding grounds. Meet Andi at the Park and Ride off Highway 80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol Ave Exit #81, turn left at the light, then left again into the Park and Ride lot on the north side of the freeway. Bring food, water and warm clothes.

**Sunday, August 29, 7am-11am**  
**SRCSB Bufferlands**  
**Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942**  
**conardc@gmail.com**

The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District Bufferlands are 2,650 acres surrounding the wastewater treatment plant between Sacramento and Elk Grove. They are not typically open to the public. Habitat types include riparian forest, seasonal wetlands, grasslands, wild-life-friendly agricultural lands, and many habitat restoration sites. This is a good time of year to look for migrating songbirds. Be prepared for 2 miles of easy walking. From I-5 south of Sacramento, exit at the Meadowview/Pocket Rd exit (the first exit north of Laguna Blvd, and the first exit south of Florin Rd). Head east on Meadowview, then turn right (south) on Freeport Blvd. In one mile, just before the town of Freeport, turn left on Stonecrest and follow it over the freeway and south to a locked gate.

**Wednesday, September 1**  
**Evening Beaver Walk**  
**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Beaver walks end with the coming of autumn so don't miss these last opportunities to go out with Jack and find beavers. Jack has never had a trip without at least one beaver, and frequently he also finds otter and muskrat. Herons and egrets, Black Phoebes and other birds are also active in the cool of the evening. Give Jack a call to learn the meeting time and place for this trip.

**Sunday, September 5, 6am**  
**Pt. Reyes for Vagrants**  
**Leader: Scott Hoppe, 835-8471**  
**shoppe01@earthlink.net**

Birding the coast can be very productive this time of year, for both regular migrants and more uncommon birds. Scott is an expert birder who can sort out that confusing fall warbler. Be prepared for several miles of walking. Bring lunch and liquids for a full day of birding. Meet Scott at the Park and Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento, take the West Capitol

Ave Exit #81; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park and Ride lot.

**Saturday, September 11, 7:30am**  
**Reichmuth Park**  
**Leader: Tim Manolis, 485-9009**  
**ylightfoot@aol.com**

Join Tim at the park entrance on Gloria Drive and 43rd Avenue at 7:30am. In the past Tim has found many uncommon birds in Reichmuth Park. The lerp on the large eucalyptus tree are particularly attractive to a wide variety of birds. Tim will be looking for fall migrants, warblers, vireos and flycatchers. This is a good chance to work on identifying birds in confusing fall plumage, and Tim has the expertise to do it.

**Sunday, September 12, 8am**  
**Sunrise Area,**  
**American River Parkway**  
**Leader: Mark Martucci,**  
**833-6722**  
**matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Mark will lead you on a morning walk to one of his favorite spots along the American River Parkway. You will see a nice variety of resident birds and maybe some surprises. From Highway 50, drive north on Sunrise Blvd; turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd and take the first left on Pennsylvania. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee if you don't have a County Parks Pass. This is a good trip for both beginners and more experienced birders.

**Wednesday, September 15**  
**7am-11am**  
**Spring Migration at the**  
**Bufferlands**  
**Leader: Chris Conard**  
**203-1610**  
**conardc@gmail.com**

This morning tour of the Bufferlands will occur during the peak of fall migration. We will focus on finding migrant songbirds, lingering nesting birds, raptors and early waterfowl. Exploring riparian forest, oak woodlands, grasslands and wetlands should produce a good sample of the species present. The Bufferlands contain 2,650 acres of wetlands, riparian forest, grasslands, vernal pools, and restored habitats. From Sacramento, take I-5 south. Exit at Meadowview/Pocket Rd (just south of Florin Rd) and turn left (east) over the

freeway. Turn right (south) on Freeport Blvd (the third light). After one mile, just before the town of Freeport, turn left on Stonecrest and follow it over the freeway and south to a locked gate. Be prepared for potentially muddy trails and up to 3 miles of walking.

