

FIELD TRIPS

Please be considerate of the leaders and fellow birders by arriving in plenty of time, at least 15 minutes prior to the departure, to receive any last-minute instructions and to arrange the carpools. Due to the rising cost of fuel, please remember to offer the driver gas money.

A boxed lunch will be available (pre-order) for Friday, Saturday and Sunday field trips from the Stockton Hilton. Please designate on the registration form if you wish to purchase boxed lunch(es).

Please note the codes in parentheses after the descriptions are ratings provided as a service to our participants with limited mobility. Explanations are given at the end of Field Trips section. Contact Dale Smith (dale.smith2@comcast.net), field trip coordinator, if other arrangements need to be made.

Thursday

Birding with Jon Dunn: WAIT LISTED While the location is yet to be determined, spending a day in the field with Jon, while having Ed Pandolfino as a co-leader, is an unforgettable learning experience! This trip is a teaching event as well as general bird watching with lots of emphasis about becoming a better birder. Donations are \$50. **Field trip information will be emailed to confirmed participants.** All funds raised on this trip will benefit the Youth Scholarship and Publications Funds. As this trip will not return to the hotel until late afternoon, bring a lunch, snacks, and water. Meet in the hotel lobby at **5:15AM for a 5:30AM departure.** (3/R)

Friday

Directions and maps for all Friday trips will be provided Friday morning prior to departure time at the field trip meeting location on the first floor of the Stockton Hilton. Don't forget to pick up your boxed lunch if you pre-ordered one.

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| 5:30 AM departures | A) Birding with Jon Dunn
B) Colusa NWR
C) Eastern Stanislaus County
D) Merced Refuges
E) Salt Spring Valley & Vicinity
F) Sutter Buttes |
| 6:00 AM departures | G) Cosumnes River Preserve
H) Pardee Reservoir Eagle Boat Trip
I) Sacramento County Bufferlands
J) San Joaquin River NWR
K) Staten Island/Delta Meadows SP
L) Southeastern Solano County
M) Western Amador County
N) Yolo County |
| 6:30 AM departures | O) Micke Grove Regional Park |
| 7:00 AM departures | P) Nature/Wildlife Photography
Q) Ripon Oak Grove Park and WTP |

Birding with Jon Dunn: WAIT LISTED Join Jon Dunn and co-leader Ed Pandolfino as they explore Eastern Stanislaus County. This trip is a teaching event as well as general bird watching with lots of emphasis about becoming a better birder. All funds raised on this trip benefit the Youth Scholarship and Publications Funds. Donations are \$50. Please meet in hotel lobby at **5:15AM for a 5:30AM departure.** (3/R)

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge, Sutter Buttes, & District 10: The focus will be Colusa NWR, one of the best places in the Central Valley to view large waterfowl concentrations. There will be myriad ducks on the tour and skeins of Snow, Ross's and White-fronted geese, and many raptors overhead—possibly including Bald Eagle and/or Peregrine Falcon. Eurasian Wigeon is almost a cinch. There will be some easy walking on a level trail

through a riparian forest next to the main viewing pond. If time allows on the return trip, we will drive around the Sutter Buttes to look for Rough-legged Hawk, Sandhill Cranes, and diving ducks. Then we will proceed to District 10, northeast of Marysville, a winter haven for thousands of easily viewed geese and swans, including occasional Trumpeter & Bewick's swans, and White-faced Ibis. Driving time from Stockton to Colusa NWR is about 2 hours. (2) **5:30AM Departure**

Cosumnes River Preserve: Cosumnes River Preserve has the finest valley oak riparian forest in California. The preserve also has extensive wetlands, fallow fields, oak savannahs, and fresh water tidal marshes and swamps. Because this is one of the best locations to observe the overwintering Valley birds, we are offering two, simultaneous field trips, starting at different points. The trips will include visits to the River Walk trail, Lost Slough Boardwalk, along Desmond Road, and wetlands around "The Barn," (~ 4-5 miles). Participants can expect to see many cranes and waterfowl, a diverse variety of raptors and many songbirds. (3/C) **6AM Departure**

