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# President's Message

*Good thoughts and actions can never produce bad results; bad thoughts and actions can never produce good results.*  
—James Allen

The volunteers at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and ARNHA have often amazed and inspired me. Volunteers come in all shapes, sizes and ages.

During the Maidu Indian Day celebration, I was inspired by a young high school volunteer who was selling tickets at the front gate. I noticed that she wasn't just taking tickets; she enthusiastically directed people where to go, describing the event and helping every person get oriented at the festival. Because of her enthusiasm, people she talked to were better oriented, happier, and I am sure enjoyed the festival much more and felt welcome.

I would like to challenge all ARNHA members to become volunteers. There are many opportunities. Come to ARNHA Board meetings and see how you can help raise funds for the Nature Center. Contact the Nature Center for meeting times. Or call Jamie at the Nature Center, and she will enthusiastically describe to you the types of work needed and events that need help and help you get oriented.

As Janet Baker, Sacramento County Regional Parks Director, pointed out on page one, your help is needed more than ever.

I would like to encourage everyone to go to our website [www.arnha.org](http://www.arnha.org) where you can order our books online, find out the latest events, and even renew your membership!

You will find other volunteer opportunities and participation events at these websites: Effie Yeaw Nature Center, [www.effieyeaw.org](http://www.effieyeaw.org), and Sacramento County parks, [www.sacparks.net](http://www.sacparks.net).

*Larry Washington, President, ARNHA*



## Effie Yeaw Honored Anew

The California Park & Recreation Society has inducted Effie Yeaw into its 2009 Hall of Honor, a posthumous award that hailed her as a nature educator and "Pioneering Activist for Preservation of the American River Parkway."

The 4,000-member organization of park professionals and interested citizens also cited the Carmichael school teacher for starting the nature study program in Deterding Woods, now home of the nature center named for her.

Mrs. Yeaw, who died in 1970, was also credited with being a founder and secretary of the Save the American River Association, enthusiastically planting and preserving oak trees, and writing and illustrating the first edition of *The Outdoor World of the Sacramento Region* field guide in 1959, which is periodically updated.

"Effie Yeaw would be so happy to see how the nature center named for her provides an opportunity for young people to enjoy the exhibits and get out into nature, and for families to get away from TV and all our other electronic gadgets," Nature Center Director Marilee Flannery said at the March 20 induction ceremony.

The ceremony was attended by nine members of Effie Yeaw's family. County Parks Director Janet Baker spoke of Effie Yeaw and shared some of the accomplishments of the Nature Center named for her. After receiving the award plaque, Mrs. Yeaw's daughter asked that the plaque be kept at the center along with Effie Yeaw's other awards. ■



**Bird and Breakfast Raises \$2,450**

Seventy-five birding enthusiasts contributed \$2,450 to ARNHA’s treasury March 14 in one of the most successful Bird and Breakfast fundraisers ever. Eight Sacramento Audubon volunteer bird trip leaders led participants through the Effie Yeaw nature area and helped them identify 57 bird species before everyone returned to the Assembly Building for a hearty breakfast of casserole, fruit and pastries prepared by ARNHA volunteers.

A Merlin was a day’s highlight, along with a Hutton’s Vireo and two Anna’s Hummingbird nests, plus a partially-built Bushtit nest. But birding coordinator Jack Hiehle said the most unusual event was the sight of a Canada Goose squaring off against an Osprey.

Jack said his group watched as the Osprey caught a 12-15 inch fish, started to fly off, and dropped the fish on a gravel bar occupied by three geese. When the Osprey tried to retrieve the fish, one of the geese stormed over and forced the big raptor to take flight without its catch.

“That was the darnedest thing,” Jack said. “Canada Geese just don’t do that!” ■

**New Signs of the Parkway**

Credit Effie Yeaw Nature Center staff members for key roles in creating the handsome new signs about the history, geology, flora and fauna on the American River Parkway. Director Marilee Flannery, Betty Cooper and Lynne Pinkerton created the interpretive signs that heighten interest along a 23-mile stretch of parkway.