**Wednesday, September 15**  
**Evening Beaver Walk**  
**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

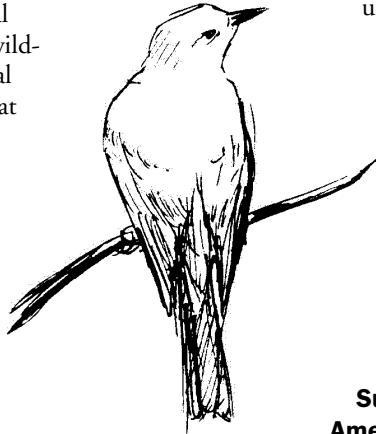
This will be one of your last opportunities this year to view beaver with Jack on this evening walk. The seasons are changing and you don't want to miss the opportunity to go on one of these trips. Give Jack a call for a meeting time and place.

**Saturday/Sunday,**  
**September 18-19th**  
**Monterey Bay Coastal and Pelagic Trip**  
**Two-Day Monterey Trip**  
**Leader: Mark Cudney, 987-2422**  
**Reservations: Ken Hashagen,**  
**316-8596**

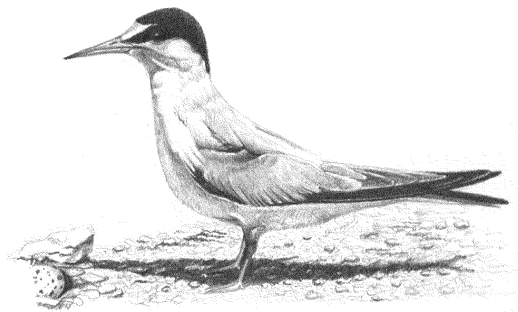
Saturday: Visit several Monterey Peninsula and adjacent area hot spots for land and shore birds.

Sunday: The best pelagic birding in North America—Monterey Bay.

See the front page article for a complete description and registration information.



*Kirsten Munson*



*Daniel Kilby*

*Findings* continued from page 2

**River Bend Park (formerly Goethe Park)** (5/29) — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “16 birders joined me for a morning walk. Bewick’s and House Wrens were abundant, and there were two active Bushtit nests. Western Bluebirds were bathing in a puddle. We had good looks at a pair of White-tailed Kites, also Red-shouldered Hawks overhead, and a Cooper’s Hawk sitting on a nest.”

**Sierra Valley** (5/23) — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “As I sat at the meeting place, I wondered if there would be a trip. The weather forecast for the Sierras was not good, and I began to wonder if anyone would show up. 5 people did, and we had a great day of birding — one of my most memorable. Our first stop was Kyburz Flat where we birded in snow flurries (and shaking hands from the cold), and found some great birds. Among the standouts were MacGillivray’s, Wilson’s, and Yellow warblers; Gray Flycatcher; Pygmy Nuthatch; Mountain Bluebird and Cassin’s Finch. We continued on to Sierra Valley where temperatures were a bit more bearable. One of the most interesting things here was seeing numbers of birds that are not often seen on the valley floor. We saw at least 30 Mountain Bluebirds (some side by side with Western Bluebirds). And Western Wood-Pewees seemed to be on every other fence line. Also seen were Chipping Sparrows. Other birds of note were Blue-winged Teal, Burrowing Owl, Bank Swallow, Sage Thrasher and Lark, Brewer’s, Savannah and Vesper sparrows. At about 2:30 that afternoon, 2 of the group had to leave. The rest of us continued on to Smithneck Creek Picnic Area, which is located southeast of Loyalton. Here we discovered Golden Eagle, Lewis’s Woodpecker, Pacific-slope and Dusky flycatchers, Warbling Vireo and Lazuli Bunting. We tallied 83 species in all at our mountain locations. On the way home, we decided to stop in Auburn and see the Painted Redstart, and we were not disappointed. An excellent trip, and comments were made on how the weather made it more exciting.

**Dragonfly Trip** (5/22) — Leader Tim Manolis reported: “The trip to the American River Parkway behind Rio American River High School was a bit of a dud. Only one person showed up, despite nice weather. And odonates were a bit few and far between. Highlights were good numbers of the California-endemic

Exclamation Damsel, and nice in-hand looks at a Sinuous Snaketail and Pacific Clubtail. We also saw an emerging Black Saddlebags, my first sighting of the year of this species locally.”