Eastern Stanislaus Co.: **WAIT LISTED** This field trip will focus on the grasslands, oak savannah, and foothill reservoirs of Eastern Stanislaus County. Starting in Oakdale, we will make a brief visit to Oakdale Recreation Area, and then go to Woodward Reservoir (day use fee per vehicle--\$10 for general, \$5 for seniors 62/over). From there, we will go to Willms Road, looking for such wintering raptors as Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, Bald and Golden eagles, Merlin and Prairie Falcon. We will go north on Cooperstown Road to La Grange, where we should see Lewis's Woodpeckers. Mountain Bluebirds, Vesper Sparrows, Burrowing Owls are possible there, too. We will visit Basso Bridge and go down Lake Road, where Phainopeplas are likely. We will visit the Turlock Lake Campground (if permission is obtained and time permits), where we may see Red-breasted Sapsucker, Brown Creeper, Pacific Wren, or a rare wintering passerine. Our last stop will be Modesto Reservoir if there is enough time before returning to Oakdale by early afternoon. (2) **5:30 AM Departure from the Stockton Hilton to meet with the local field trip leader and other participants at the Starbucks in Oakdale at 325 E. F Street at 7:00 AM.** Restrooms and picnic tables are available at Knights Ferry and La Grange.

Merced Refuges: **WAIT LISTED** East of the O'Neill Forebay in central Merced County, the wildlife refuges attract an abundance of cranes, waterfowl, waders, and shorebirds. Ibis, pelicans, and eagles are also a possibility. In the past, we have seen rare species such as Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Phoebe, Vermilion Flycatcher, Stilt Sandpiper, and Ruff, so although we cannot predict seeing a rare bird, this area provides a great opportunity to discover an unexpected species. We will visit the Merced NWR and the San Luis NWR, and if time permits, the Los Banos Wildlife Area and Gun Club Road marshes. Driving time is about 100 minutes each way. (2/SS) **5:30AM Departure**

New - Micke Grove Regional Park: Join leader Rich Cimino for a walk through this 132-acre property, near Lodi, which features several small to large groupings of native and introduced tree species, a Japanese garden, forest with watered lawns, wet lands and ponds. All are attractive for bird life. It is also home to the San Joaquin County Historical Museum.

Micke Grove is an eBird Hot Spot for the county with 112 species recorded. By introducing the park and museum grounds to CVBS birders, we can begin to add species to the eBird Hot Spot list.

Birds which may be seen are wintering ducks, mergansers, herons, egrets, raptors, Barn Owl, possible rail species, Yellow-billed Magpie, Hutton's Vireo, woodpeckers, thrushes, Common Yellowthroat and possible wintering warblers and sparrows. Wear water repellent shoes, layer clothing, bring liquids and a lunch. Rest rooms are on site. Drive time is only 20 minutes.

As there is a \$5 per car admission fee, carpooling is recommended. (If you wish, after birding, you can visit the museum that reveals the rich heritage of this region.) (3/WS) **6:30AM Departure**

Nature/Wildlife Photography in the Field with Bob Steele: **WAIT LISTED** Join professional bird photographer Bob Steele as we explore digital bird photography in the field. We'll look for easy-to-photograph subjects to allow for the primary focus to be on technique and fundamentals. Topics discussed and explained will include camera setup, equipment, exposure techniques, composition, flash use, digital field evaluation of images, and approaching subjects. Minimum equipment requirements for the workshop are: Digital SLR body; 300mm lens; teleconverters, tripod, and flash (if available). Geared toward beginner photographers, but intermediate and advanced photographers are sure to learn something as well. (3/WM, SM) Limited to 8 participants. **7AM Departure**

Pardee Reservoir Eagle Boat Tour: This scenic foothill reservoir is normally closed to the public during the

winter months. This field trip features a four-hour boat tour led by East Bay MUD Fisheries and Wildlife Biologist James Jones. Eagles, Ospreys, and winter waterfowl are expected. Limited to 20. (C) **6AM Departure**

Ripon Oak Grove Park & Wastewater Treatment Plant: Oak Grove Park in Ripon is a 55-acre undeveloped remnant of riparian forest and riparian oak woodland on the north bank of the Stanislaus River at the southern edge of San Joaquin County, 25 miles south of Stockton. The park contains some excellent habitat, and the black currant, raspberries, elderberries, wild grape, and naturalized black mulberries provide an abundant food source for both resident and migratory species alike. Although the trails are level, they are not all well-maintained, so there may be a bit of bush-whacking, stepping over logs, ducking under branches, etc. If it has rained, the trails may be muddy. The adjacent Ripon Wastewater Treatment Plant consists of 15 acres of treatment ponds and 40 acres of accessible (on foot) disposal ponds. A Pacific Golden-Plover has been found here in past winters, and a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, and gulls is expected. Driving time is about 45 min. each way. (3/R) **7AM Departure**

