



# The *OBSE*RVER

Sacramento Audubon Society

## General Meeting

**Thursday, March 15**  
**Shepard Garden and Art Center**  
**7pm General Meeting**

### A Half Million Hawks Later

**20 Years of Raptor Tracking at the Golden Gate**  
**Allen Fish**

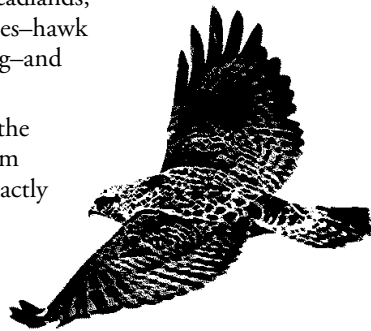
Founded in 1985, the Golden Gate Raptor Observatory (GGRO) has been called the most citizen-driven, raptor-monitoring effort in the US, with nearly 300 volunteers annually contributing more than 40,000 hours. Centered on the autumn flight of tens of thousands of birds of prey of 19 species over the Marin Headlands, the GGRO runs three ongoing studies—hawk watching, banding, and radiotracking—and numerous short-term studies.

Come see a two-decade snapshot of the GGRO—its successes and pitfalls—from GGRO director Allen Fish. Learn exactly how hard it is to identify accipiters, and other raptor trivia. For example, how do you tell a dark morph from a dark phase? A juvenile from an immature? Where is the highest recorded density of nesting Cooper's Hawks? How would you domesticate a Redtail and why? Does a Bald Eagle carry an inner map of salmon-spawning rivers and duck-dense wetlands?

Allen Fish studied at UC Davis and did bird research with various government agencies (BLM in Sac'to!) before settling into the Marin Headlands in 1985 to run the new GGRO. Five years ago, he returned to UC Davis' Avian Sciences Department to teach a winter course in Raptor Biology. Allen was raised in Redwood City, making altitudinal migrations each summer to the Donner Pass region. He currently lives in Berkeley with his wife, Allison, and two children, Jack and Margot.

Sacramento Audubon meetings are held the third Thursday of the month at the Shepard Garden and Arts Center in McKinley Park, located at 3330 McKinley Blvd. in Sacramento. The public is always welcome. A map with directions can be found at our website [www.sacramentoaudubon.org](http://www.sacramentoaudubon.org) under the General Meetings heading.

*Sally Riggs, Program Chair*



### THANK YOU FOR THE PHOTOS!

The Education Committee extends a big "Thank You" to Wayne Morehead and Bill Grenfell for their generous contributions to our digital photo gallery. Due to their generosity as well as others, the committee is already providing programs to children in the greater Sacramento region. Thank you Wayne and Bill!!

### AND THE BINOCULARS!

Our SAS Board has voted to send the Nikon binoculars donated by Chris Conard and Kimya Lambert to the ABA Birder's Exchange. Before we pack them up and send them off, please check and see if you have anything you would like to donate also. Birder's Exchange helps to make birding and avian research possible in areas south of our border such as Mexico and Latin America. They need good working equipment and field guides. Bring anything you may have to our General Meeting in March or contact a Board Member.

## Great Backyard Bird Count

### CHECK THE RESULTS

Just because the counting is over for 2007 doesn't mean the GBBC is over. Now more fun can be found by checking the results. How did Sacramento do? What's going on with bird populations in northern California and the United States? What state reported the most species? Check all the results online at [www.birdsource.org/gbbc](http://www.birdsource.org/gbbc). Then click on "Explore the Results."

You can look for maps, Top 10 and state tally lists. Compare these results to previous years. Look for what impact this year's large snowstorms might have had on bird populations across the country.

As of press time 53,063 checklists had been submitted. There was a total individual bird count of 7,778,406 and a species count of 576. Hope you participated but if not you can still join Project Feederwatch and contribute to ongoing research. Just click on the link to Project Feederwatch and get involved.

# Field Trip Findings

**Yolo Wildlife Area (2/14)** — Leader Dan Tankersley reported: “An enthusiastic group of birders participated in this mid-week outing to the Vic Fazio Wildlife Area and enjoyed a beautiful cloud and wind-free morning. The group observed 60 species, including Blue-winged Teal, Bonaparte’s Gull, Cattle Egret and seven species of shorebirds. Several flights of Snow and Greater White-fronted Geese periodically diverted our attention from scoping the masses of ducks and other waterfowl residing at the refuge. At morning’s end, amid the chatter of black-birds and meadowlarks, we promised we would all return to this wonderful wildlife area very soon.”

**Cosumnes River Preserve (2/12)** “Today being a holiday for schools, we had three students join the tour; total participants 11,” leader Sami LaRocca reported. “Most of the participants were beginning birders, so time was taken to identify and discuss the various ducks and shorebirds found wintering in the preserve. The Sandhill Cranes were around in sound, as well as in view in the sky even while we were on the River Walk trail; just a wonderful spectacle. The usual suspects added up to a total of 63 species for our morning.”

**Yolo Wildlife Area (2/10)** — Two pairs of Blue-winged Teals were the highlights, leader Richard Barbieri said. The group also spotted four American Bitterns, and Green-winged and Cinnamon Teals, along

with fly-overs of Sandhill Cranes and Tundra Swans.

**Sandhill Cranes of the Central Valley (2/10)** — Fifteen participants joined this “Save Our Sandhill Cranes” sponsored trip at the Cosumnes River Preserve and Staten Island. Unfortunately, rain sharply reduced numbers of cranes and waterfowl that had been observed at a similar tour on January 20.

Leader of both trips was Jessica Stocking, formerly of the International Crane Foundation, who gave informative talks on the sensitive condition of the crane populations.

