

FIELD TRIPS

Please note the codes in parentheses after the descriptions are ratings provided as a service to our participants with limited mobility. Explanations are given after the Specialized Field Trips section.

Friday

Directions and maps for all Friday trips will be provided Friday morning prior to departure time. Please be considerate of the leaders and fellow birders by arriving in plenty of time, prior to the departure, to receive any last minute instructions. Contact Kurt Mize (km1542@att.com), field trip coordinator, if other arrangements need to be made. A boxed lunch will be available from the Stockton Grand. Please designate on the registration form if you desire to purchase one.

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| 5:30 AM departures | A) Colusa NWR
B) O'Neill Forebay/ Merced Refuges
C) Salt Springs Valley & Vicinity
D) Sutter Buttes
E) Eastern Stanislaus Co. |
| 6:00 AM departures | F) Cosumnes River Preserve
G) Eastern Contra Costa Co
H) Pardee Reservoir Eagle Boat Trip
I) Raptor Run
J) Bufferlands & Stone Lakes NWR
K) San Joaquin River NWR
L) Yolo County |
| 6:30 AM departures | M) Gull Workshop |

Colusa National Wildlife Refuge, Sutter Buttes, and District 10: The main 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 and 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'll proceed to District 10, northeast of Marysville, a winter haven for thousands of easily viewed geese and swans, including occasional Trumpeter and Bewick's swans, and White-faced Ibis. Driving time from Stockton to Colusa NWR is about 2 hours. (2)

Cosumnes River Preserve: Cosumnes River Preserve has the finest valley oak riparian forest in California. The preserve also has extensive wetlands, fallow fields, oak savannas, and fresh water tidal marshes and swamps. There are 2 possible routes: 1) River Walk trail, Lost Slough Boardwalk, along Desmond Road, and wetlands around "The Barn", (about 4-5 miles), or 2) Tall Forest, Accidental Forest, along Desmond Road and wetlands around "the Barn" (approx. 4-5 miles). The River Walk and Lost Slough Boardwalk trails are flatter, unobstructed, and a better sampler of all the habitats of the lower preserve. Birding the Tall Forest requires following animal trails through thick shrubs and over and under fallen trees. Ten years of accumulated deadfall, without a cleansing flood, has made transit of the Tall Forest very difficult. Rubber boots are encouraged due to standing water and low spots. Participants on both tours can expect to see many cranes and waterfowl, a diverse variety of raptors and many songbirds. No Tall Forest specialty has not been seen on the River Walk, but Winter Wren, Varied Thrush, Hutton's Vireo, and Wrentit are likelier in the Tall Forest. Driving time is about 30 minutes. (3/C)

Eastern Contra Costa Co.: Eastern Contra Costa County, despite rampant development in recent years, still offers fine birding opportunities. Planned stops include Clifton Court Forebay for rarities which may include Tufted Duck, scoters and loons, Byron Hot Springs for raptors as well as Burrowing and Short-eared owls, Marsh Creek Reservoir for water birds, Holland Tract for geese and Sandhill Cranes, and the ponds at Iron House Sanitary District for waterfowl, American Bittern and a chance to hear Black Rails. Walking is minimal, except for a flat, leisurely walk of approximately 2 miles at Iron House Sanitary District. Driving time is about 45 min. (2)

Eastern Stanislaus Co.: The focus of this field trip is the rolling grasslands, Oak Savannah and foothill reservoirs of Eastern Stanislaus Co. We will travel first to Turlock Lake State Park to look for early Mountain Plovers and then work our way east to Joe Domecq/Basso Bridge (sneak peeks at the salmon) and north along Cooperstown Rd., Willms Rd., Knight's Ferry and Sonora Rd. In the event that roads are wet, we will travel north on Crabtree Rd. instead of Willms Rd. Expect to see Lewis' Woodpeckers, lots of raptors (including both eagles and 3 falcon species), Vesper Sparrows, Mountain Bluebirds, wintering songbirds and more. Restrooms available at 3 stops, but no food or gas services available after the meeting spot. Meet at the Fruit Yard Restaurant (the corner of Hwy 132 and Albers Rd). east of Modesto at 7AM or at the symposium at 5:45 AM. (2)

Gull Workshop-Nimbus Fish Hatchery: Jon Dunn will lead a special field trip to the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. This is one of the premier spots to view rare pink-legged gulls in the Central Valley. Since this is a fund raiser for the Youth Scholarship Fund, donations will be \$20.(3/R) **Limited to 25 participants.**

Pardee Reservoir Eagle 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 technician James Jones. Eagles, Ospreys, and winter waterfowl are expected. (C) **Limited to 20 participants.**

Raptor Run: We will drive around the countryside trying to see as many raptors as possible. Five buteos (light and dark morphs) and four falcons (including Prairie and Merlin) are possible, as well as Golden and Bald eagles, Northern Harrier, White-tailed Kite, and Osprey. Five owls are possible, though only the Burrowing (and possibly Short-eared) are likely in the daylight. The Flood/Waverly Roads area will be our starting point. Most of the raptors have been seen there. From there we'll chase the missed raptors in areas where they have been recently reported. (1)

Sacramento Co. Bufferlands and Stone Lakes NWR: We will visit wetlands, riparian forest, and grassland habitat with a high diversity of bird species. This is an excellent chance to see, raptors, winter songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, and hopefully a few surprises. We will visit several sites, with short to moderate walks at each.(2/R) **Limited to 20 participants.**