Sacramento County Bufferlands: The 2500-acre Bufferlands, surrounding the Sacramento Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, provide an open space buffer between the treatment plant and the community. This tour provides an opportunity to visit sites with limited public access and to see the fruits of local conservation and restoration efforts. Large-scale habitat restoration has been underway since 1992. We will visit restored and remnant habitats, including tule and cattail marsh, managed seasonal wetlands, riparian forest, and grasslands to find a high diversity of species. In addition, the wastewater ponds can harbor a good diversity of shorebirds. This tour provides an excellent chance to look for rails, raptors, winter songbirds, shorebirds, and waterfowl. We will visit several sites, with short to moderate walks at each. (2/R) **6AM Departure**

San Joaquin River NWR: WAIT LISTED The San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge is located west of Modesto within the historic floodplain of the confluences of the San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tuolumne rivers. Refuge lands consist of oak-cottonwood-willow riparian forest, pastures, agricultural fields, and wetlands. The refuge has an approved refuge boundary of 12,877 acres with over 1,900 acres of pristine riparian woodlands and 800 acres of newly restored riparian woodland. It is the primary wintering site of 98% of the Aleutian Canada Geese that winter in the Valley (October—April), plus it is a major wintering/migration area for Lesser and Greater Sandhill Cranes, Cackling Geese, and White-fronted Geese. The refuge's riparian forest provides important migration and breeding habitat for Neotropical migratory land birds including the most recent celebrity, Least Bell's Vireo. We should expect to get close to 100 species on this trip. (3/C) **6AM Departure**

Salt Spring Valley & Vicinity: WAIT LISTED East of Stockton, in the low foothills of Calaveras County, lies the Salt Spring Valley. Due to the variety of habitats visited, a nice selection of birds will be viewed. Expected birds will include good numbers and variety of raptors and waterfowl. Raptors usually include Bald and Golden eagles, Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, and Prairie Falcon. Waterfowl will include a mix of geese, dabbling and diving ducks, mergansers, grebes, shorebirds, herons, gallinules, and coots. The ranch is also good for Lewis's Woodpecker & Phainopepla. Driving time is 60-90 min. over a narrow country road. Restroom opportunities are very limited. (3/R) **5:30AM Departure**

Southeastern Solano County: The grasslands and farmlands between Dixon and Rio Vista provide some of the best open country birding in the Central Valley. Target species include Mountain Plover and numerous raptors: Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, Prairie Falcon, Merlin, and both eagles are possible. This is one of the best areas for the regionally declining Long-billed Curlew and Loggerhead Shrike. Scattered wetlands harbor waterfowl and forested patches shelter songbirds. Much of the birding will be along lightly-traveled roads. Restroom opportunities are very limited. (1) **6AM Departure**

Staten Island & Delta Meadows State Park: WAIT LISTED Delta Meadows State Park is about 25 miles northwest of Stockton. This will be our first and longest stop as we walk the trails of this undeveloped, seldom-visited, and relatively unknown state park. The park consists of a remnant of valley oak riparian woodland with sloughs, ponds, seasonal wetlands, and meadows at the confluence of the Mokelumne and Sacramento Rivers. Afterward, we will head to the nearby 9,200-acre Staten Ranch on Staten Island, a Nature Conservancy property that is still actively farmed, but also managed for wildlife. The farm's corn and wheat fields are flooded in winter to provide critical habitat for Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl. Restroom opportunities are limited. (3) **6AM Departure**

Sutter Buttes: The trip will be an opportunity for birders to get a close up look at the only mountains in the Central Valley. The time of year will limit the diversity of birds but it will be a good opportunity for those working on

their Sutter County bird lists. (A \$15 donation for the Middle Mountain Foundation to be collected with your registration) (3/R) **5:30AM Departure**