**Walk Along the American River (2/5)** — Leader Jack Hiehle said this walk in the vicinity of Jacob Lane was featured by the odd behaviour of a young Cooper’s Hawk. It tagged along with the 13 participants, perching in nearby trees as they moved along the path. “It just wasn’t doing things a smart hawk would be doing,” Jack said. The group also saw Red-shouldered Hawk and Pied-billed Grebes.

**East Lawn Cemetery (2/4)** — Western Bluebirds were an uncommon, welcome sighting in this quiet Sacramento city locale, leader Mary Beth Metcalf reported. Other highlights on a walk that attracted 20 participants, including several beginners, were Red-breasted

Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Brown Creeper, and a huge flock of Cedar Waxwings.

**Schollenberger Park and Bodega Bay (2/3)** — Ron Storey, co-leader with Valerie Phillips, reported: “We began our trip in Petaluma, where we saw Harris’ Sparrow, Varied Thrush, Blue-winged Teal, and an American Bittern. We heard a few Virginia Rails but they never made themselves visible to our group. From Petaluma we went to Bodega Bay where we saw Brants, Horned Grebes, Black Oystercatchers, Ruddy and Black Turnstones, Brandt’s Cormorant in breeding plumage, and Common Loons.



Kirsten Munson

After Bodega Bay we headed north to Goat Rock where we saw several gull species, Red-throated Loon, and just before leaving we noticed an Elephant Seal on the beach across the Russian River from us. As we drove back towards Petaluma heading east out of Bodega Bay, we saw a Ferruginous Hawk sitting on the ground not far from the road.”

**Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (1/28)** — “Thirteen birders had a clear sunny day with no wind and recorded 70 species of birds,” leader Mark Martucci reported. “We had thousands of Snow

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## SACRAMENTO AND BENICIA 2006-2007 CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT RESULTS

### SACRAMENTO

Clear, cold weather helped 38 observers record 156 species, one of the highest totals ever in the 57-year history of the Sacramento Christmas Bird Count. Held on December 30, highlights included a Kumlein Gull (considered a subspecies of Iceland Gull) reported by Ed Harper’s team; Vaux’s Swift (reported by Terry Colborn), American Tree Sparrow (reported by Scott Hoppe); Ruff at Conaway Ranch, Western Gull at the Davis Wetlands and a female Red-breasted Merganser at Greenhaven Lake.

“Most amazing, though, Maureen Geiger reported, “would be the roughly 15,000 Canvasbacks on the large pond near Discovery Park. The number is more than

we have ever had before, and just one of those awesome sights, with all of them appearing to ever so slowly slide across the pond to get as far from us as possible.”

### BENICIA

Seventy-four observers and three bored feeder watchers recorded 168 species and a total of 113,999 birds in the 60th Benicia Christmas Bird Count, December 18. Compiler Robin Leong said that in addition, Red-breasted Merganser and Semipalmated Plover were seen during count week in the Solano/Solano (Grizzly Island) count circle.

With very little wind and temperatures as low as 25 degrees, there were no new species or really unusual species, although

there were 3 Cattle Egrets, compiler Robin Leong said. Snow Geese were seen for the first time since 2002. The following species tied or broke the Benicia CBC high counts: Eared Grebe 47, Pelagic Cormorant 8, Blue-winged Teal 12, Sharp-shinned Hawk 14, Cooper’s Hawk 23, Red-shouldered Hawk 33, Swainson’s Hawk 1, California Quail 217, Long-billed Curlew 542, Northern Pygmy-owl 2, Burrowing Owl 16, Short-eared Owl 33, Anna’s Hummingbird 320, Oak Titmouse 68, Rock Wren 22, Ruby-crowned Kinglet 394, American Robin 9320, Varied Thrush 151, Wrentit 9, Cedar Waxwing 672, Hutton’s Vireo 25, Common Yellowthroat 188, Song Sparrow 883 (which includes m.m. maxillaris 447, both are Benicia CBC highs), Dark-eyed Junco 1270, and Great-tailed Grackle 2.

# Field Trips



Daniel Kilby

## 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 Richard Barbieri, 966-4603, [offleash56@yahoo.com](mailto:offleash56@yahoo.com), for trips through March 11th. For trips from March 17th through April 15th call the scheduler Mark Martucci, 833-6722, [matuchbirdman@yahoo.com](mailto:matuchbirdman@yahoo.com). For trips after April 16th call the scheduler Carla Barbaro, 486-1198.

Consider car pooling 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.

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### Thursday, March 1, 8am to noon Effie Yeaw Nature Center Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777

Meet Jack in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park for a 4 hour walk on the trails winding through the oak woodland and down to the river. This is an excellent birding spot and Jack will also share his knowledge of the native and non-native plants and trees of this parkway area.

### Saturday, March 3, 8am to noon Bushy Lake/Cal Expo Floodplain Leader: Maureen Geiger, 444-0804 [mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mkgeiger@sbcglobal.net)

Join Maureen for a look at some of the birds that live along this section of the American River Parkway. Wood Ducks are usually seen, and river otters and beavers are a possibility as well. This will be about a 4 mile walk and will end near lunch time. Bring water and appropriate footwear as it may be muddy. Meet at the parking area at the south end of Ethan Way, just south of where Hurley Way goes into Gate 12 of Cal Expo. Newer birders will enjoy this trip.

### Sunday, March 4th, 7am to noon Folsom Lake, Mormon Island to Brown's Ravine Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942 [conardc@gmail.com](mailto:conardc@gmail.com)

Be prepared for a two mile walk along a rolling trail in the oak covered hills overlooking Folsom Lake. On the lake, we'll look for loons, five species of grebe and other waterbirds. This site is often an excellent place to see Phainopepla. Hairy Woodpecker and Purple Finch may be found. The woods should be alive with the song of Bewick's Wren and other resident breeders. Meet across from the Folsom Outlets in the parking lot behind Burger

King near the CircleK on Iron Point Rd. From Hwy 50, exit at Folsom Blvd and go north. Make the first right on Iron Point, then a right into the parking lot. There's a \$5 per car entrance fee at the State Park. We will attempt to arrange a car shuttle from Brown's Ravine back to Mormon Island. Steady rain cancels.