For instance, visitors to the Effie Yeaw nature area are introduced to the signs on the Discovery trail beginning next to the nature center. One sign proclaims land where mountain man Jedediah Smith may have walked, land also occupied by beaver, river otter and grizzly bears; another sign describes overgrown habitat providing food, shade, nesting ground and pollination for wildlife and plants; and another is posted at tules-encircled Freshwater Pond, home of mallards, water striders and pond turtles.

“Betty Cooper and I will be designing interpretive signs for the Parkway for years to come,” Marilee said. Planned sites include the Sunrise-Side Channel project, River Bend Park (formerly Goethe Park), and the Fair Oaks Bluff where a donor plaza will commemorate the citizens organization that facilitated purchase of the property. ■

**Updated Audubon Guide to Bird Sites**

*by Bill Dillinger*

A new “must have” guide for anyone birding in the Sacramento area has been published by the Sacramento Audubon Society. It’s an updated and greatly expanded fourth edition of the popular “Birding in the Sacramento Region.” It covers 77 sites, nearly twice as many as the previous edition, all described by experienced birders familiar with the birding spots.

New Google maps allow more precise pinpointing of site locations, and the separate section on where to find different species is much more detailed.

Its nearly 200 pages also include information on where to find checklists and guides for other areas in Northern California, how to contact Audubon chapters and other conservation organizations in this part of the state, with addresses and websites, and a rundown on special events throughout the year.

It is ring-bound to withstand heavy use, with a sturdy plastic cover featuring drawings by Dan Brown of the Nuttall’s Woodpecker, California Thrasher, and Yellow-billed Magpie, all unique to this area.

The book can be purchased for \$10 from the Sacramento Audubon Society and at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center Discovery Shop, and with a slight mark-up from Wild Birds & Gardens at Madison and Fair Oaks, Wild Birds Unlimited in Loehmann’s Plaza at Fair Oaks Blvd. and Fulton Ave., and The Naturalist at 605 2d St., Davis. ■

**Art Prize for Carol**

Carol Doersch, a founder and past president of ARNHA, received the “Marj Long Memorial Award to an artist who has never received an award” at the Marj Long Memorial All Members Art Show at the Sacramento Fine Arts Center Jan. 10-31. Carol received a \$100 prize for her “Venice Window 2,” a water color that she said was inspired by a photograph taken by her daughter Ann on a visit to Europe.

Carol said she had been painting “erratically” for 60 years, adding with a laugh, “It’s about time I won something, right?” ■



## Wrong Plants Harm Habitat

You can do yourself and the birds and other wildlife a favor by making smart plant choices, says Julie Serences, education chairperson of the Sacramento Audubon Society.

Not smart are pampas grass, Scarlet Wisteria (also called Red Sesbania) and other invasive plants because they produce huge numbers of seeds and out-compete natives for space in the American River Parkway and other riparian corridors. Both of these plants and others are sold at nurseries and home gardeners may plant them unaware that they are of little value to our native fauna, she said.

For instance, birds need high quality protein to raise their young. Native plants have co-evolved with insects in a balanced way, while invasives rarely have predators and usually do not offer this food for birds at a critical time in their life cycle.

### What to plant in your garden then?

“Native plants need no fertilizer, little maintenance and almost no watering once established,” she said. “Result: You are building habitat for native birds, insects and other critters in your own backyard.”