**Sacramento Bar, American River Parkway** (5/16) — Leader Mark Martucci reported: “Twelve birders and fifteen student’s from Mira Loma High School had 45 species of birds on a very nice mid-spring morning. Highlights included MacGillivray’s Warbler, Yellow Warbler, Warbling Vireo, Western Kingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher and Willow Flycatcher (thanks Cathie). A big thanks to Richard Barbieri for helping the high school students with all the birds.”

**Sailor Bar** (5/12) — Leader Jack Hiehle reported his group saw Common Moorhen, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Magpie, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Wren, Western Bluebird, Swainson’s Thrush, Northern

Mockingbird, Warbling Vireo, Yellow Warbler, Forster’s Tern, Bullock’s Oriole, and Red-winged Blackbird. Also, 1 coyote, 15 red-eared sliders, and 1 deer.

**William Pond Recreation Area** (5/9) — Leader John Huls reported: “Our purpose was to compare and contrast the songs of Bewick’s Wren and Song Sparrow. Although we heard both species, the noise of the high water releases cascading down the American River tended to drown out the Song Sparrows that favor the many small islands near the red mudstone clay banks. A family of Bushtits passing around a huge dragonfly provided some comedy. Valerie Phillips spotted the best bird of the day, a Hermit Warbler. Many thanks to Malcolm Fea who arrived early and set up his scope on a Red-shouldered Hawk nest where we enjoyed watching both parents tend to their two fuzzy nestlings.”

**Bothe-Napa Valley State Park** (5/15) — Leader Dan Williams reported: “We had a beautiful day in northwest Napa County. It started out foggy and chilly, but before long it was a gorgeous spring day with

temps in the 70s and plenty of sunshine. This park is a little bit of the Redwood Coast just above the wine country. The forest is vast which made finding singing birds a bit challenging. We heard a song that was almost certainly a Northern Parula which would have been only Napa County’s second, but it turned into a tantalizing near miss when we couldn’t get it in sight. Nevertheless our group managed to spot a number of interesting species.

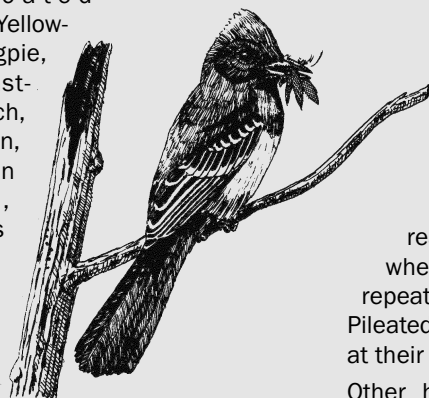
Right away near the visitor center we were treated to excellent close-up views of Chestnut-backed Chickadees feeding their young, as well as a few juvenile juncos, a Wilson’s Warbler, and a Cassin’s Vireo.

On the entire length of the Redwood Trail along Ritchey Creek we were serenaded by Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Brown Creepers, and Warbling Vireos, most of which remained hidden in the endless green, but we managed to get a few good looks. The real treat came late in the morning when after hearing their jungle yells repeatedly, we finally got a glimpse of a Pileated Woodpecker pair changing guard at their nest cavity.

Other highlights included many Black-headed Grosbeaks and Western Tanagers, a singing Hermit Warbler, banana slugs on the trail, and a Hutton’s Vireo’s tail sticking out of its ‘baseball’ nest right above our picnic table.”

**Cronan Ranch, Coloma** (5/9) — Leader Maureen Geiger reported: “There were 12 of us on a cold, cloudy, windy day, in spite of which we had great birds. About 45 species were counted, including Lazuli Bunting, Rufous-crowned Sparrow and Purple Finches. This was surprising as most birds were lying low, trying to stay warm, which we birders did not!”