### Saturday, March 10, 7:30am Best Slough and Yuba County Wetlands Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603 [offleash56@yahoo.com](mailto:offleash56@yahoo.com)

Best Slough's drainage runs west out of the foothills and ends near Hwy 70 to meet with Algodon Slough which runs south and feeds into the Bear River. It's here at this confluence that Richard will lead you to see some of Yuba County's wetland habitat and surrounding properties. Meet Richard at the Park & Ride at Hwy 99 and Elkhorn Blvd. Take I-5 north from Sacramento; at the I-5/Hwy 99 split, take 99 and take the first exit after the split. Turn left over the freeway; the Park & Ride is on the southwest corner.

### Sunday, March 11, 8am Goethe Park Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882 [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net)

Meet Cathie at the first parking lot on your right past the entrance kiosk. This is a good time of year for singing and nesting birds, as well as early blooming plants. Pipevine Swallowtail Butterflies should be active. We'll walk through the oak woodland over to the river. Beginning birders are welcome on this trip, which will end before noon. There is a \$4 entrance fee to the park; if you wish to carpool a short way in, meet Cathie at 7:45 on Rod Beaudry Drive just off Folsom Blvd.

### Saturday, March 17 ARNHA Bird & Breakfast Effie Yeaw Nature Center Ancil Hoffman Park Contact: 489-4918

This morning bird walk is a fund raiser for the American River Natural History Association. Join experienced birders for an informative walk on the Nature Center trails and share in good company during the hearty breakfast. This gathering is for those 13 years of age and older. For more information, and to make reservations, call the Nature Center at 489-4918.

### Saturday, March 17, very early Tall Forest Bird Count Cosumnes River Preserve Recorded Information, 684-2816

Meet at the farm center gate at the intersection of Desmond and Bruceville Roads, ON TIME to join this monthly bird count. Usually led by John Trochet, this area is normally closed, so this is your opportunity to bird there. John has an appreciation of nature on many levels, and a trip with him is always exciting. You must check the recorded information a day or two previously to get the exact meeting time and any other updated details. Arrive a little early, as this trip always leaves promptly.

### Sunday, March 18, 8am Effie Yeaw Nature Center Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882 [empid@earthlink.net](mailto:empid@earthlink.net)

Spring is a great time to walk the paths of the Nature Center, looking for nesting hummingbirds, blooming Giraffe's Head and Dutchman's Pipe, and listening to all the bird activity as they sing to attract

*Field Trips* continued on page 4

## Field Trips continued from page 3

mates and establish territory. Meet Cathie in the Nature Center parking lot in Ancil Hoffman Park. This walk is great for beginning birders, and anyone interested in natural history. Walk will end by noon.

### **Sunday, March 18** **Habitat Improvement Work Day** **Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Help Jack restore native vegetation along the American River Parkway. Tasks vary from month to month, so call Jack for details and meeting time, usually early morning.

### **Tuesday, March 20, 8am to noon** **Sailor Bar Area** **Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Meet Jack at the end of Emperor Street to explore the plants, birds and animals of this riparian corridor along the American River Parkway. From Winding Way, turn south on Kenneth, then east on Emperor Street to the end.

### **Saturday, March 24** **8am to noon** **Shadow Glen/Snowberry Creek** **Leader: Lea Landry, 638-1141** **llandry@softcom.net**

Meet Lea in the parking lot of the Snowberry Creek Equestrian staging area where Main and Sunset Avenues meet in Orangevale, (1/4 mile east on Main), for a morning walk which will include some riparian habitat, some ridge trails, and a good view of Lake Natoma. Possible sightings include Cooper's Hawk, Rufous-crowned Sparrow, and an assortment of waterfowl. There may be some short steep climbs on trails, so wear comfortable hiking footwear. Beginning birders are welcome on this trip.

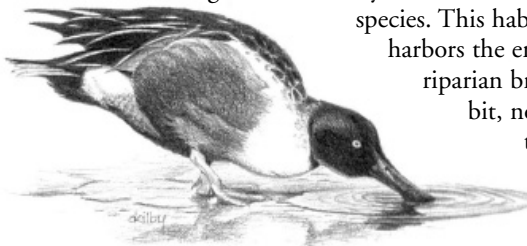
### **Sunday, March 25, 8am to noon** **Orangevale Park** **Leaders: Paul Cordero and** **Mark Martucci, 833-6722** **matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Meet Paul and Mark in the parking lot on Filbert Ave at 8am. They will be looking for a variety of resident, wintering and early migrant species. Be prepared for a one to two mile hike on potentially muddy trails. To reach Orangevale Park take Hazel Ave to Oak Ave. Go East on Oak Ave to Filbert Ave. Take a right on Filbert; the parking

lot is on your right. This is a great trip for beginning birders.

### **Saturday, March 31, 7am** **Caswell Memorial State Park** **Leader: Gary Fregien, 451-2767** **calaveri@sbcglobal.net**

Caswell Memorial State Park is located in the Central Valley near the town of Ripon, about an hour south of Sacramento. The park's position along the meandering Stanislaus River affords a combination of water and riparian vegetation. Although now merely a remnant, the park's 258 acres are mostly wild, in stark contrast to the surrounding agricultural lands, and present a pristine example of the once extensive riparian corridor along the river. The habitat is primarily mature riparian valley oak woodland. Its multi-level canopy provides lush cover, nesting and feeding grounds and is a magnet for a variety of resident and migrant species. This habitat also



*Daniel Kilby*

harbors the endemic riparian brush rabbit, not known to occur elsewhere. For more information about the park, go to [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov), click on "Find A Park" and use the drop-down menu to find Caswell. We had a nice variety of birds during our March '06 trip; 52 species in all, including a White-throated Sparrow. The December, 2006 trip was also quite productive with 49 species.

