President’s Corner
Rudy Darling, SFAS President

When I was starting out in birding, oh so long ago (don’t ask), I sure would have loved to have had someone help me get started. That field guide – Peterson’s, the only one available at the time – would have seemed a lot less intimidating if I had had some idea of what birds were commonly found in my area, and where they liked to live. As it was I had to bumble about my neighborhood by myself and make my share of outrageous misidentifications.

Dale Rubach (SFAS field trip chair) recently informed me that Bill Covington is retiring from leading monthly bird walks at Traylor Ranch. That got me to thinking, what a wonderful gift that was to beginning birders to have someone who sets aside one morning a month to help people get started on the long path to birdwatching proficiency. I know from personal experience that having a regular commitment impacts vacation planning, attending other conflicting events, family outings, etc. It takes dedication. Of course, it helps if it’s also fun and something you might do anyway.

Christy Sherr is a past SFAS President, retired State Park Ranger from most recently Malakoff Diggins SHP, and currently works as an Outreach Coordinator and Wildlife Biologist with the John Muir Project of the Earth Island Institute.

SFAS GENERAL MEETING
Thursday, April 4, 2019 at 7:00 pm
Community Room, Madelyn Helling Library
Nevada County Government Center, Nevada City
When Bill, a career CalTrans employee and independent contractor, retired about 17 years ago, he looked for a retirement activity. Birding seemed more fun than golf, so, despite poor hearing, he grabbed his old Peterson’s field guide (I see a pattern here) and entered the world of birdwatching. He went to some Elderhostel programs on birdwatching, joined SFAS and saw in The Phoebe a request for volunteer bluebird box monitors, which he did at Traylor Ranch. Though Bill professes not to be a great birder, he does know the birds of Traylor Ranch and has helped many people learn about them. He pointed out something that I learned years ago while nervously leading my first field trip – a bird walk turns out to be a group effort. There is usually someone in the group who can answer questions that come up, be it ID, behavior, range, etc. But it takes some committed person to be there and lead the group on its communal adventure. I asked Bill how he came to lead the trips. He replied that he went on one of Dan Stewart’s monthly beginning bird walks around the Grass Valley Sierra College campus area. Afterwards, over coffee at Briarpatch Co-op, Dan suggested it would be great to have a similar monthly walk at Traylor Ranch. Bill fell for it, and the rest is history. Thank you, Bill, for your dedication. I know it was appreciated.

Speaking of Dan Stewart, he has been leading his beginning birder walks for many years and is still doing it on the third Sunday of every month. I can only think of a handful of occasions when he requested a substitute in all that time. Dan is a fifth generation Nevada County resident. His career was spent teaching automotive services (in our day we called it auto shop) at Colfax High School. He had paid attention to birds on trips to the coast, struggling through ID’s like all of us, but it was when he went on an SFAS field trip to the Marysville rice fields with Jim Groeser that he got the bug. He was amazed that someone could just name off the birds without a second thought. Jim eventually talked Dan into being on the SFAS board, ultimately serving as president for two years. He also has helped out with education committee endeavors – classroom presentations, tabling, festivals, etc. For a while he assisted treasurer, Don Rivenes, with check depositing and writing. Dan hopes that SFAS will remain a viable organization well into the future, continue offering educational outreach and field trips, and that we can expand into the younger generation.

When I asked Dan what motivates him to dedicate one morning every month to teaching about birds, he said, without hesitation, that he believes it is important to have public awareness of the environment, and especially of birds as “canaries in the coal mine.” He also believes that it is important for SFAS to offer regular, short, beginning bird walks in addition to our extensive offerings of longer or more specialized field trips. As anyone who has been on any of his walks knows, he enjoys the discussions that ensue from walking in the habitat and observing the birds. Like Bill, Dan professes not to be the best birder, but he knows the birds in his neighborhood and he is extremely good at explaining to beginning birders about bird ID and behavior. His collection of binoculars lets participants try out different types to see what might work best for them. Besides, he says, there is the Briarpatch Co-op’s pastry cabinet at the end of the hike. I hope you get a chance to join him one third Sunday soon. As he says, birds are a never-ending source of amazement.

I would be remiss if I did not thank several others who lead regular walks. SFAS board member, Heath Wakelee, leads walks in Placer County geared to beginning birders. Former SFAS president, Carol Malnor, her husband, Bruce, and Bob Slyker lead monthly bird walks at Bridgeport (South Yuba River State Park). For all the field trips of these and other leaders, please check The Phoebe’s Field Journal section for details. And thank them for their dedication. And where were they when I was a beginning birder?
The Insect Apocalypse Is Here - What does it mean for the rest of life on Earth?