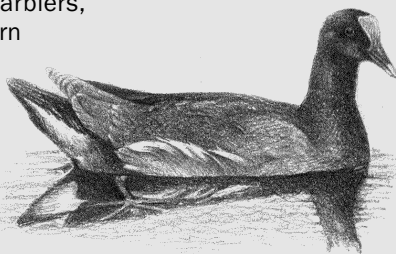
**Spenceville** (5/8) — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “Our trip was great with many highlights, which included Wilson’s Snipes performing their courtship flights winnowing overhead, Cliff and Rough-winged Swallows, Rock Wren, Western Grebes, Lark Sparrows, and close encounters with Lewis’s Woodpeckers. We also saw Yellow-breasted Chat performing its courtship flight, Bullock’s Oriole, Blue Grosbeak, Yellow Warbler, and immature Bald Eagle.”



Stephen D'Amato

**Sand Creek Road, Colusa County (5/2)**

— Leaders Tim Fitzer and Mark Martucci reported: “With winds gusting to 30 MPH on the ridge, 23 participants viewed a total of 70 species of birds. Birds seen, although some only glimpsing views, were Golden Eagle, Sage Sparrow, Wrentit, California Thrasher, MacGillivrays, Black-throated Gray, Orange-crowned, and Townsend’s warblers, Lazuli Bunting, Western Kingbirds, Bullock’s Orioles, Ash-throated Flycatchers; and heard, but not seen: Mountain Quail and Pileated Woodpecker. It was a fun day with lots of enthusiastic and fun people.”



*Daniel Kilby*

**Spring migration at the**

**Bufferlands (5/2)** — Leader Chris Conard reported: “Our walk around the Upper Beach Lake portion of the Bufferlands on a very windy day produced a nice list of the regular breeding species, including Black-chinned Hummingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher and Blue Grosbeak. Unfortunately, the warblers and other migrants were elsewhere, as we only had one Orange-crowned Warbler and four Yellow-rumped Warblers. We did have good views of the regular migrant shorebirds, including a few Semipalmated Plovers and good close-ups of Western and Least Sandpipers.”

**Pine Hill Preserve, Kanaka Valley (5/1)**

— Leader Chris Conard reported: “We had beautiful weather in beautiful habitat, with a mix of blue oak woodland and chaparral. Highlights included great views of perched Violet-green Swallow, lots of migrants in the oaks, including Warbling Vireos, Townsend’s Warblers and a Wilson’s Warbler, and good views of Sage Sparrows in the chaparral. We only heard Rufous-crowned Sparrows and California Thrashers, but saw at least a dozen Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Orange-crowned Warblers. Also had great views of the snow-covered Crystal Range and Pyramid Peak. A Hooded Oriole at the meeting site at Rescue Elementary was a nice surprise.”

**River Bend Park (4/28)** — Leader Cathie LaZier reported: “Five people joined me for a morning’s walk at River Bend. We saw migrants, including Western Tanagers, Chipping Sparrows and McGillivray’s Warbler, returning summer residents such as Western Kingbirds and Ash-throated Flycatchers, and found Bushtits, Cooper’s

Hawk, Red-shouldered Hawk and Great Horned Owl on nests. A large fuzzy baby was visible in the owl nest. There was a nice selection of wildflowers in bloom.”

**Sweetwater Creek (4/25)** — Leader Richard Barbieri reported: “The trip was a full house with about 26 people on a beautiful spring morning. Highlights

included Ash-throated, Pacific-slope, and Gray Flycatchers, Wrentit, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Phainopepla, Yellow-breasted Chat, Black-throated Gray, and Townsend’s warblers, Western Tanager, Lazuli Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, Cassin’s and Hutton’s Vireos, and Violet-green Swallows. Great Day!”

**Driver’s Flat, Auburn State Recreation**

**Area (4/24)** — Leader Scott Hoppe reported: “Sixteen birders enjoyed good weather, and though bird activity was relatively low for this location, we found some good birds and tallied about 52 species. Among the highlights were Sharp-shinned Hawk, both California and Mountain Quail (heard), 2 Hammond’s Flycatchers, 3 species of vireo — Warbling, Hutton’s and Cassin’s, 7 species of warbler, including Townsend’s and Yellow-breasted Chat. And we also got great views of 2 Wrentits, which were a first (and second) for a couple of people in the group. Surprise bird of the day was a very late, low flying Ferruginous Hawk that passed right over us.”