Western Amador County: East of Sacramento in the foothills of Amador County, numerous ponds, a large reservoir, fields, riparian woodlands, and oak savannah harbor a high diversity of birds. We will visit several hotspots to see waterfowl, grebes, pelicans, and eagles. In the past, rare wintering species have included Red-naped Sapsucker, Pacific Loon, Iceland (formerly Thayer's) Gull, Tundra Swan, Burrowing Owl, Eurasian Wigeon, Eurasian Green-winged Teal, and Black-and-white Warbler. We will visit Camanche Reservoir (fee \$8/vehicle), the lone area and numerous ponds in between. This area provides a great opportunity to see many birds for your Amador County list. Driving time is about 60 minutes each way. (1) **6 AM Departure**

Yolo County: **WAIT LISTED** Some of Yolo County's premier birders will guide participants to sites offering the county's largest variety of wintering birds. This trip goes to wetlands, sewage ponds, lake, and riparian habitats. Some possible stops are: Putah Creek riparian for passerines (Rufous-crowned Sparrow), and waterfowl along the creek (Hooded Mergansers, Barrow's Goldeneye); Lake Solano (Osprey); Davis landfill and wastewater treatment plant for gulls (Glaucous-winged, Iceland) and shorebirds; Yolo Basin marshes for waterfowl (Blue-winged Teal, mixed geese) and shorebirds (Ruff). This outing consistently produces the highest species total among symposium field trips. This field trip has easy to moderate walking, but it's mostly driving. (2) **6AM Departure from the Stockton Hilton. Plan to meet leaders in Davis by 7AM at the Park & Ride on the NE corner of the intersection of I-80 & Mace Blvd.**

Local Field Trips: (Saturday/Sunday)

Directions and maps for all Saturday and Sunday field trips will be provided prior to departure time at the field trip meeting location on the first floor of the Stockton Hilton. Don't forget to pick up your boxed lunch if you pre-ordered one.

SATURDAY'S FIELD TRIP DEPARTURE TIMES VARY. PLEASE CHECK EACH TRIP FOR DEPARTURE TIMES.

ALL SUNDAY'S FIELD TRIPS: 11:45 AM—3:45 PM

Caswell Memorial State Park: **WAIT LISTED (Saturday)** Caswell Memorial State Park, located along the San Joaquin River between San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties, includes one of the finest examples of closed-canopy Valley Oak riparian forest in the Central Valley, a habitat type that has been nearly extirpated by agricultural and urban development. Lawrence's Goldfinches nested here this year, one of few known nesting locations on the valley floor. Caswell is an excellent spot for both resident and wintering woodland birds of the Central Valley including Pacific Wren, Varied Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper, warblers, sparrows, and finches. There is a \$10 per-vehicle day-use fee at this state park, so carpooling is strongly recommended. Restrooms available. (3/R)

Clifton Court Forebay: **WAIT LISTED (Sunday)** Led by Rich Cimino, this field trip will cover three counties: San Joaquin, Contra Costa and Alameda. Starting out in northeastern Alameda at the junction of Mountain House Rd and J4/Byron Rd., we will bird the agricultural fields along Herdlyn Rd., looking for raptors, Long-billed Curlews and possible shorebirds. Then continue to the Mountain House—Kelso Rd. area for hawks, eagles, possible Prairie Falcon, and Burrowing Owl. We will move on to Clifton Court Forebay in Contra Costa County (outdoor restrooms available). At Clifton Forebay we'll need scopes to scan for ducks, gulls and cormorants, possible Peregrine Falcon and Merlin. Our last stop is Bethany Reservoir (fee area) to use the restrooms as we enter this BLM area we'll search for sparrows, warblers, and possibly wintering Swainson's Hawk. From the parking lot, we'll scan the reservoir for ducks, gull species, Golden Eagle and possible Ferruginous Hawk. **Note:** The field trip finishes at Bethany Reservoir, field trip leader will get the group back to Hwy 580/205. **Sunday Only (1/WS)**

Cosumnes River Preserve: **WAIT LISTED (Saturday and Sunday)** We will visit the River Walk Trail. Please see Friday's description for more details. (3/C)