San Joaquin River NWR: The San Joaquin River National Wildlife Refuge is located west of Modesto, California, 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 percent of the Aleutian Canada Geese that winter in the Valley (October - April), plus it is a major wintering/migration area for Lesser & 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 with the most recent celebrity, Least Bell's Vireo. We should expect to get close to 100 species on this trip. (3/C)

Salt Springs Valley and Vicinity: East of Stockton, in the low foothills of Calaveras County lies the Salt Springs Valley. Much of the outing is on the Webster Ranch, which is not open to the public. 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. These usually include Bald and Golden eagles, Ferruginous Hawk, Rough-legged Hawk, & Prairie Falcon. Waterfowl will include a mix of geese, dabbling and bay ducks, mergansers, grebes, shorebirds, herons, moorhens and coots. The ranch is also good for Lewis's Woodpecker & Phainopepla. Driving time is 60-90 min. over a narrow country road. It is necessary to caravan together to gain entrance through the locked gate. The walking is not taxing, though the ground is a bit uneven. Restroom opportunities are limited. (3/R) **Limited to 20 participants.**

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. (3/R) (Cost \$15 for the Middle Mountain Foundation) **Limited to 18 participants; Carpooling mandatory.**

Yolo County: Participant's will be guided by some of Yolo's premier birders 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 waste water treatment plant for gulls (Glaucous-winged, Thayer's) and shorebirds; Yolo Bypass marshes for waterfowl (Blue-winged Teal, mixed geese) and shorebirds (Ruff). This outing consistently produces the highest species total among symposium field trips. Easy to moderate walking, mostly driving. Plan to meet leaders in Davis by 7am. (2)

Local Field Trips: (Sat/Sun)

Camanche Lake Fish Hatchery: A 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. **6:30 am departure time.** (3/WS/SS)

Cosumnes River Preserve - We will visit the River Walk Trail. **6:30 am departure time.** (3/C)

Flood/Waverly Roads – 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 and owls and numerous other raptors are possible. Non-raptors to be looked for include Mountain Bluebirds and perhaps rare gulls at the landfill.

6:30 am departure time. (1)

Lodi Lake - A 40 acre oak riparian jewel along the Mokelumne River near downtown Lodi. Maintained trails make for very easy walking. Great spot for wintering passerines such as Varied Thrush, Winter Wren, and Golden-crowned Kinglet. A good vagrant trap, some of the rarest birds in the country have been found here.

7 am departure time. (3/WM, SM)

Mt. Plover Chase: The Mt. Plover has become increasingly difficult to find in the Central Valley and elsewhere in recent years. With a little luck, they can still be found at traditional wintering sites in Yolo, Colusa, and Solano counties. Our destination for this trip will be based on the results of scouting in those three counties during the week prior to the symposium. We have been able to locate a Mountain Plover flock on this trip during previous Symposia. Other birds likely on this trip include raptors that frequent grassland and agricultural environments. Diversity is typically low but a rarity is always possible. **7 am departure time.** (1)

Sacramento Co. Bufferlands & Stone Lakes NWR: An abbreviated version of Friday's trip. **6:30 am departure time.** (2/R)

Stockton Parks: A variety of local parks in Stockton will be visited to view wintering passerines. Varied Thrush, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Townsend's and Black-throated Grey warblers are a few possibilities. A Red-naped Sapsucker was an extremely rare treat six years ago!! **8 am departure time** (3/C)

Stockton Sewage Ponds: Some of the largest ponds in the world, this complex attracts large numbers of gulls, waterfowl, and shorebirds all year round. In previous years these ponds produced a Franklin's Gull and Peregrine Falcon for the Symposium. **7 am departure time.** (1)

Turner Rd. Vintners: This wildlife-friendly winery features sewage ponds and a 40 acre wetlands created with wastewater from winery operations. Winter visitors in 2003 included Common Loon, Ross's Goose, and a second county record of Vermilion Flycatcher!

7 am departure time. (1)

Woodbridge Rd: This road is just north of Hwy 12 off I-5. It has long been known as one of the most accessible areas in the state to see Greater Sandhill Cranes. Raptors, waterfowl, and shorebirds are also present, especially at the special crane preserve.

7 am departure time. (1)

Woodbridge Regional Park: This park 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, Winter Wren, and residents like Wrentit. This is a good vagrant trap, very similar to Lodi Lake. **7 am departure time.** (3/R)

Specialized Field Trips: (Sat/Sun)

Beginning Birding Field Trip: Jim Gain

Jim will help put into action many of the topics he covered earlier. He will visit Oak Grove Regional Park in north Stockton where wintering birds abound. Bring binoculars, field guides and note book. {Sat. 2:00—4:30 PM (3/WM, SM)}

Nature/Wildlife Photography in the Field: Clay Taylor

Grab your digital camera and join us in a nearby location to practice some basic techniques for creating great nature and wildlife images! We will find a variety of subject matter to photograph, including very cooperative critters, and we'll discuss different ways of shooting tips and techniques in the field. {Sun. 7:00—10:00 AM (3/WM, SM)}

Post Symposium Field Trip (Monday): Digiscoping—Clay Taylor

Learn about Digiscoping, the technique of taking digital photos through the eyepiece of a spotting scope. Sign up for this special workshop led by Clay Taylor of Swarovski Optik. Bring your own equipment (he will bring some spotting scopes) and you will get past the basics to taking some remarkable photos. We will actually be taking pictures of birds in the field. Donations will be \$20.(3/R) **Limited to 15 participants.**

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 w/s
- (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