**Bobelaine Sanctuary (4/23)** — Leader

John Huls reported: “Our group of 17 birders and botanizers enjoyed a perfect day trekking through Bobelaine’s green mansions. A special thanks to Robert Thomas for keeping the trails in perfect condition. At the sit-down portion of our trip we talked about the social mores of 18th century Europe and how they influenced the botanists Carl Linnaeus and Joseph Banks. Banks played a prominent role in Captain Cook’s first round-the-world voyage and through his friendship with King George III and his direc-

torship of both Kew Gardens and the Royal Society he is credited with making Kew Gardens the foremost botanical repository and research institution in the world. Best birds of the day were Ash-throated Flycatchers and a pair of Caspian Terns flying upriver over the Feather.”

**Hansen Ranch Park Preserve (4/18)**

— Leader Jonilynn Okano reported: “The morning stroll along the dike overlooking Hansen Ranch did not disappoint the 22 birders who joined me for a great outing. 59 species were spotted including wonderful views of nesting Western Kingbird and a fly-by of six American White Pelicans. Shorebirds included a Whimbrel along with Least Sandpiper, Long-billed Dowitcher, Wilson’s Snipe, and Killdeer. Quite a surprise was the Blue-winged Teal joining the more prevalent Cinnamon and Green-winged species. Great and long looks of the American Bittern and Black-crowned Night Heron thrilled everyone. The large rookery allowed views of egrets and herons in breeding plumage.”

**Celebrating Creek Week and Suburban**

**Parks (4/17)** — Leader John Huls reported: “Courtship and territorial displays of Red-winged Blackbirds highlighted our first stop, a green-belt and mitigation cattail pond hidden behind a Wal-Mart/Cosco complex on Auburn Blvd. Our group of 5 then ventured to the Thomas Kelly School nature area. This lush and little known suburban forest provided perfect cover for an unusually high concentration of Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-rumped Warblers.”

**American River between Howe and Watt**

(4/17) — Leader Dan Kopp reported: “Had about 14 participants. Had heard only Wilson’s Warblers, our only migrant. Several Ash-throated Flycatchers and one Western Kingbird. We saw an American Robin building its nest and I saw them

fledge four young a week ago. Two White-tailed Kites were not happy with two Swainson’s Hawks that nest here. We had approximately 110 fly-over Greater White-fronted Geese headed north.

We also saw about three Orange-crowned Warblers and one Green Heron. We tallied 56 species.”

*Pete Hayes*



*Stephen D’Amato*

## HERE'S YOUR CHANCE! VOLUNTEER TO BE OUR NEXT PROGRAM CHAIR

After enjoying the challenge and satisfaction of locating and scheduling Speakers and Programs for the Sacramento Audubon Society's General Meetings for 3 years, Lea Landry has decided it's time for someone else to step in and take over the position. Programs are already scheduled through April 2011, so there's plenty of time for someone to check in and learn how it's done. The SAS Program Chair does not have to be a SAS Board Member, nor does he/she/they have to be in attendance to introduce programs at the General Meeting.

The work entailed can easily be done from home, by phone or email. Programs are arranged by contacting potential speakers (Lea has a list of past speakers as well as a compendium of potential speakers and sources of nature-oriented presentations) and setting up the schedule. The Web Master and Newsletter Editor are provided with write-ups for the presentation, and on Meeting nights, equipment and other logistical requirements for the speaker at Shepard Garden and Arts Center, are set up for the presentation. Lea will work with her replacement to make sure all bases are covered before turning over the position.

Anyone interested in assuming this position may contact SAS President, Keith Wagner, or Lea Landry at llandry@softcom.net (preferred) or phone 916-638-1141, to volunteer

### AUDUBON OUTREACH

Walk On The Wildside, an all-day outdoor event at Beach Lake, was our latest outreach activity. Bonnie Breeze, Cathie LaZier, Darrell Mohr and Jonilynn Okano joined many other environmental groups at this community event which has an attendance of over 2000. Other Sacramento Audubon members participating in the activities were Chris Conard, leading Bufferlands tours, and Tim Manolis with bird banding demonstrations. It was a busy time with live animals, live music, and many hands-on activities for children and families.