There is a day-use fee to enter the park. We plan to spend several hours in the park along some of the numerous nature trails, so bring food and water. The trails are primarily level, but these paths and the vegetation along them may be damp. Dress appropriately. We will meet at the Park & Ride on the east side of Hwy 99 at the Sheldon Rd exit.

### **Sunday, April 1, 8am** **Upper Sunrise,** **American River Parkway** **Leader: Mark Martucci, 833-6722** **matuchbirdman@yahoo.com**

Mark will lead you on a morning walk along the American River Parkway. You will see a nice variety of resident birds and maybe a few early spring migrants. From Hwy 50, drive North on Sunrise Blvd, turn left on Fair Oaks Blvd, and take the first left on Pennsylvania. There is a \$4 per car

entrance fee. This is another great trip for beginners and for more experienced birders alike.

### **Wednesday, April 4, 8am to noon** **Bannister Park** **Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Explore another beautiful area along the American River with Jack. As always, you can share in his knowledge of the natural history of the parkway. Meet Jack in the parking lot at the end of Bannister Road, south off Fair Oaks Blvd., west of Sunrise Blvd.

### **Saturday, April 7, 8am to noon** **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 and early migrant species. This will be about a 4 mile hike and will end before lunch. Bring water and appropriate footwear as it may be muddy.

### **Sunday, April 8, 8am** **Goethe Park** **Leader: Cathie LaZier, 457-6882** **empid@earthlink.net**

Meet Cathie in the first parking lot on your right past the entrance kiosk. We'll walk through the oak woodland and along the river, looking for spring wildflowers and nesting birds. Trip will end before noon. Beginners are encouraged to come on this trip. There is a \$4 per car entrance fee to the park; if you wish to carpool a short distance in, meet Cathie at 7:50am on Rod Beaudry Drive, just off Folsom Blvd.

### **Saturday, April 14, 8am** **Jepson Prairie and Yolo Bypass** **Leader: Andi Salmi, 691-7216** **andisalmi@yahoo.com**

Jepson Prairie is an unusual area of bunch grass prairie and vernal pool habitats, harboring some fascinating native plant species. Wildflowers will be the main focus of the morning and we'll bird Yolo Bypass in the afternoon. Meet Andi at the Park & Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento at 8am. From Sacramento take the West Capitol exit; turn left, then left again into the lot. Bring a lunch and water as this trip will last into mid-afternoon.

**Sunday, April 15, 7:30am**  
**Spenceville Wildlife Area**  
**Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603**  
**offleash56@yahoo.com**

This scenic recreational area of rolling hillsides, streams, reservoirs and ponds offers a variety of wildlife. This trip will include several short hikes and one optional 5 mile hike over uneven terrain. A short steep climb to Fairytale Falls may provide a look at a dipper. Other possible birds include Yellow-breasted Chat, Lewis' Woodpecker, rails, warblers and more. Bring lunch, plenty of water, and dress for changeable weather. Meet Richard at Brookfield's restaurant parking lot in Roseville. Take Eureka Road exit off I-80; go right on Eureka and first left at the stoplight (Taylor Road). The restaurant is located behind the Shell gas station.

**Sunday, April 15**  
**Habitat Improvement Work Day**  
**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Help Jack restore native vegetation along the American River Parkway. Tasks vary from month to month, so call Jack for details and meeting time, usually early morning.

**Tuesday, April 17, 8am to noon**  
**William Pond Park**  
**American River Parkway**  
**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack for this walk to check out both the river and the small lake, as well as the developed park area. A variety of birds may be present, and Jack will point out some of the local plants and share information about their use by Native Americans. Meet him just outside the park entrance at the end of Arden Way. This trip is a great one for beginners.

**Saturday, April 21, 7am**  
**Bodega Bay**  
**Leader: Dan Brown, 362-2458**  
**Naturestoc@aol.com**

Join Dan for a full day of birding and exploring the many habitats around Bodega Bay. This is often one of the best coastal birding areas, with many gulls, shorebirds and waterfowl to see, in addition to possible vagrant songbirds. Meet Dan at the Park & Ride off Highway 80 in West Sacramento. From Sacramento take the West Capitol Avenue exit, turn left at the stop light and then left again into the Park & Ride lot. This Park & Ride lot is on the North side of the freeway, NOT THE SOUTH SIDE LOT. We will leave at 7am SHARP. Bring

food, (your option for lunch will be the Tides snack bar) water and warm clothes.

**Sunday, April 22, 8am**  
**Bear Valley, Wildflowers and Birds**  
**Leaders:**  
**Jerry Marinovich, (530) 666-0768**  
**Tim Fitzer, 870-5207**

Bear Valley is known for its scenic beauty and wildflower displays, so Jerry and Tim will be looking for a wide variety of flowers. Of course the birds will not be overlooked; there are many that nest here. Bear Valley is located off Hwy 20 east of Williams, and a portion of the road is dirt. The trip will last into the afternoon so bring lunch and liquids. This is a fun trip for beginning birders and wildflower lovers. Meet Jerry and Tim at the Jack In The Box parking lot in Woodland; take the Road 102 exit off I-5, go right, and the parking lot is on your right. FRS radios will be helpful on this trip.

**Saturday, April 28, 7am to 11:30am**  
**Spring Migration at the**  
**SRCSB Bufferlands**  
**Leader: Chris Conard, 362-5942**  
**conardc@gmail.com**

This morning tour of the Bufferlands will focus on finding migrant songbirds, resident breeders, and lingering winter residents. The heron, egret and cormorant rookery will be in full swing, and if water levels are right, we could have excellent shorebirding conditions. The Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District 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) 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.