Flood/Waverly Roads: **WAIT LISTED (Saturday)** The Flood/Waverly rangelands in eastern San Joaquin County are a "Raptor Wonderland" in winter. Birds likely to be seen include Ferruginous and Rough-legged hawks, perhaps a Prairie Falcon or Merlin. Eagles, owls, and numerous other raptors are possible. Other birds to be looked for include Long-billed Curlews, Loggerhead Shrikes, Mountain Bluebirds and perhaps gulls near the landfill. (1)

Heritage Oak Winery: If you want a birding trip combined with a little wine tasting at the end of day, this is the trip for you! This winery is located on a seldom traveled section of E. Woodbridge Road six miles east of Lodi. It was built in 2007 on a beautiful piece of property bordered by the Mokelumne River on the south. Twenty acres of untouched woodlands bisect the property, separating the upland vineyards from those in the bottomland. Trails pass through a variety of habitats: vineyards, a nature area, dense patch of cottonwood and willows, along the Mokelumne River, and two meadows. Along the way, you will notice numerous nesting boxes that the owner, Tom Hoffman, has built. Over the last 5-6 years, David Yee has regularly led monthly field trips to this area and has steadily built up a checklist of birds. **Sunday Only** (3/WM, SM)

Lodi Lake Wilderness Area: **WAIT LISTED (Sunday)** A 40-acre oak riparian jewel along the Mokelumne River near downtown Lodi. Maintained trails make for very easy walking. It is a great spot for wintering passerines such as Varied Thrush, Pacific Wren, and Golden-crowned Kinglet and a good vagrant trap, with some of the rarest birds in the county historically found here. (3/WM, SM)

White Slough Water Pollution Control Facility (Lodi WTP): **WAIT LISTED** These small settling ponds are near the intersection of I-5 and Hwy 12. Highly productive over the years, they are one of the spots to see Pacific Golden-Plover locally if they are around. When the conditions are right, they can attract good numbers of other shorebirds as well as gulls, terns and ducks. (1)

Mokelumne Day Use Area: **WAIT LISTED (Saturday)** This is small, delightful riparian oak woodland along the banks of the Mokelumne River northeast of Lodi. Expect mergansers, sparrows, warblers, and an occasional Osprey or eagle. There are maintained trails in this area leading from the parking lot to the river and riparian forest. (3/WS/SS)

Ripon Wastewater Treatment Plant: **WAIT LISTED (Saturday)** This consists of 15 acres of treatment ponds and 40 acres of accessible (on foot) disposal ponds. A Pacific Golden-Plover was found there last spring, and a variety of waterfowl, shorebirds, waders, and gulls is expected. (1)

Sacramento County Bufferlands: **WAIT LISTED (Sunday)** This will be an abbreviated version of Friday's tour, visiting a few of the most productive sites. **Note:** The Sunday tour will end in the field (near Elk Grove, not back at the Hilton). Limit 20. **Sunday Only** (2/R)

Staten Island: The 9,200-acre Staten Ranch on Staten Island, a Nature Conservancy property that is still actively farmed, but also managed for wildlife. The farm's corn and wheat fields are flooded in winter to provide critical habitat for Sandhill Cranes and other waterfowl. Restroom opportunities are limited. (1) **7AM Departure**

Stockton Rural Cemetery: The large oaks, elms, and other trees in this historic cemetery host an interesting variety of wintering and migrating thrushes, warblers, sparrows, and woodpeckers, among others. Even when the birding is slow, visitors can enjoy a relaxing stroll through California history. (1)

Woodbridge Wilderness Area: **WAIT LISTED (Saturday)** This wilderness area (open on selected weekends only) consists of lush riparian woodlands nestled along the south bank of the Mokelumne River in the town of Woodbridge. Dirt trails meander throughout the park. It is a great spot for wintering passerines such as Varied Thrush, Pacific Wren, and residents like Wrentit. This is a good vagrant trap, very similar to Lodi Lake, only wilder. (3/R)

Field Trip Ratings for Limited Mobility Birders

Time in Car vs. Out

- (1) Most birding can be done in and around car
- (2) Mixed
- (3) Most or all birding requires being out of car

Codes (if applicable) for out-of-car segments:

- (WM) Most areas suitable for wheelchairs and scooters
- (WS) Some areas suitable for wheelchairs and scooters
- (SM) Most areas have places to sit
- (SS) Some areas have places to sit
- (R) Rough and/or muddy terrain
- (C) Contact leader, multiple routes of various accessibility possible