As you can see, our Outreach committee is very active. Periodically I send out a list of upcoming events so interested people can volunteer for a particular event. If you'd like to be on that list send an email to Cathie LaZier, empid@earthlink.net, with Outreach in the subject line.

### SPEAKERS AND PROGRAMS FOR 2010

**September 16** – Robert Meese, *Tricolor Blackbirds*

**October 21** – Ron LeValley, *A Blue Whale Adventure*

**November 18** – Jess Morton, *Audubon Partnerships in Baja California*

### 2011

**January 20** - Andy Engilis, *Birding in Chile*

**February 17** - Scott Crosbie, *Yellow-billed Magpies* (Tentative Date)

**March 17** - Ed Pandolfino, *Raptor Survey*

**April 21** - Ben Sacks, *Central Valley Red Fox* (Tentative Date)

#### 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.

**In Memorium** continued from page 1

A State Park planner by profession, he was deeply involved in the planning for Bobelaine and a number of other chapter projects. As chapter president in 1977-78 he set some sort of record, establishing 16 committees and persuading 210 people—10% of the membership—to work actively on them.

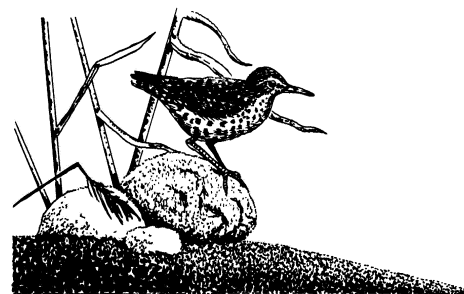
Born and brought up in Oakland, as a child he collected bird cards, and by the eighth grade had joined in organizing a birding club. He went on to get master's degree at UC Berkeley, did wartime service in the Navy, then went to work for State Parks, retiring in 1972.

He and his wife Jane were married for 63 years, until her death in 2004. They had two children.

He was an avid cyclist, and until a short time before his death rode 20 miles three times a week with friends on the Parkway bike trail.

### 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 held on September 28, 2010 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.



Stephen D'Amato

## 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.

### SAS NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these  
new members:

Deborah A Cott	Cecelia G Sayer
Elizabeth Johnson	Kelley & Emily Shelton
Royce Matlock	K A Vyverberg
Elaine Novak	Paula
Angela L Ogdan	Whittingham

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS!

Thanks to the following for their generous donations:

Bill Bianco, Irene Bond, Case Butterman, Jeanne Conry, Courtney Covington, Nancy Gilbert, Stu Husband, Rosemary Mayfield, Kevin McRae, Elaine Novak and Susan Oie, to the **General Fund**.

Judith Bietz, Aubrey Blue, Bonnie Breeze, Carolyn Broeren, Maxine Cornwell, Suzanne Covington, Gary Fregien, Nancy Gilbert, Yoshino Hatanaka, Candy Holland, Marylyn Lewis, David Masche, Valerie Phillips, Victoria Stoffers, Susan Stratton, Carol Thomas and Sharon Wisecarver, to the **Conservation and Education Fund**.

Subash Chand donated his Speaker's Honorarium to the **Education Fund**.

Pete Hayes made a donation in memory of Elmer Aldrich.

### ANNUAL MAY BOOK SALE

The annual book sale at the May general meeting earned \$224 which was donated to the American Birding Association's Birder's Exchange program. Birder's Exchange provides optical equipment and field guides to scientists and educators in Latin America and the Caribbean. Find out more at [www.aba.org/bex/](http://www.aba.org/bex/)