Excerpted from the article by Brooke Jarvis

A paper by an obscure German entomological society has brought the problem of insect decline into sharp focus. The German study found that, measured simply by weight, the overall abundance of flying insects in German nature reserves had decreased by 75 percent over just 27 years. The study would quickly become, according to the website Altmetric, the sixth-most-discussed scientific paper of 2017. Headlines around the world warned of an “insect Armageddon.”

A 1995 study, by Peter H. Kahn and Batya Friedman, of the way some children in Houston experienced pollution summed up our blindness this way: “With each generation, the amount of environmental degradation increases, but each generation takes that amount as the norm.”

In Britain, as many as 30 to 60 percent of species were found to have diminishing ranges. Larger trends were harder to pin down, though a 2014 review in Science tried to quantify these declines by synthesizing the findings of existing studies and found that a majority of monitored species were declining, on average by 45 percent.

Entomologists also knew that climate change and the overall degradation of global habitat are bad news for biodiversity in general, and that insects are dealing with the particular challenges posed by herbicides and pesticides, along with the effects of losing meadows, forests and even weedy patches to the relentless expansion of human spaces.

There were studies of other, better-understood species that suggested that the insects associated with them might be declining, too. Ornithologists kept finding that birds that rely on insects for food were in trouble: eight in 10 partridges gone from French farmlands; 50 and 80 percent drops, respectively, for nightingales and turtledoves. Half of all farmland birds in Europe disappeared in just three decades. At first, many scientists assumed the familiar culprit of habitat destruction was at work, but then they began to wonder if the birds might simply be starving. In Denmark, an ornithologist named Anders Tottrup was the one who came up with the idea of turning cars into insect trackers for the windshield-effect study after he noticed that rollers, little owls, Eurasian hobbies and bee-eaters — all birds that subsist on large insects such as beetles and dragonflies — had abruptly disappeared from the landscape.

Amateurs have long provided much of the patchy knowledge we have about nature. Those bee and butterfly studies? Most depend on mass mobilizations of volunteers willing to walk transects and count insects, every two weeks or every year, year after year. The scary numbers about bird declines were gathered this way, too, though because birds can be hard to spot, volunteers often must learn to identify them by their sounds.

The current worldwide loss of biodiversity is popularly known as the sixth extinction: the sixth time in world history that a large number of species have disappeared in unusually rapid succession, caused this time not by asteroids or ice ages but by humans. When we think about losing biodiversity, we tend to think of the last northern white rhinos protected by armed guards, of polar bears on dwindling ice floes. Extinction is a visceral tragedy, universally understood: There is no coming back from it. The guilt of letting a unique species vanish is eternal.

Conservationists tend to focus on rare and endangered species, but it is common ones, because of their abundance, that power the living systems of our planet. White-rumped vultures were nearly gone from India before there was widespread awareness of their disappearance. Describing this phenomenon in the journal BioScience, Kevin Gaston, a professor of biodiversity and conservation at the University of Exeter, wrote: “Humans seem innately better able to detect the complete loss of an environmental feature than its progressive change.”

We’ve begun to talk about living in the Anthropocene, a world shaped by humans. But E.O. Wilson, the naturalist and prophet of environmental degradation, has suggested another name: the Eremocine, the age of loneliness.

By eating and being eaten, insects turn plants into protein and power the growth of all the uncountable species — including freshwater fish and a majority of birds — that rely on them for food, not to mention all the creatures that eat those creatures. We worry about saving the grizzly bear, says the insect ecologist Scott Hoffman Black, but where is the grizzly without the bee that pollinates the berries it eats or the flies that sustain baby salmon? Where, for that matter, are we?

“It’s a debate we need to have urgently,” Goulson says. “If we lose insects, life on earth will...” He trailed off, pausing for what felt like a long time.
Field Journal

For field trip updates, changes or cancellations check http://sierrafoothillsaudubon.org/
Our field trips are free. Carpooling drivers appreciate participants offering to share fuel costs

Bird Walk at South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport
Saturday, March 9, 2019
8:00—10:00 AM
Leaders: Bob Slyker 530-205-9011 bgssly@aol.com Carol and Bruce Malnor (530-263-9392) cmalnor@comcast.net

Meet at Bridgeport’s north parking lot (just across the highway bridge) on Pleasant Valley Road. Easy walking on a wooded trail and along Kentucky Creek and the Yuba River. We will see species common to an oak woodland/riparian habitat, such as Lark Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Black Phoebe, California Towhee, and Northern Rough-winged Swallow. There’s a possibility of seeing an American Dipper. Please contact Bob or Carol if the weather is questionable.