**Sunday, April 29, 7:30am**  
**Sweetwater Creek**  
**Leader: Richard Barbieri, 966-4603**  
**offleash56@yahoo.com**

At this favorite spring hotspot you should find wildflowers in bloom and the song of

the Yellow-breasted Chat. Richard will scout for Lazuli Buntings, Wrentits, California Thrashers, migrating hummingbirds, and colorful warblers. Meet Richard at Bella Bru in the shopping center on the northeast corner of El Dorado Hills Blvd and Hwy 50. This will be a half day trip, and is a good one for beginners.

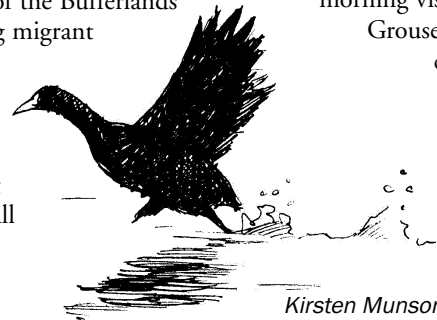
**Wednesday, May 2, 8am to 11am**  
**Phoenix Field**  
**Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Join Jack at Phoenix Field (Jim David Park) for a walk around the beautiful vernal pools. This trip will feature rare plants and spring blooms in the vernal pools. Jack will lend his expertise in identifying these unusual plants. Phoenix Field is located on Sunset Blvd just east of Hazel Avenue. Don't forget your binoculars to view the resident birds.

**Mono Lake, May 2 & 3**  
**Wednesday & Thursday**  
**Leaders: Lea Landry, 638-1141**  
**llandry@softcom.net**  
**Dan Tankersley, 606-6518**  
**dtankers@winfirst.com**

The highlight of this trip is the very early morning visit to the Greater Sage Grouse lek to watch the birds' courting display. Other possible areas to be birded are the South Tufa area and the County Park's boardwalk at the north end of Mono Lake, the Jeffrey Pine Forest, especially in the burn area, Lee Vining Creek and Lundy Lake. Other

birds that may be seen include Pinyon Jays, Mountain Bluebirds, Sage Thrashers, Sage Sparrows, Brewer's Sparrows, Green-tailed Towhees, Canyon Wren, Wilson's Snipe, and lots more! The Thursday morning trip to the lek leaves the motel area VERY early, (4:15am!), to arrive at the lek before sunrise, so bring warm clothes with lots of layers. For those who drive up Wednesday morning, meet the leaders at the Mono Basin Visitor Center, on Hwy 395 just north of Lee Vining, at 12:30pm (having already lunched.) If you choose to drive up on Tuesday and stay overnight, meet the leaders at 8am Wednesday at the Mono Lake Committee Store in Lee Vining for morning birding. The Wednesday morning group will lunch in the field. There are several good motels and restaurants in Lee



Kirsten Munson

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Vining; contact the leaders for more information, or go to [www.leevining.com](http://www.leevining.com).

### **Saturday, May 5, 7am SHARP Mines Rd/Del Puerto Canyon Leader: Gary Fregien, 708-0636 [calaveri@sbcglobal.net](mailto:calaveri@sbcglobal.net)**

This full day outing is oriented toward the birder with adventure in the heart. Mines Road and Del Puerto Canyon are located southeast of Livermore, about an hour and a half south of Sacramento. This is primarily a road trip, but with several stops, encompassing three counties along the birding route: Alameda, Santa Clara and Stanislaus. The trip's timing and varied habitats typical of the coastal mountains and canyons should produce numerous spring migrants as well as resident birds. Expect Phainopepla, Lawrence's Goldfinch, Lewis' Woodpecker, Bald Eagle, Bullock's Oriole and many more. We will visit one regional park, Lake del Valle, where there will be a day-use fee to enter the park.

Meet Gary at the Park & Ride off I-80 in West Sacramento. Take the West Capitol Ave. exit; turn left at the light and then left again into the Park & Ride lot. Car pooling is suggested, due to limited access at stops and the distance traveled. When we DEPART the lot at 7am sharp, we will

back-track to I-5 and proceed south and west to the Livermore area. Bring along FRS radios, food and water.

### **Sunday, May 6, leaving at 7am South Yuba River State Park Covered Bridge Area Leader: Lisa Moraga, 455-4786 [lmoraga562@earthlink.net](mailto:lmoraga562@earthlink.net)**

Bridgeport and South Yuba River State Park are located on Pleasant Valley Road, eight miles north from the Intersection of Pleasant Valley Road and State Route 20 west of Grass Valley. (17660 Pleasant Valley Road, Penn Valley, CA (530) 432-2546) web link: [www.sierrafoothillsaudubon.com/Birding/hot\\_spots/bridge.html](http://www.sierrafoothillsaudubon.com/Birding/hot_spots/bridge.html)

This area is spectacular during the spring for birdlife and wildflowers. We will bird trails near the visitor center and portions of the Point Defiance Trail. We'll look for Yellow-breasted Chat, Bullock's Oriole and Canyon Wren. Along the river portion of the Point Defiance trail, Golden Eagle and American Dipper have been spotted. The Black Oak woodland north of the river supports a variety of woodpeckers. The trails are adorned with plenty of poison oak, so dress appropriately. This trip lasts into the afternoon. Pack a lunch and bring plenty of water for the hike. Sturdy shoes and protective clothing are essential for the trails. Meet at the Park & Ride off I-80/Horsehoe

Bar Road, Exit #110. We will leave the Park & Ride promptly at 7am, so arrive a little early.

### **Saturday, May 12, 8:15am Pine Hill Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Walk with Jack up to a Fire Lookout and explore till early afternoon, with a focus on the rare and endangered plants found in this special area. Jack will not ignore the birds, so bring your binoculars as well.