Among a list of “Valley Habitat Heroes” she cited as ideal native alternatives were Valley Oak, California Redbud, Toyon, Silver Bush Lupine and California Fuchsia. For a complete list of “Heroes” and another of invasive plants, visit [www.ARNHA.org](http://www.ARNHA.org)

Doug Tally, one of the authors of a study describing a linkage of diminishing bird populations and non-native plants, is the author of a book that Julie highly recommended, *Bring Nature Home—How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*. ■

## New Bird Brochure

A colorful new ARNHA brochure that illustrates and describes 20 commonly seen birds of the Sacramento region is now on sale for \$1 at the Discovery Shop in the Effie Yeaw Nature Center (EYNC). The handy guide was produced by Lia Robertson, EYNC naturalist and member of the ARNHA Publications Committee. The color photos were provided by Sacramento Audubon Society and professional photographers.

Printing costs were covered by a grant from the American River Parkway Foundation. The brochure is the first in a planned series depicting the flora and fauna of the EYNC nature area and beyond. Subject of the next one is wildflowers. ■



Common Birds  
Sacramento Region

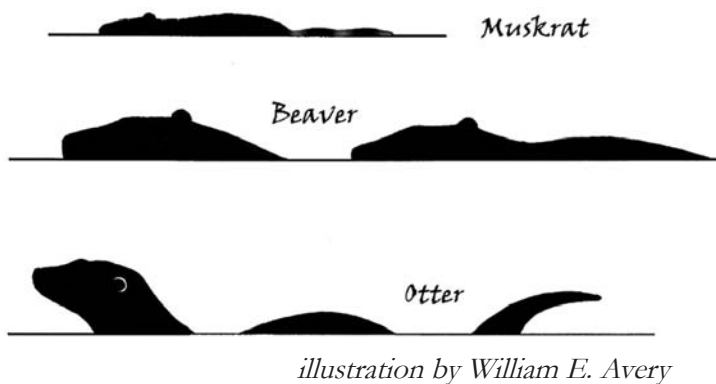
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Common Birds  
of the  
Sacramento Region

Identify 20 often-seen birds,  
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\$1.00  
at the Discovery Shop  
inside the  
Effie Yeaw Nature Center

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- The muskrat is only about half the size of the beaver, but it rides high in the water. It sculls forward propelled by a long tail flat from side to side. It lives in a conical house or burrow and eats clams and vegetable matter.

- The long, lithe river otter is about the same size as the beaver but only a third of its weight. With its 12-17 inch tail it swims porpoise-like and dens in the river bank with the entrance below the surface. Its diet includes crayfish and rough fish like Sacramento Suckers. ■

## What's That Animal Swimming Out There?

Identifying those furry critters often seen swimming in the Lower American River isn't always easy. CSUS Professor William E. Avery offered some tips at an ARNHA public forum at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center on March 26.

- At more than 2 feet long and weighing 30-60 pounds, the beaver is bigger than either the muskrat or river otter. It often announces its presence with a big splash of its paddle-like tail as it warns invading beaver, “I'm here, this spot is taken.” It lives in a half lodge on a river bank and dines on the bark of trees.

# Resource Guardians Must Be Ready for Anything

by Peter J. Hayes

The park rangers, game wardens and refuge managers who protect our natural resources don't just check fishing and hunting licenses or investigate car burglaries, although those are vital parts of their job. Sometimes members of this "thin green line" have to round up reported ostriches loose on the parkway or wrestle an alligator into submission.

As State Fish & Game Warden Billie Mills said, "It's a fun job, a tough job." She was one of five federal, state and county resource officers who discussed their careers and a few of their more unusual cases at a Jan. 29 ARNHA public forum arranged by Effie Yeaw Nature Center Director Marilee Flannery.

About those reported ostriches, actually, they only looked like ostriches, and county park rangers figured they were probably some of the wild turkeys that populate the EYNC nature area. But panelist Randy Lewis, county parks ranger, said they turned out to be emus, a slightly smaller version of ostriches. "It took four rangers to herd them back to their home at the county farm in Hagan Park," he said.

Warden Mills, who is the daughter of Billy Mills, famed upset winner of the 10,000 meter run in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, is one of only 200 game wardens in the state and just two in Sacramento County. She told how she was assigned with a colleague to seize a "pet" alligator that had outgrown a tank at a home near the American River. It's illegal to possess an alligator without a permit.