City of Lincoln Wastewater Treatment Facility
Monday, March 11, 2019
9:30 to 11:30 AM
Leader: Heath Wakelee 916-870-5253 hwakelee@gmail.com

Meet at the City of Lincoln Wastewater Treatment Facility, 1245 Fiddyment Road, Lincoln, CA 95648 Phone: (916) 434-2450.

We will meet in their parking lot just inside the gate. This will be primarily a car birding trip so those with access and functional needs are welcome to attend. We should see a variety of birds such as: Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Mallard, American Coot, Pied-billed Grebe, Great-blue Heron, Great Egret, Black-necked Stilt and American Avocet. If weather is questionable contact Heath.

Bird Walk For Beginners In Grass Valley
Sunday, March 17, 2019
8:00 -10:00 AM
Leader: Dan Stewart  530-265-4677 dcstew@outlook.com

This walk is designed for beginners, but more skilled birders are helpful and welcome. We’ll talk about binoculars, how and where to find birds, what to look for when you find one. We meet at 8:00 AM in the parking lot of the Briar Patch Market on Sierra College Drive in Grass Valley. We walk for a little less than two miles and it usually takes about two hours. Fifteen to twenty different species are almost guaranteed, especially with enough sharp eyes and ears. It’s a nice walk up over the hill at Sierra College and back to the Briar Patch. Come on out and help us find and identify some birds.

Bird Walk for Beginners - Traylor Ranch, Penryn
Saturday, March 23, 2019
9:30-11:30 AM
Leader: Heath Wakelee 916-870-5253 hwakelee@gmail.com

Meet at 9:30 AM in the parking lot off Humphrey Road at the southeast corner of Traylor Ranch Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary in Pennyn. Note: the address for the Reserve is 5050 English Colony Road in Penryn. This trip is intended for beginners, but experienced birders are welcome and add to the experience for all. Traylor Ranch affords an opportunity to see the resident species of the lower foothills and valley floor, usually twenty or more different species. We’ll spend about two hours and walk a little more than a mile. Come on out, bring your binoculars and help us find some birds. The more eyes and ears, the more birds we’ll see. Here’s the Placer Co. web site for Traylor Ranch:
http://www.placer.ca.gov/departments/facility/parks/parks-content/parks/traylor-ranch-nature-reserve

Bird Walk at South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport
Saturday, April 13, 2019
8:00—10:00 AM
Leaders: Bob Slyker 530-205-9011 bgssly@aol.com Carol and Bruce Malnor (530-263-9392) cmalnor@comcast.net

Meet at Bridgeport’s north parking lot (just across the highway bridge) on Pleasant Valley Road. Easy walking on a wooded trail and along Kentucky Creek and the Yuba River. We will see species common to an oak woodland/riparian habitat, such as California Quail, Lark Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Black Phoebe, California Towhee, and Acorn Woodpecker. There’s also a possibility of seeing an American Dipper. Please contact Bob or Carol if the weather is questionable.

Bird Walk for Beginners in Nevada City (Hirschman’s Trail)
Saturday, April 13, 2019
8:00-11:00 AM
Leader: Theresa Thomas 530-264-6742 randtthomas@sbcglobal.net

This walk is designed for beginners but more skilled birders would be helpful and appreciated. Expect to see about 20-25 species, both residents and spring migrants. We will walk 2 1/2 miles taking about 2 hours.

Meet at the Hirschman’s Trail parking lot on Cement Hill Road (next to the Nevada County Government Center (Rood Center) at 8:00 am. Dress for the weather with good hiking shoes and bring your binoculars. If weather is questionable contact Theresa.

Field Trip Along The Cascade Canal Trail
Saturday, April 20, 2019
8:00 - 11:00 AM
Leader: Rudy Darling, (530) 272-6504, rdarling@sbbmail.com

Meet at the auxiliary parking area, which is a tenth of a mile or two downhill from Banner-Lava Cap Rd. on Gracie Road, Nevada City (NOT the disputed lot at the corner of Gracie and Banner-Lava Cap Rds.). Approximately 3 miles walking on mostly level ground.

