

NSAS Sacramento Valley National Wildlife Refuges
12-4-21

We started the day at the **Colusa National Wildlife Refuge**. The platform pond had numerous Snow and white-fronted geese along with the typical dabbling ducks including: Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, American Wigeon and a flock of over 150 Ring-necked Ducks that took flight as we headed down the auto loop. Although the fog was dense we could see the 1000's of Snow Geese that were feeding and resting in the marsh. Highlights included Common Gallinule, a Sora Rail, Wilson's Snipe, Ring-necked Pheasants, and a well camouflaged American Bittern seen by a few.



Next we headed along **Road Z** north of Route 162. With the fog lifting we had great views of Greater-white fronted and Snow Geese along with 30 Tundra Swans. Highlights included White-faced Ibis, and hundreds of Dunlin along with 2 Long-billed Curlews and many Killdeers feeding in the flooded fields with a passing Bald Eagle scaring up the geese. There were 2 larger, light-mantled Herring Gulls spotted in the midst of 45 Ring-billed Gulls.



The **Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge** gave us wonderful views of both Snow and the smaller cousin, Ross's Geese. Thousands of Pintails and other dabbling ducks including shovelers, wigeon, gadwall, with fewer numbers of green-winged and cinnamon teal were feeding and resting in the marshes along the auto route. Divers included nearly 100 Ring-necked Ducks, Bufflehead and Ruddy's. Typical marsh birds included Great Blue Herons and Great Egrets, Harriers, Red-shouldered, and Red-tailed hawks and a beautiful Sharp-shinned Hawk resting on a post on our way out of the marsh. Watching the thousands of Snow Geese take flight over the Marshland at sunset is truly an experience of a lifetime.



The next morning was spent at the **Gray Lodge Wildlife Area**, a must see Refuge! Along with hundreds of geese, shovelers, wigeon and pintails, there were 6 Blue-winged Teal, Virginia and Sora Rails, Black-necked Stilts, Dunlin, Greater Yellowlegs and 18 Long-billed Dowitchers and a flyover of 6 Sandhill Cranes! Many land birds were also present, the highlights being a American Pipits, Orange-crowned, Common Yellowthroats, and many Yellow-rumped Warblers along with a surprise Phainopepla.



Our last stop was scoping the fields along **Grimes & Tule Roads**. We were delighted to see 80 Tundra Swans with the hundred Greater White-fronted Geese and a show-stopping Ferruginous Hawk landing on the power pole. During the 2-day excursion we managed to observe 100 species making this event a must, for future field trips.