"We estimated it was slightly over 3½ feet from nose to tail, so it was quite strong," she said. "The tank was too heavy and awkward for us to move, so we had to tie the gator in duct tape and wrestle it into our dog pen to take it away. We learned later that the owners had intended to release it into the river because they didn't know what to do with it."

If there are esoteric aspects to protecting natural resources, most are routine, even dangerous assignments requiring officers to maintain a calm, confident manner in tough interpersonal contacts. For instance, they must consider whether a person behaving erratically is a substance abuse case or is mentally ill, said Beatrix Treiterer, manager of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge. She also expressed concern that the economic downturn would lead to increased challenges such as dealing with illegal fishing and marijuana cultivation.

Panelist Scott Liske, one of five state parks rangers who patrol the 42,000-acre Auburn State Recreation Area, noted that rangers have full peace officer powers and may be called on to handle a wide variety of off-site incidents regularly, as he did once when he gave aid to an auto accident victim for 15 minutes before another professional rescuer arrived. On patrol, he said, "Ticks are really unnerving; 600 state parks people have come down with Lyme disease from them."

Asked by a member of the audience about crime on the parkway, Steve Flannery, County Parks Chief Ranger, said "It's safer on the parkway than on neighboring streets." But when it comes to people who run their dogs off leash, he added, "Some of these people think they're above the law." He later pointed out in an interview that the ordinance banning unleashed dogs was based on public concern that such animals may NOT have uncertain rabies vaccinations and must be quarantined if they bite someone. In addition, he said many birds are ground nesters, and an unleashed dog may disturb a nest or force the parents to abandon it. He estimated that county rangers issue 15-20 citations annually to owners of unleashed dogs. ■

# The Owls of EYNC

by Stephanie Monzon, EYNC volunteer

Did you know that not all owls are nocturnal, but that many are most active at dusk and dawn? Would you have guessed that Western Screech Owls don't screech, they trill, and only the Great Horned Owl calls out "who, who?" Effie Yeaw Nature Center staff member Denise Booth shared these and many more fascinating owl facts on March 11 at "Owls in the Wild," one in a series of seminars on local natural wonders given for Effie Yeaw Nature Center employees and volunteers. The seminars are open to the public for \$5.

The seminar focused on the nature center's four resident owls. Perhaps the best known of our birds is the Great Horned Owl, "Virginia" (from the species name *Bubo virginianus*). She has been at the center since 1987 after being struck by a vehicle and has already lived well beyond the age that her species does in the wild. Great Horned Owl populations are robust—the species is one of the most widespread and common owls in North America. A large and powerful raptor, it can catch animals as large as turkeys.

Our newest owl is "Sophia," a beautiful Northern Saw-whet Owl. She came to the center in July 2008 after being rescued from the grill of a semi truck, having clung there for 60 miles before being discovered. The facial disk of this species is especially striking, patterned like a



Sophia

sunburst. Its call has been compared to the sound of sharpening a saw, hence its name. These birds are in California during their breeding season, from

see "Owls" next page

“Owls” from previous page

December through March, though are rarely seen because they are nocturnal, quiet, small, and difficult to startle.

“Luna,” our Barn Owl, identifies more with humans than with owls because when she was rescued, at just 18 days old, she had to be hand-fed and could not return to the wild. Luna lays eggs every year, but because she does not have a mate those eggs are infertile. Nature Center staff must remove the eggs (because they would soon rot) and substitute artificial eggs so she can fulfill her maternal instinct.

The Barn Owl is one of the most widely distributed birds in the world, found on all continents except Antarctica. It can easily find prey at night due to its excellent vision, and its asymmetrically placed ears give it an unbeatable ability to locate prey by sound alone—with up to 99% accuracy.