This field trip is being run in conjunction with Know Your Watershed month, a collaborative effort of conservation organizations in the Yuba, Bear, and American River watersheds (for more information, see www.knowyourwatershed.org). It will be an exploration of the Little Deer Creek watershed. While the focus will be on birds, we will also explore mammals, plants, and history of the area. Birds might include Pacific Wren, Pileated Woodpecker, Nashville Warbler, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Northern Pygmy-Owl.

Bird Walk For Beginners In Grass Valley
Sunday, April 21, 2019
8:00-10:00 AM
Leader: Dan Stewart  530-265-4677 dcstew@outlook.com

Meet in the Briar Patch parking lot at 8:00AM. See March 17, 2019 listing for trip description.
Bird Walk at South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport
Friday, April 26, 2019
9:00—10:00 AM
Leader: Sylvia Wright, Sylvia.l.wright@gmail.com

Meet at Bridgeport’s north parking lot (just across the highway bridge) on Pleasant Valley Road. Easy walking on a wooded trail and along Kentucky Creek and the Yuba River. We will see species common to an oak woodland/riparian habitat, such as Western Bluebird, Golden-crowned Sparrow, Yellow Warbler, Downy Woodpecker, and Northern Rough-winged Swallow. There’s a possibility of seeing an American Dipper in the river. Please contact Sylvia if the weather is questionable.

Bird Walk for Beginners - Traylor Ranch, Penryn
Saturday, April 27, 2019
9:30-11:30 AM
Leader: Heath Wakelee 916-870-5253 hwakelee@gmail.com

Meet at 9:30 AM in the parking lot off Humphrey Road at the southeast corner of Traylor Ranch Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary in Penryn. Note: the address for the Reserve is 5050 English Colony Road in Penryn. See March 23, 2019 listing for trip description.

Field Trip at Rock Creek Nature Trail
Saturday, April 27, 2019
8:00 – 11:00 AM
Leader: Rudy Darling, (530) 272-6504, rdarling@sbbmail.com

Meet at the Nevada County (Rood) Government Center in the lot behind the county jail. This field trip is being run in conjunction with Know Your Watershed month, a collaborative effort of conservation organizations in the Yuba, Bear, and American River watersheds (for more information, see www.knowyourwatershed.org). It will be an exploration of the Rock Creek watershed and its birds, which might include Pacific Wren, Pileated Woodpecker, Western Tanager, and others.

Bird Walk for Beginners - Traylor Ranch, Penryn
Monday, April 29, 2019
9:30-11:30 AM
Leader: Heath Wakelee 916-870-5253 hwakelee@gmail.com

Meet at 9:30 AM in the parking lot off Humphrey Road at the southeast corner of Traylor Ranch Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary in Penryn. Note: the address for the Reserve is 5050 English Colony Road in Penryn. See March 23, 2019 listing for trip description.

Bird Walk at South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport
Friday, May 3, 2019
8:00—10:00 AM
Leaders: Bob Slyker 530-205-9011 bgshy@aol.com, Sylvia Wright, Sylvia.l.wright@gmail.com

Meet at Bridgeport’s north parking lot (just across the highway bridge) on Pleasant Valley Road. Easy walking on a wooded trail and along Kentucky Creek and the Yuba River. We should see Band-tailed Pigeon, White-breasted Nuthatch, Bullock’s Oriole, Cliff Swallows, California Towhee, and Acorn Woodpecker. There’s also a possibility of seeing an American Dipper.

Birding by Ear (Conifer forests)
Saturday May 4, 2019
7:00AM – 12:00PM (or thereabouts)
Leader: Rudy Darling (530-272-6504, rdarling@sbbmail.com)

Twenty-five miles round trip driving. Easy walking on level ground. Mostly standing and listening.

Meet in the parking lot of the Rood Government Center, 950 Maidu Avenue, Nevada City to carpool.
Breeding season is the best time to study bird song. We will visit several habitat types up Hwy 20 from Nevada City. There we will learn how to make sense out of all the twitters and tweets emanating from those frustrating invisible birds in the forest. Species we might hear include Hermit Thrush, Mountain Quail, Pacific-slope, Dusky and Hammond’s Flycatchers, Pileated Woodpecker, and Fox Sparrow, as well as the usual common species. Call Rudy in the event of bad weather.