Meet at 8:15am at the El Dorado Park & Ride, (going east on Hwy 50, take the first El Dorado offramp; go right to the second stop sign, and left into the Park & Ride.) Alternate meeting place is at 9am at the gate at Ulenkamp and Pine Hill Roads. (Hwy 50 to Bass Lake Road; right on Green Valley Road; pass a school on your right and then turn left on Ulenkamp Road to Pine Hill Road.) This trip will last till early afternoon so bring a lunch and liquids.

### **Monday, May 14, 8am to noon Paradise Beach Leader: Jack Hiehle, 967-0777**

Meet Jack in Glen Hall Park at the end of Carlson Drive for this interesting morning hike along the American River. Jack will show his skills as an all-around naturalist by pointing out birds, butterflies and wildflowers.

## **SOME APRIL CREEK WEEK ACTIVITIES**

### **Bufferlands Birds and Blooms Tour Saturday, April 21, 1:30pm-3:30pm**

Thousands of waterfowl and other wetland birds winter at the Fishhead Lake wetlands, and many live year-round to nest and raise their young. California poppies, lupines, owl's clover, and baby blue-eyes grow around the uplands and wetland edges. Come enjoy the birds and flowers. The meeting location is weather-dependant, so contact Roger Jones at (916) 875-9174 or email [jonesro@saccounty.net](mailto:jonesro@saccounty.net) the week preceding the event for exact meeting location and directions.

### **Mather Vernal Pool Flower Walk Sunday, April 22, 10am and 1pm**

Join the Mather vernal pool docents of the Sacramento Chapter of the California Native Plant Society for a 2 hour tour to explore this magic carpet of flowers. These unique wildflowers bloom only for a brief period in the spring. Meet at the Splash Center at 4426 Excelsior Road. See [www.sacvalleycnps.org](http://www.sacvalleycnps.org) for directions. For more information and to sign up, call (916) 737-WILD. Reservations are required. The tour is provided free of charge by trained CNPS docents, however donations are greatly appreciated.

### **Steelhead Creek Beaver Pond Walk Wednesday, April 25, 6:30pm**

Early evening is the best time to see beaver activity and lots of other local wildlife. Take a stroll with Mary Tappel along Steelhead Creek. Meet at the Ueda Parkway Staging area parking lot on Elkhorn Blvd. and Sorrento Rd. east of Steelhead Creek. Call 925-1933 or email [mtappel@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:mtappel@waterboards.ca.gov) for further information or directions. NOTE: this event will be cancelled in the event of heavy rain.

### **Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) Wetland Tour Thursday, April 26, 9am-11am**

Natural Resource Specialist Lizette Crosbie will lead a tour of Wolf Ranch Wildlife Sanctuary, a 60 acre wetland created by SAFCA. The wetland is a major habitat feature of northern Sacramento and has a large diversity of viewable wildlife including waterfowl, raptors, songbirds and beaver. This tour includes a 1 mile walk and the opportunity to view features of SAFCA's wetland and riparian restoration projects. Meet at the Ueda Parkway staging area at Elkhorn Blvd. and Sorrento Rd. just east of Steelhead Creek. Please call (916) 874-6451 or email [crosbiel@saccounty.net](mailto:crosbiel@saccounty.net) to sign up or for further information.

# STATEWIDE BREEDING BURROWING OWL SURVEY

The Institute for Bird Populations (IBP) is currently partnering with local Audubon Society chapters to perform surveys for Burrowing Owls throughout their entire breeding range in California. This two year project aims to repeat surveys completed between 1991 and 1993, and compare results between the two survey periods. In addition, surveys are being conducted in 3 new regions including the Sonoran and Mojave Deserts, and the Modoc Plateau.

In 2006, with the help of 18 dedicated volunteer coordinators up and down the state, we recruited and deployed 219 volunteer surveyors who logged an amazing 3,245 hours of volunteer labor. From May 1 through July 15 of 2006 survey volunteers visited and systematically counted breeding pairs of Burrowing Owls on 204 5km x 5km survey blocks across California.

REGION	No. of Blocks Surveyed in '06	Pairs of Owls Detected
Bay Area Interior	45	58
Middle Central Valley	77	97
Northern Central Valley	31	9
Southern Central Valley	26	25
Central Interior	14	3
Southern Interior	17	85
Coachella Valley	5	1
Imperial Valley	8	275
Sonoran Desert	18	15
Mojave Desert	76	27
Great Basin	18	0

We can report that surveyors documented 595 Burrowing Owl pairs on 72 of the 335 surveyed blocks. Detections were highly concentrated in a few areas of the state, particularly the Imperial Valley, and to a lesser degree, the middle Central Valley and Southern Interior regions.

## Survey Efforts and Results in Sacramento County

Surveyors, including members from Sacramento Audubon Society, visited 14 blocks, contributing a total of 184 volunteer hours. The 14 blocks included 11 historically known breeding owl blocks and 3 random blocks. Disappointingly, breeding pairs were detected at only five of the 14 blocks. In the five occupied blocks, 15 pairs were detected.

Thanks to all of the volunteers: Esther Burkett, Chris Conard, Ken Hashagen, Lea Landry, Cathie LaZier, Sara Lee, Lora Leerskov, Karen Mitchell, David Perrin, Shawn Petrash, Carole Petrash, Tricia Reed, Sarah Ross, Steve Scott, Sarah Stier, and Lois Wren.

If you did not participate in 2006 but are interested in participating in summer 2007, please email us at owl@birdpop.org, and provide contact information and your county of residence. We provide maps of your survey area, instructions, data forms, and assistance if you have questions. Censusing a 5km x 5km block typically requires between 5 and 20 hours of work, depending on the location of the block. Surveys must be completed between May 15 and July 15 of 2007.