“Twilight,” our Western Screech Owl, is only the size of a pigeon and had been attacked by a cat prior to coming to the center. As a result she has an injured eye, which prevents her from hunting. She is very curious around people, moving her head in a dance-like motion to compensate for her lack of depth perception. Her species is one of the most common in North America yet is increasingly vulnerable to habitat loss because of urban development.

### Additional Owl Facts:

- Other owls found in California include the Great Gray, Barred, Spotted, Long-eared, Short-eared, Boreal, Burrowing, Northern Pygmy, and Flammulated Owls.
- A group of owls is called a “Parliament.”
- Owls can move their heads 270 degrees because they have 14 vertebrae in their necks (vs. 7 for human necks).
- Owl wings are virtually silent, so owls are fearsome nocturnal predators.
- Owls do not build their own nests.
- Owls have two stomachs.

### Join the Night Owls!

Want to see the Effie Yeaw Nature Center’s resident owls up close and personal? And listen for the hoots, trills, and whistles of owls outside in the nature area? If so, the nature center’s Assembly Building is the place to be Friday, June 5 at 7 p.m. when ARNHA presents another in its series of free public forums.

Denise Booth, EYNC staff naturalist, will use various visual and sound aids to describe these fascinating, formidable birds of prey. She’ll bring out the nature center’s resident owls to meet the audience, then take everyone on a short hike on the nature trail to try to “call out” some owls in the wild.

Light refreshments will be served. ■

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## Sacramento County Board Honors Peter J. Hayes

By Lynne Pinkerton  
Effie Yeaw Nature Center Staff

The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors honored ARNHA’s very own Peter J. Hayes as one of its Outstanding Volunteers of the Year on April 21. At this yearly volunteer recognition event, the Board gives recognition and thanks to volunteers who have given exceptional service to the people of Sacramento.

Peter J. Hayes has been a prolific writer and editor for ARNHA for more than eight years. In 2001 *The American River Almanac* was published, full of Pete’s wonderful seasonal essays about the American River Parkway. With a beginning inventory of 2,000 books, now nearly all sold, this publication alone has netted ARNHA close to \$20,000 for promoting interpretive education on the Parkway. The charming essays, paired with outstanding photography, are the work of a man with a true gift for words.

Other ARNHA publications that Pete has turned his professional skills to include *The Outdoor World of the Sacramento Region*, having co-edited the most recent edition with Jo Smith for publication in 2004. This book is a perennial favorite and is used by families visiting the Parkway as well as students’ assigned reading for their collegiate biology or environmental classes. In 2005 Pete was the editor for an updated and expanded version

of *The Lower American River: Prehistory to Parkway*, a favorite of history buffs and curious residents. And in 2006 Pete was part of the ARNHA publications committee that reprinted an expanded version of the biography *Effie Yeaw: Teacher, Naturalist, Visionary*, which now includes one of her stories for children.

Out and around town, Pete has worked diligently over the years promoting ARNHA’s publications to area bookstores, garden stores, bicycling shops, and museums. His gentlemanly demeanor and sincere passion for ARNHA’s educational books results in wholesale distribution to retail outlets all over the region. Not only do these sales increase the revenue supporting ARNHA’s mission, but they have opened the doors for hundreds, if not thousands of people to be taught about the animals, plants, and people that populate the American River Parkway. Pete is a wonderful ambassador for ARNHA and for the power of words to educate and inspire. ■





# ARNHA Calendar of Events

- **Free public Forum: Owls of the Parkway**  
Friday, June 5, 7 p.m. at EYNC (*see page 7*)
- **Summer Fun Days**  
June 8 - August 14, 9 a.m. to 12 noon at EYNC  
For more info/registration, [www.effieyeaw.org](http://www.effieyeaw.org)
- **ARNHA Annual Meeting**  
Wednesday, September 9, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at EYNC
- **Maidu Indian Day**  
Saturday, October 3, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at EYNC (*see page 5*)

# Thank you Donors!

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