Bird Walk at South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport
Saturday, May 11, 2019
8:00—10:00 AM
Leaders: Carol and Bruce Malnor (530-263-9392) cmalnor@comcast.net

Meet at Bridgeport’s north parking lot (just across the highway bridge) on Pleasant Valley Road. Easy walking on a wooded trail along Kentucky Creek and the Yuba River. We will see species common to an oak woodland/riparian habitat, such as California Quail, Black Phoebe, Spotted Towhee, and Acorn Woodpecker, Wrentit, Steller’s Jay, Ash-throated Flycatcher and Yellow-breasted Chat. There’s a possibility of seeing an American Dipper.

Bird Walk at Sierra Discovery Trail and Bowman Road
Saturday, May 11, 2019
7:00 – 11:00 AM
Leader: Rudy Darling (530-272-6504, rdarling@sbbmail.com)

Meet in the parking lot of the Rood Government Center, 950 Maidu Avenue, Nevada City to carpool. Fairly level walking, about one mile.
Straddling the Placer/Nevada County line, this nice walk has several habitat types. A short drive to the Yuba River brings even more diversity. Possible species include American Dipper, White-headed Woodpecker, MacGillivray’s Warbler, Canyon Wren. Call if in doubt about weather cancellation.

Bird Walk For Beginners In Grass Valley
Sunday, May 19, 2019
8:00-10:00 AM
Leader: Dan Stewart 530-265-4677 dcstew@outlook.com

Meet in the Briar Patch parking lot at 8:00AM. See March 17, 2019 listing for trip description.

Bird Walk for Beginners - Traylor Ranch, Penryn
Thursday, May 23, 2019
9:30-11:30 AM
Leader: Heath Wakelee 916-870-5253 hwakelee@gmail.com

Meet at 9:30 AM in the parking lot off Humphrey Road at the southeast corner of Traylor Ranch Nature Reserve and Bird Sanctuary in Penryn. Note: the address for the Reserve is 5050 English Colony Road in Penryn. See March 23, 2019 listing for trip description.
On Jan. 5, forty observers set out to count the birds in our 15-mile diameter CBC circle (177 square miles, mind you).

It started out nice enough, albeit cloudy and cold. Then, around 11:00 the wind and rain set in with a vengeance. Fortunately, it soon tapered off to scattered showers for much of the afternoon, but there were still long stretches when no birds were anywhere to be seen. In spite of this we tallied 10,123 birds of 90 species that day, both well below average, but still more individuals than last year’s record low of 7,899. Three more species were observed during “count week” – Pileated Woodpecker, Pacific Wren, and Phainopepla – bringing our species total to 93 compared to an average of 104.

The highlight of the day was a group of about 50 Tricolored Blackbirds in a large mixed flock of blackbirds found by Dan Stewart and Trish King at a livestock feeding station near Lake Wildwood. In fact, the only record high counts for the day were these and Red-winged Blackbirds. Our second-highest count of American Dippers (12) was notable. Canada Goose (1,516) was the most numerous species again this year and American Robin (961) lost its usual second place to the red-wings (1,081) There were, however numerous record lows, hopefully mostly due to the poor weather – CA Quail, Pied-billed Grebe, Mourning Dove, Great Blue Heron, Red-tailed Hawk, Acorn Woodpecker, Nuttall’s Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, CA Scrub-jay, House Sparrow, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, and CA Towhee.

Thanks to area leaders Sylvia Wright, Dale Rubach, Rudy Darling, Ted Beedy, Dan Stewart, Christy Sherr, Don Rivenes, and Willie and Jane Hall for their dedication, and to Jeannie Darling for feeding us after a long day of counting.

Gestalting the Birds

We birders are playing the game of trying to identify the birds we see.

Whenever we look at a bird we observe numerous bits of data, such as: bill length, size and color, eye color, stripes of colors, total length, tail length, leg length, over body color or colors, calmness or nervous movement, vocalizing or not vocalizing. This instant impression we get is known as "gestalt". The Sibley Guide to Birds words this as "the overall impression you receive from the combination of subtle differences. The initials GIS are often used.....inferring general impression and shape."

After we have birded for a while we place a good deal of confidence in this sometimes instant impression......that we "gestalted" a Raven, or a Western Bluebird, or, the easy one.......a Great Egret. So satisfying to see a flock of little brown birds, "gestalt" one that is perched and instantly observe an orange and pinkish bill and a white crown......the give away data that says "this is a White-crowned Sparrow."