### Sacramento Audubon Society Membership Application

Lea Landry, Membership Chair

11054 Autumnwind Lane, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670-4224

llandry@softcom.net (916) 638-1141

Date \_\_\_\_\_ *The Observer* Newsletter \$25 per address \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Observations* continued from page 10

a **Least Bittern** at Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) on 5/8, a **Ruddy Turnstone** at the Davis Wetlands on 5/14, a breeding plumage **Sanderling** and **Baird's Sandpiper** (very rare in spring) at the Woodland WTP on 5/19, a **Ruff** at YWA on 4/20-22 and 5/1, a **Common Nighthawk** along Meiss Rd on 5/28, many **Olive-sided Flycatcher** and **Gray Flycatcher** reports (the latter mostly around Davis), **Brown Creepers** nest building near Lake Solano on 4/14, a **Black-and-White Warbler** near UCD on 4/14, an amazing 25-30 **Chipping Sparrows** near Winters on 4/15, and three to four likely breeding pairs of **Dark-eyed Juncos** at CRP. There were two frustrating reports lingering from March. A male **Vermilion Flycatcher** was photographed on private property in central Yolo County, but word didn't get out until after it was gone. Also, a **Gray Catbird** was apparently photographed in Carmichael on 3/10, but the photographer wouldn't give specific details.

We are now featuring photos of some of the highlight birds on the Sacramento Audubon Web site (<http://sacramentoaudubon.org/activities/recent sightings.html>).

Many of these reports first appeared on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit [www.cvbirds.org](http://www.cvbirds.org) and click "Listserv" for details. With over 200 reports, it is impossible to list everyone; however, I want to thank the following for reports on the above species and for providing additional information:

Roger Adamson, Dan Airola, Dan Brown, Todd Easterla, Leo Edson, Irene Engilis, Gil Ewing, Kevin Guse, Steve Hampton, Dave Johnson, Dan Kopp, Jeri Langham, Ed Pandolfino, Michael Perrone, Linda Pittman, Deren Ross, Don Schmoldt, Susan Schneider, John Sterling, Craig Swolgaard, Kevin Thomas, John Trochet, Sally Walters, Liz West, and Ed Whisler.

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

*Chris Conard*

# Seasonal Observations

April 1 to May 31

Rare and Unusual Bird Reports

[www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

It is impossible to cover everything from two of the most active months on the avian calendar, but there is no doubt about the highlights of the season, and probably the year. **Bell's Vireos** were found singing from two separate locations south of Parking Lot G at the Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA) beginning on 4/16. Possible mating activity was reported involving a third bird, but nothing was confirmed. This species had been a regular member of the Central Valley's breeding bird fauna prior to being devastated by **Brown-headed Cowbird** nest parasitism and riparian habitat loss. Modifications to the environment made the state far more suitable to cowbirds, and Bell's Vireos were hit harder than any of the native songbirds, becoming rare by the 1920s. The YWA birds continued through press time, and though there are a lot of cowbirds in the area, it is very encouraging to see the possible return of this species. Bell's Vireos successfully bred at the San Joaquin NWR (Stanislaus County) in 2005 after an absence from the region for decades.

A **Painted Redstart**, a gorgeous warbler characteristic of southeastern Arizona, was found in a residential neighborhood in Auburn sometime before birders became aware of it on 5/17. This very cooperative bird, the loudest and most conspicuous in the neighborhood, was found through at least 5/28. Painted Redstarts are very rare visitors to far southern California in winter, but this is only the third or fourth

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record for the northern half of the state, and most unexpected.

With sporadic rain and unsettled weather,

one might have expected a lot of ground-  
ed migrants. There were some excellent  
days, especially in the western half of the  
Valley, with those east of the Sacramento  
River wondering where most of the birds  
were. Perhaps most astonishing was a  
morning walk up Rayhouse Rd in the foot-  
hills of Yolo County on 5/1. In addition to  
nice finds of a **Pileated Woodpecker** and  
a **Hairy Woodpecker**, there were amaz-  
ing numbers of regular western migrants.  
Low estimates were of 40 **Western Wood-  
Pewees**, 40 **Ash-throated Flycatchers**,  
125 **Warbling Vireos**, 150 **Townsend's  
Warblers**, 175 **Hermit Warblers**, 100  
**Wilson's Warblers**, and 75 **Western  
Tanagers**. This gives a hint of how many  
birds migrate through and what a small  
fraction we actually record.

A partial list will have to suffice for the  
other highlights, with a female **Surf  
Scoter** at the Woodland WTP on 4/20,

*Observations* continued on page 9

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must reach the Seasonal Observations Editor by the 8th of the month.

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