We are grateful to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Pacific Gas and Electric Company for providing grant money for this project.

Contact Us: IBP's Burrowing Owl survey is directed and coordinated by Bob Wilkerson and Rodney Siegel. We can be reached at owl@birdpop.org or 415-663-2051. You can learn more about the project, as well as IBP's other projects, at www.birdpop.org

Bob Wilkerson and Rodney Siegel

## Findings continued from page 2

Geese with a few Ross's geese mixed in. Two adult and one immature Bald Eagle, a Prairie Falcon and at least 50 Ring-necked Ducks."

**Robinson Road, Road 113, and Birds Landing (1/27)** — Ferruginous Hawk, Prairie Falcon, Burrowing Owls, and Long-billed Curlews were seen, leader Tim Fitzer said.

**Salt Spring Valley (1/21)** — Leader Tim Fitzer reported that this trip to western Calaveras County yielded five Bald Eagles, Ferruginous Hawks, Prairie Falcon, Burrowing Owls, Lewis' Woodpecker and 30 Mountain Bluebirds.

**Gray Lodge Wildlife Area (1/20)** Highlights were three Eurasian Wigeons, viewed at 50 yards or less, John York, co-leader with Doug O'Bannion, reported.

Two blue morph forms ("Blue Goose") of Snow Geese were observed among thousands of ducks and geese. Virginia Rails and Soras were heard calling back and forth. Sandhill Cranes were present en route to the refuge.

**Sandhill Cranes of Central Valley (1/20)** Twenty birders turned out for this "Save Our Sandhill Cranes"-sponsored trip, Mike Savino, coordinator with leader Jessica Stocking reported. After enjoying a wide assortment of shorebirds, ducks and geese at the Cosumnes River Preserve wetlands loop, the group drove to Staten Island where thousands of cranes, Tundra Swans, geese and ducks provided a spectacle "of wild thunder," Mike said.

**Point Reyes Mammal Trip (1/15)** Leader Jack Hiehle's group recorded a resounding scorecard of four Gray

Whales, 193 Elephant Seals with 43 pups, one Harbor Seal, nine Sea Lions, 79 Black-tailed Deer, 78 Axis Deer, 11 Fallow Deer, and 19 Tule Elk, plus 50-plus bird species, including a Peregrine Falcon.

**Lodi Water Treatment Plant and Staten Island (1/14)** — Leader Richard Barbieri said Pacific Golden Plover, Bonaparte's Gull, Lesser Scaup, Forster's Tern, and Sandhill Cranes were recorded before the group moved to Staten Island. There they found Burrowing Owls, Snow Geese, Tundra Swans and Green-winged Teal.

**Sailor Bar (12/8)** — Hooded Merganser, Barrow's Goldeneye, Sharp-shinned Hawk, and Lincoln's Sparrow were recorded on this American River Parkway trip, leader Jack Hiehle reported.

Pete Hayes

# Upcoming Events

## 12TH ANNUAL GODWIT DAYS IN ARCATA

Don't forget the 12th annual Godwit Days spring migration bird festival being held April 20-22. See last month's *Observer* for further information or visit [www.godwitdays.com](http://www.godwitdays.com).

## SACRAMENTO BIRDING FOR FUN WORKSHOP

Sheila Green is a volunteer with SAS and has over 7 years experience teaching the love of birds and nature to kids and adults. Birding for Fun is an inter-generational, hands-on workshop for children ages 6-16 accompanied by a parent, grandparent or other special adult. Sheila will be covering birding in the Sacramento Area with special emphasis on audio and visual bird identification; where to go exploring; backyard and wild habitat conservation.

It will be held at the Cordova Community Center, 2197 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova. The classes will be from 6:30 to 8pm, Wednesday, March 14 and 21 with a field trip from 9 to 11am on Saturday, March 17. You can register by calling the Park District's number at 362-1841. The class size is limited, so sign up soon. Cost is \$15.

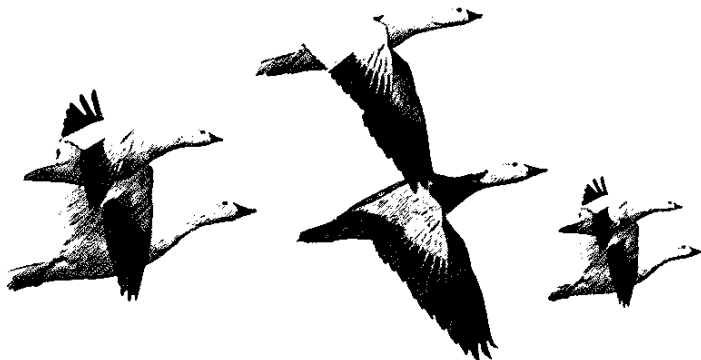
## SIXTEENTH ANNUAL SPRING SALE

On March 31 and April 1, from 10am to 4pm, the Shepard Garden and Arts Center will hold its annual Spring Sale. This event provides funding for community services such as shows and programs for the general public, as well as the maintenance for the wonderful building where we hold all our meetings. A little bit of a garage sale with an emphasis on gardening, you can also find expert advice from the many garden club members who volunteer to man the booths. Come out and support the Sale.

## KERN RIVER VALLEY SPRING NATURE FESTIVAL

The 13th Annual Kern River Valley Spring Nature Festival will take place the weekend of April 27-30, 2007. Saturday and Sunday, Audubon-California's Kern River Preserve in Weldon, will host numerous free events including bird walks led by Kerncrest Audubon Society volunteers, bird banding with the Southern Sierra Research Station, and information booths and exhibits located in the large, shaded front yard of Preserve Headquarters. All day, with a fee, birding and other natural history field trips with expert leaders will be offered Friday-Monday, April 27-30.

For further information including activities, trip descriptions, accommodations, and a list of the birds seen last year visit <http://kern.audubon.org/bioregion.htm>.