Around our oaken countryside there are numerous, noisy Acorn Woodpeckers. A flash "gestalt" of one flying away says......"a black bird with three large, white blotches of feathers." It’s as though the words "Acorn Woodpecker" were written on the bird’s back.

If the bird observed remains for a while, one has a chance to study the bird further and confirm, or not confirm, the initial "gestalt" Identification.

MORE PEOPLE ON THE PLANET MEANS MORE BIRDS GO EXTINCT
WANTED: A very Special Volunteer

By Kate Brennan

SFAS needs someone who has read my annual reports on our Bluebird Monitoring Project and thought ... “I’d kind of like to do that.”

But this very special volunteer needs to live in or around Bullard’s Bar Reservoir (Camptonville, Dobbins, No. San Juan, etc), because I’d be asking them to visit 5 bluebird boxes on a fairly small site (BYLT trail) once per week for about 6 months of the year (March through August), and this very special person would be more likely to visit them regularly if they live close by or routinely drive on Marysville Rd between Hwy 49 and Dobbins.

So, if you do live or regularly drive in this area, and you’ve been looking for just the right way to get more involved in Audubon, please contact me and I can tell you more about monitoring bluebird boxes and our team of 13 monitors. It’s quite simple and each visit will only take about 15 minutes, but does need to be done weekly during the breeding season. [It just happens to be a lovely picnic spot with a fabulous view.] We do have a back-up monitor for any weeks when you might not be able to monitor.

In checking out this new site in December, we saw quite a number of Western Bluebirds hanging around – that’s a good sign!

Email me at woodswoman55@goskywest.com or call 530-268-1682.

Two levels of membership are available: SFAS Chapter Membership is $20 annually and includes a subscription to The Phoebe newsletter and an invitation to the many chapter activities. For $200 you receive a lifetime membership in the chapter. Send a check payable to Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, P.O. Box 1937, Grass Valley, CA 95945.

An introductory membership to the National Audubon Society is $20 and includes automatic membership in the local SFAS chapter. Subscription to NAS includes the bi-monthly NAS Audubon Magazine and the SFAS Phoebe newsletter. Send a check payable to NAS, Membership Dept, P.O. Box 97194, Washington, DC 20090-7194. Or you can join online at www.audubon.org and click on “JOIN.” For more information, contact Kate Brennan at 530-268-1682.

The Phoebe is published five times per year on or about the first of January, March, May, September and November. Newsletter submissions are due by the 10th of each month preceding newsletter publication.
The mission of the Sierra Foothills Audubon Society is to educate ourselves and others to the variety and the beauty of our natural environment and to protect our wildlife and natural places.

SFAS BIRD-A-THON SCHEDULED FOR MID-MAY

By Rudy Darling, organizer

FASTEN YOUR SEAT BELTS ~ the spring migration and, of course, the SFAS Bird-A-Thon (BAT), will soon be arriving in the Sierra near you. This year it is scheduled for mid-May (10 – 20), but we won’t discourage you if you want to do it earlier in a Central Valley location or later in the Sierra. Last year we raised over $1,500 for the chapter’s education and conservation activities, and had a great time doing it. The BAT is one of our chapter’s two fundraisers each year. We need as many teams as possible out in the community gathering pledges (and new members) and out in the field gathering bird sightings.

For those members who are unfamiliar with the Bird-A-Thon concept, here is a brief overview. A BAT is a uniquely Audubon way of raising funds for chapter projects, such as classroom education, conservation, preservation, bluebird recovery, etc. It is similar to the walk-a-thons, bike-a-thons, bowl-a-thons, and what-have-you-a-thons sponsored by other organizations. The difference is that donors make pledges to BAT teams, often in the form of a specified amount ($0.05 - $1 or more) per bird species seen during one full day of birding. Teams of 1–4 birders spend as much of a 24-hour period as they wish looking for birds. At the end of the event, the number of species seen by each team is tallied and the pledges are collected.

If you are interested in participating or pledging to a team please contact Rudy Darling (530) 272-6504 or rdarling@sbbmail.com. Start looking for teammates, thinking up team names, boning up on local hot spots, and spreading the word – and, of course, it’s never too early to start gathering or making pledges.

Donation to SFAS

Sierra Foothills Audubon Society welcomes gifts and bequests for specific conservation projects or the general operation of SFAS. They can also be memorial gifts to honor a friend or relative. All gifts will be recognized in The Phoebe as well as personally on behalf of SFAS.

Mail gifts to:
Sierra Foothills Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1937
Grass Valley, CA 95945

All gifts are tax deductible.