## MAY BOOK SALE

Mark your calendar for our May General Meeting. We will begin early and hold our annual Book Sale. This year we are lucky to have additional books donated by Mr. and Mrs. Jim Middleton. Please go through your bookshelves and consider donating items to the sale. Anything with a natural history theme is welcome, including of course, birding books, CDs, and videos. Look for information in future issues of *The Observer* about where to bring your books prior to the sale. This is a great fundraiser for SAS and lots of fun as there are always great finds and bargains. See you there!



## THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS

Though we mention those who have given donations every month we really are very thankful for everyone's generous support. It keeps our Society thriving and better able to support its Mission functions. Thanks again to everyone.

Joann Anglin, Tim Fitzer, Scott Hoppe, John Payne, and Jeanne & Bruce Swinehart, to the Conservation and Education Fund.

Joann Anglin, Johnnie Corlew, Loraine Holden, Sheila Larkin, John Payne, and Jeanne & Bruce Swinehart, to Bobelaine Sanctuary.

Peter Stoddard to the General Fund.

### 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 NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to all  
of these new members:

Dennis and Meg Bryerton	Barbara Milton Julie Sheldon
Karen Burke	Willard Spaulding
William Gould	Judith Tracy
Truman Holtzclaw	Nancy Weagly, DVM
Scott Hoppe	

### NOMINATIONS

The Nominating Committee is seeking volunteers to serve on the Society's Board of Directors for the year beginning July 1, 2007. If you would like to volunteer or have a nomination please call Tim Fitzer at 870-5207.



Rosemary Gilbert Bell

### 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 March 27, 2007 at 7pm at the SMUD Building, 6301 S Street, Sacramento.

## 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

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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation for Conservation/Education \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation for maintenance Bobelaine Sanctuary \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Sacramento Audubon Society

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please remember to send any change of address to our Membership Chair.

### SACRAMENTO AUDUBON SOCIETY CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Corresponding Secretary:** Jan Tankersley, 359-2829

**Treasurer:** Cathie LaZier, 457-6882, empid@earthlink.net

**Past President:** Peter Watkins, 929-6623, P2Watkins@chw.edu

**Directors:**

Roy Greenaway, 631-3536

Dorothy Harvey, 921-6126

Sheila Deaner, 278-7869, deaner@skymail.csus.edu

Lea Landry, 638-1141, llandry@softcom.net

**Education Chair:** Dan Tankersley, 359-2829, dtankers@winfirst.com

**Conservation Chair:** Roy Greenaway, 631-3536

**Membership Chair:** Lea Landry, 638-1141, llandry@softcom.net

**Properties Chair and**

**Newsletter Editor:** Sharon Wisecarver, 399-1660, sawise7@sbcglobal.net

# Seasonal Observations

January 1 to January 31  
Rare and Unusual Bird Reports  
[www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm](http://www.cvbirds.org/ListServ.htm)

The first month of 2007 turned out to be Sacramento's driest in the 158 years of record keeping. It was also one of the coldest, with ice over an inch thick on sheltered waters. There were several excellent finds, with the Grizzly Island **Snowy Owl** continuing through 1/25. Other headliners included a heard-only **Brown Thrasher** reported on the 1/2 Rio Cosumnes Count at the Cosumnes River Preserve (CRP) and again on 1/5. A **Common Grackle** was found at a private ranch in Galt from 1/16 to 1/18. It was a first record for this species in Sacramento County and, somewhat surprisingly, received a lot of attention in the press. This led to some confusion, since **Great-tailed Grackles**, a different species, are regularly seen in the area. To the south of our area, a **Smew** was seen by many just east of Sonora from 1/20 to 1/29. If accepted by the California Bird Records Committee, this would constitute just the third state record for this stunning Eurasian merganser.

Out-of-season species found on the 1/2 Rio Cosumnes CBC included a gorgeous male **Bullock's Oriole** at CRP and a **Blue Grosbeak** on Merritt Island in Yolo County. Additional Yolo highlights included a **Eurasian Green-winged Teal** on 1/7 at the Yolo Wildlife Area (YWA), a **Yellow-bellied Sapsucker** reported at the Putah Creek picnic area south of Davis on 1/7, the continuing **Eastern Phoebe** from private land near Winters on 1/30, the return of last year's **Ovenbird** to the Mace Ave bridge over Putah Creek, and the continuing **American Tree Sparrow** at YWA on 1/21. Among the many

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Yolo gull reports were an amazing three adult **Glaucous Gulls** on 1/27 at the Yolo Central Landfill. On 1/7, three **McCown's Longspurs** were reported along County Line Rd in northern Yolo, and again on 1/28

along with a **Lapland Longspur**. Another **Lapland Longspur** was reported on 1/1 at "Longspur Corner" near Rds 16 and 90B.

Other birds of interest include single **Surf Scoters** from the Turner Rd Vintners on 1/10-12 and from Beal's Point on 1/15, the continuing male **Red-breasted Merganser** at Sailor Bar on the American River Parkway (ARP) through at least 1/2, a **Western Gull** at the Gristmill Access (1/16-20), the continuing **Red-naped Sapsucker** at Larchmont Park throughout the month, and the continuing immature **Northern Shrike** near the entrance to Jepson Prairie through at least 1/28.

Many of these birds were first reported on the Central Valley Bird Club Listserv. Visit [www.cvbirds.org](http://www.cvbirds.org) and click "Listserv" for details. Thanks to all for their reports.

Chris Conard

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**Editor:** Sharon Wisecarver, e-mail, NOTE new address: [sawise7@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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 monthly January through December, except June and August, by the Sacramento Audubon Society.

### PLEASE NOTE

The Editor's new email address:  
[sawise7@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sawise7@sbcglobal.net)